We hope that everyone is safe and healthy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, and that you all had a successful fall planting and harvest season. This newsletter is the first in what will be a quarterly newsletter to update you on our current research, as well as, to highlight recent grants and publications. During the COVID-19 pandemic, research has continued here at the Eastern Virginia AREC. I want to personally thank the faculty and staff here at the center for their commitment to masking, social distancing, and cleaning, which enabled us to continue our normal day-to-day in-person operations throughout the pandemic. We have recently finished small grain (wheat and barley) planting and soybean harvest. Dr Nicholas Santantonio has recently been hired to replace Dr. Carl Griffey as small grain breeder. Although located in Blacksburg, the bulk of Dr. Santantonio’s field research will continue to be located at EVAREC. Best wishes to Dr. Griffey in his retirement!

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

Joseph
“The Virginia Tech small grain scab breeding program is committed to developing high yielding fusarium head blight (FHB) wheat and barley lines for producers in the mid-Atlantic region. Each year, we select progeny from scab crosses and evaluate FHB traits in thousands of plots under mist irrigation. One of the pillars of my research is to map and validate FHB resistance QTL(s) from native sources of winter barley and identify diagnostic molecular markers that will aid in marker-assisted selection. I’m collaborating with other VT faculty in developing high-throughput phenotyping capabilities with hyperspectral imaging to assess field disease symptoms of FHB incidence and severity in small grains breeding material. The potential application could drastically save time and resources, while resulting in more objective disease estimations, during the field season when disease evaluation is critical.”
Recent Publications & Grants

**PUBLICATIONS:**

2020 Small Grain State Tests Performance. [SPES-227.pdf (vt.edu)]


**GRANTS:**


Eastern Virginia AREC’s **mission** is to serve Virginia’s grain and soybean industries through research and educational programs leading to improved varieties and crop management practices. Our research objectives are to support the Virginia Tech soybean and small grain breeding programs, and to conduct agronomic research that contributes to economically and environmentally sound crop production in the Commonwealth and beyond.

**A COLLABORATIVE NETWORK**

The ARECs are a network of 11 centers strategically located throughout the state that emphasize the close working relationships between Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and the industries they work with. The mission of the system is to engage in innovative, leading-edge research, to discover new scientific knowledge, and create and disseminate science-based applications that ensure the wise use of agricultural, natural, and community resources while enhancing quality of life.

Eastern Virginia Agricultural Research and Extension Center

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