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***Pyricularia oryzae* INFECTION ON WHEAT SPIKES AFFECTS SEEDS QUALITY<sup>1</sup>**/ Infecção por *Pyricularia oryzae* nas espigas de trigo afeta a qualidade das sementes. E. T. SILVA<sup>2</sup>; M. U. P. ARAUJO<sup>2</sup>; J. A. RIOS<sup>2</sup>; D. F. CUNHA<sup>2</sup>; F. A. RODRIGUES<sup>2</sup>. <sup>2</sup>Federal University of Vicosa, Department of Plant Pathology, Viçosa, MG, Brazil. E-mail: ernesto.silva@ufv.br.

Wheat blast, caused by the fungus *Pyricularia oryzae*, has become one of the most important disease affecting wheat yield. This study aimed to elucidate the stage of spikes development that will be most susceptible to *P. oryzae* infection. Plants from cultivar BR-18 were inoculated with *P. oryzae* at anthesis and at 7, 14, 21, 28 days after anthesis. Plants with spikes non-inoculated with *P. oryzae* served as the control treatment. The spikes of plants from all treatments were harvested and the weight of 1000 seeds (WS) was determined. The WS was significantly different among the stages of spikes development. The WS was significantly lower (9.4g) at anthesis in comparison to both 28 days after anthesis (36.8g) and non-inoculated spikes (36.5g). The results from this study showed the importance of the time to which the spikes are infected by *P. oryzae* in order to decrease seeds quality.

**Key words:** Fungal disease; Seed pathology; Spikes development.

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