

## Addressing Ergot Concerns in Wheat

### Public Value Statement

Ergot in small grains can have a significant impact on wheat quality including financial losses at the point of sale, potentially influencing the export market and creating concerns about livestock feed.

### The Situation

The beginning of the 2018 wheat harvest in central to east-central North Dakota prompted several reports of ergot. While it is common to observe ergot every year, ergot reports were exceeding acceptance thresholds at elevators prompting rejection and discounts. Although the entire state had a great wheat crop, production in this area was left with several questions pertaining to ergot management and handling of seed lots with ergot.

### Extension Response

The Extension response involved county agents, area off-campus specialists and state specialists. The response was broken down into three key aspects.

1. Assessing the situation: County agents submitted a questionnaire to elevators to gauge ergot incidence in wheat. The data collected remained anonymous and gave a good indication of the problem.
2. Discussing the issue: Greg Endres organized a conference call with county agents to discuss ergot. During this call, information was provided on frequently asked questions on ergot and a PowerPoint was developed with more detailed information that county agents could use.
3. Information creation and delivery: An ergot publication was created highlighting field management and feeding concerns in animals. Additionally, several Extension-events included ergot as a primary topic of discussion.

### Impacts

The ergot questionnaire gathered feedback from eight elevators. Elevators most impacted estimated 25% of the grain loads were discounted. Other estimates indicated that over 100,000 bushels of wheat was not brought in due to fears of discounts and/or rejection. Several elevators reported wheat loads with ergot levels as high as 0.5%, which is ten times higher than the wheat threshold.

The agronomic changes that will be implemented by growers will not be assessed until the 2019 growing season. However, ergot information was delivered at five events in 2018 and will be presented at another ten events in 2019.

### Feedback

*"The ad hoc ergot discussion was quite good."*  
-Attendee at Carrington REC Crop tour

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### Image/Info Graphic



### Collaborators

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### Non-Extension Collaborators

North Dakota Wheat Commission

### Resource Links

<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/crops/ergot-in-small-grains/pp1904.pdf>