

# Lee County Extension

Fall 2005

## The 2005 Growing Season in Review

The harvest is quickly coming to a close and we have been receiving a few questions on nitrogen application, soil testing, as well as management decisions for the coming year. While the official state yield data for our county is not yet available, I would summarize this past year as one of tremendous yield variation. I learned a great deal from the growing season of 2005. The most important may not have been new, but reinforced what a difference a one inch rain at a critical time can make in the final yield determination of a field. The growing conditions really emphasized how important corn suitability ratings are for management decisions and the importance in determining land value and cash rents. I would also add to this list the importance and how much we depend on the soil profile being at maximum field water capacity before entering a year such as 2005.

I believe we also need to thank the plant breeders for their research and the progress they have made, especially with corn, and in a very short period of time. I am certain that if, ten years ago, we would have had the growing conditions of 2005, the yields would have been substantially less.

When the record books for 2005 are written I believe the following will be mentioned, dry weather conditions, high temperatures, a few soybean aphids and spider mites, escaping soybean rust for one more year, record high energy prices, low crop prices, aflatoxin, above average wheat and oat yields, and a very significant yield variation across the county. The yield variations will mean very little when one reviews the county yield averages for soybeans and corn as few farms will have had the average yield. Land values continue to be strong and interest rates seem to be moving higher. Inputs and their management for 2006 being at the top of the list for 2006 priorities.



Doug and Donna Vogel received the State of Iowa Good Neighbor award from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and WHO Radio.

## Private Pesticide Re-Certification

The dates for private applicators educational training in Lee County will be:

Dec 13<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Grove Savings Bank Comm. Room, Donnellson, 1:30 or 7:00 p.m.

Feb 9<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Grove Savings Bank Comm. Room, Donnellson, 1:30 or 7:00 p.m.

We will send additional information however, there will be four training opportunities for applicators to choose from. A private applicator who wishes to maintain their license through education programs will be able to do so by attending one of the sessions. Each session is limited to 50 participants. The cost is \$15.00 to attend an ISU educational re-certification program. You are welcome to sign-up at this time.

November 10, 2005

**Bob Dodds**  
Lee County CEED

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### Dates

Pro Ag Outlook  
Nov 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005 8:00AM

Sheep ICN  
Nov 29, 2005  
7:00 pm

Master Gardener Meet  
Dec 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005  
7:00 pm

Private Pesticide Certification  
Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>, 2005  
1:30 pm and 7:00 pm

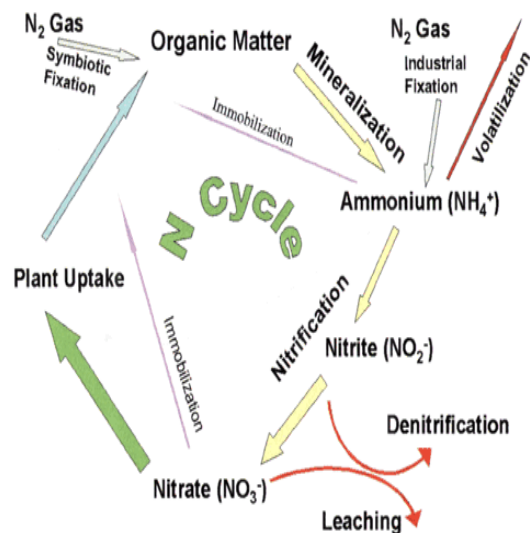
Lee County Fair  
July 5-10, 2006

## Remember 50 Degrees when applying Nitrogen

If you are considering the application of anhydrous ammonia or manure with a high ammonium N content this fall, remember to wait until temperatures cool to 50° F and will continue to move lower.

