

## Crops Bulletin

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*Serving Clay, Buena  
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**Elwynn on Twitter.** See

<http://twitter.com/elwynntaylor> for updates from ISU extension climatologist Elwynn Taylor. This site is updated almost daily.

**Soil temperatures.** See

<http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/NPKnowledge/soiltemphistory.html> for county by county 4 inch soil temperatures.

**Check Alfalfa stands.** It is time to check alfalfa fields for winter damage. Dig some alfalfa plants and check the taproots. The taproot should have firm healthy tissue that is creamy white in color. Crown buds should be intact and firm.

Alfalfa seeded in 2008 should have 12 crowns per square foot. Fields seed in 2007 should have 8 crowns per square foot. Older stands need to 4- 8 plants/square foot to be productive.

Stems per square foot are a more accurate indicator of alfalfa yield potential. However, the alfalfa needs to be a few inches tall for this method to be effective. Stems counts of 55/square foot are considered ideal, where as stem counts of less than 40 will have reduced hay yields.

**Fertilizer storage questions.** Fertilizer stored on the farm is subject to state regulations on fertilizer storage. See

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/blackhawk/news/fertilizer.htm> for more info. The Fertilizer Bureau of IDALS (515 281 8599) can answer specific questions.

**Anhydrous ammonia application.** Farmers who apply anhydrous ammonia at 6-8 inches deep, apply it an angle to the future corn rows and wait 2-3 days before shallow tillage, should not have any N loss or crop injury problems. Nitrogen may be lost if the zone of ammonia application is exposed to the air with tillage. However, if the ammonia is applied at a depth of 6 to 8 inches and if the tillage is 3-4 inches deep – there should not be any nitrogen loss.