

### **Scout wheat early and plan to tissue test.**

Wheat producers need to count tillers in January and follow up with tissue sampling in late February or March. This approach is the best way to optimize fertilizer purchases and application. At the beginning of green-up in January, 50 to 70 tillers per square foot is optimum. If the count is lower, apply half the spring topdress nitrogen right away. This application will help the crop continue to produce tillers on warm days without excessive growth.

Tissue test in February or March (at Feekes growth stage 5 or Zadoks GS 30) to find out if more nitrogen is needed. Contact your regional agronomist if you need additional guidance on how to count tillers or identify the appropriate growth stage.

### **Test source water for tobacco seedling float beds.**

Nearly half of the source water samples taken from tobacco float bed operations in North Carolina and about one in five nutrient solution samples have high alkalinity (sometimes known as total carbonates). Alkalinity values greater than or equal to 100 contribute to high pH and soluble-salt problems. When necessary, the solution report provides recommendations for reducing alkalinity by 80 percent.