We often only speak or write about soil temperatures however, it is important to note that even with soil temperatures below 50° F, ammonium does nitrify in to nitrate. Since nitrification is a microbe – process, the rate is influenced by several factors that affect biological activity, such as ammonium supply, temperature, soil aeration, soil pH – range from 4.5 to 10.0 (optimum at pH 8.5) and soil moisture (highest at field capacity), but the greatest influence is soil temperature. Therefore an easy way to slow conversion of ammonium to nitrate is to have cold soil temperatures.

The optimum temperature for nitrification is around 90° F. Below 50° F the rate slows rapidly, but nitrification continues until 32° F.



## Sheep and Lambs Classes Offered by ICN

For sheep producers or acreage owners who maybe considering the purchase of a few ewes will want to mark their calendars for two sheep programs, November 29<sup>th</sup> and December 13<sup>th</sup>. Both programs will begin at 7:00 p.m. and will be held at the Central Lee High School ICN Room.

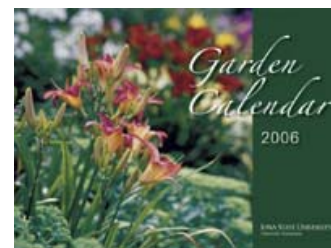
November 29<sup>th</sup>: Dr. Cindy Wolf, University of Minnesota Extension sheep veterinarian will discuss the national identification program and where the sheep industry is headed. Dr. Wolf and her husband run 1500 ewes in Southeast Minnesota and will share the operation of their flock .

December 13<sup>th</sup>: Paul Rogers, Deputy Director of Policy for the American Sheep Industry Association and Brad Anderson of the Iowa Lamb Corporation. Rogers will share highlights on national programs and bright spots in the sheep industry's future. Anderson will discuss his job as a lamb meat marketer along with what producers can do to get more for their product.

**“Lamb Prices for the year have averaged above \$90 per cwt.”**

## New and Timely Publications

- 2005 Iowa Crop Performance Test for Alfalfa [www.agron.iastate.edu/icia](http://www.agron.iastate.edu/icia)
- 2005 Iowa Crop Performance Test for Small Grain
- 2005 Corn and Soybean Performance Test [www.extension.agron.iastate.edu/varietytesting/](http://www.extension.agron.iastate.edu/varietytesting/)
- 2006 Iowa State Garden Calendar \$8.00
- 2005 Lee County Plat Book \$25
- PM 1800 Aflatoxins in Corn –New
- PM 2002A Woodland Improvement and Crop Trees in Iowa
- PM 2002B Planning for Wooded Acreages and Woodlands
- PM 287 Take a Good Soil Sample
- PM 1310 Interpretation of Soil Tests Results
- PM-1688 General Guide for Crop Nutrient and Limestone Recommendations in Iowa



Iowa State University Garden Calendar for 2006 is currently available from the Extension Office cost \$8.00 plus postage.

## Ideas Which May Life A Little Easier

It seems like we never have enough hydrants on a farm, or at least not in the right spot and thus we often resort to using a garden hose to move water; add freezing temperatures and it becomes a real challenge.

To keep the hose clear of ice and ready for the next day I often found myself wrestling with the hose trying to remove the water from the hose. I have on many occasions hoped for a sunny day and often would not be able to water a few head of sheep until late afternoon.

Growing tired of this I secured a few couplers which have allowed me to attach an air compressor (50psi) to the end of the hose and simply blow the water from the hose. To do this I combined a 3/4" to 1/2 inch reducer, 1/2 to 1/4 connector and a 1/4 inch coupling. After putting all the fittings together the couplers are ready to go on to a hose and to be hooked up to an air compressor or an air pig. It takes a few minutes and sure saves a wrestling match with a garden hose.



Do you find yourself carrying a 5 gallon bucket around? You know the one missing the plastic grip missing, the one which seems to want to cut right through your hand. Using a 1 inch wooden dowel and a couple of 2-1/2" ceiling hooks screwed into the dowel the hook nicely attaches to the handle of the bucket. The comfort is great and you do not have to wait 10 minutes for circulation to return to your hand after carrying it across the farm yard.

