



CROPS WORLDWIDE THREATENED BY NEW WHEAT FUNGUS

A virulent new wheat-killing fungus called **wheat stem rust** could destroy harvests across the globe, warns the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

Also known as **wheat black rust**, the fungus, which first emerged in Uganda in 1999, has spread from East Africa to Yemen on the Arabian Peninsula. About 80% of all varieties of wheat in Asia and Africa are vulnerable to this new strain which spreads rapidly and is transmitted by the wind across continents and over long distances.

“Global wheat yields could be at risk if the stem rust spreads to major wheat producing countries,” cautioned FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf said. Destruction of wheat crops, causing billions of dollars worth of losses, “could lead to increased wheat prices and local or regional food shortages,” he said.

This could have dire implications for developing countries, he added, since they rely heavily on wheat and do not have access to wheat varieties resistant to the fungus.

FAO has joined forces with the Global Rust Initiative – an international group lead by the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center to fight the spread of the dangerous strain.

In the late 1980s, a similar disease appeared in East Africa, traveling to Yemen, the Near East and Central Asia, finally reaching South Asia in four years. This massive spread resulted in losses in crops worth over \$1 billion.

Wacky weather, droughts, pestilences and wars are all contributing to famines in many parts of the world today. And we are told the world is “only one crop away from disaster.”

The prophecy of Revelation speaks of exorbitant prices for wheat - food - in the Tribulation.

PROPHECY

“And when He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, ‘Come and see.’ And I looked and saw a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.

“I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, ‘**A quart of wheat for a denarius**, and three quarts of barley for a denarius’.” (*A denarius was the equivalent of a day’s wage.*) (Revelation 6:5-6)