## Testing Fields for Soybean Cyst Nematodes

Fall is a great time to test this past year's soybean field for SCN. In Iowa 70% of our fields have some level of nematode infestation. While we know it is present here in Lee County, we still have a number of fields that have not been diagnosed or have strategies to manage them. Large nematode populations can cause severe damage to soybean crops, especially in very dry years such as 2005.

A few comments on collecting samples:

- Samples can be collected until a hard freeze occurs using a soil probe.
- Collect samples 6 to 8 inches deep.
- Collect 15 to 20 locations in zigzag pattern (20 acre = 1 sample).
- Mix the 15 to 20 cores from 20 acres and send a minimum of one cup of soil.

Cost per soil sample at ISU is \$15.00

**"In Iowa Over 70% of the Soybean Fields have some level of infestation of Soybean Cyst Nematode"**

## Fescue in Southern Iowa

Tall fescue grass is becoming widespread in pastures, road ditches, and field borders throughout the southern half of Iowa. The species has a number of positive attributes, including being a hardy, adaptable and productive cool season grass. It is a heavy sod forming grass that also retains its forage quality through winter months. As a result, many producers select tall fescue for deferred grazing in winter.

However, there are a number of negatives associated with tall fescue. Many stands are infected with an endophyte fungus that produces compounds that are toxic to cattle. If cattle eat endophyte-infected tall fescue, they exhibit reduced weight gains and reduced milk yields as well as a number of more serious illnesses such as fescue foot. Contact the Lee County Extension Office for more information about management alternatives, endophyte-free cultivars, and new nontoxic varieties.



Byron Leu and Mark Carlton ISU Specialists stress the importance of managing pastures for maximum profitability. Iowa Prison Farm Field Day.

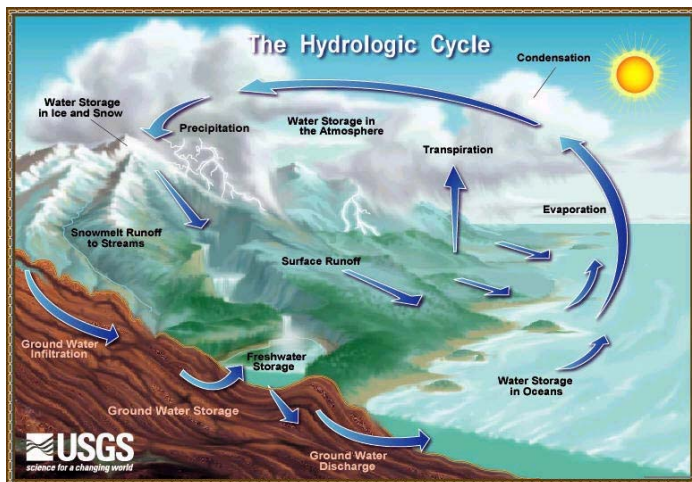
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## Water Cycle



## Agriculture in the Classroom

Each year the Lee County Extension Service provides students the opportunity to spend a day on the farm. Students learn where our food comes from, the importance of agriculture, the safety of our food, the importance of good nutrition and the many uses of by-products which come from crops and livestock. Involved in this learning experience are all the 1st graders from the Keokuk School system, all the 3rders from the Fort Madison School System and the 6th graders from the Central Lee Schools.

Those assisting with the teaching of the sessions have included 4-H and FFA members, Pork and Beef Producers, Master Gardeners, Keokuk Hospital Conservation Department, Extension Specialists, and a special thank you to Neil and Mary Ella Johnson and Ron and Suzanne Overberg. The Lee County Farm Bureau is a co-sponsor of the event.



If you enjoy horticulture you may wish to tune into KOKX 1310 every Saturday morning at 7:30 Am to listen to the Horticulture Program "Let's Get Growing" I discuss primarily questions that we receive during the week at the Extension Office and in addition comments from our State Horticulturalist. The program runs from April to the end of November.