

**CROP NOTES for May 13, 2009**

Past issues of Crop Notes are posted at:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/winneshiek/info/crops.htm>

**Iowa State University Extension Information for Northeast Iowa**

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**CCA credits**

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June 25, North ISU Research Farm Field Day, Kanawha, CCA credits

**WEATHER**

## **Soil Temperatures**

Currently, average soil temperatures are around 60 F. We want to get to 65 F for the planting of warm-season forages such as sorghum-sudan, millet, teff and others. Some of these plantings may follow first crop alfalfa, or winter rye harvested for forage. Soil temperature readings are available at: <http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/NPKnowledge/>

## **Degree Days for Corn**

From May 1 to Present:

Normal for Northeast Iowa = 117 GDD

Current for Nashua = 116 GDD

Current for Cedar Rapids = 122 GDD

## **Comments from Elwynn Taylor**

Elwynn Taylor, says USDA reports little crop planting East of Iowa in the past week, and weather patterns are starting to show a wet period moving into the Corn Belt and that could be very bad news for Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. La Niña continues to lose strength and should not be a factor in the 2009 growing season. This predicts avoidance of above normal (hot) summer temperatures in the upper Midwest.

## **INSECTS**

### **Alfalfa Weevil**

Time to scout until first crop harvest. However, as of yet there are no reports of finding significant alfalfa weevil occurrence in either Iowa or Illinois. The following article from the ICM News has everything you need to know about scouting for the pest.

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/CropNews/2009/041709pope.htm>

### **Black Cutworm**

The cool May has pushed back the anticipated accumulated 300 DDs (base 51 F) following a significant flight. That plus an earlier miscalculation on my part puts northeast Iowa at about a May 25 prediction date to start scouting for the presence of young larvae in corn fields. A recent article in the ICM News on Black Cutworm includes scouting tips

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/CropNews/2009/0428tollefson.htm> .

### **Common Stalk Borer**

The 5 control options were listed in the March 18, 2009 Crop Notes. Go to that issue for details.

Currently, we are approaching options 2 (if you did not utilize option 1) and option 3 (for weedy fields).

Option 2: Apply insecticide on the grassy field borders during egg hatch (575 to 750 DD, base 41, Jan. 1). For northeast Iowa this window is approximately May 12 - 22.

Option 3. Apply insecticide with an "in-field" herbicide program if perennial grasses and ragweed (populations from last year) are extensive. If larva are in these weeds (i.e. quackgrass, wirestem, giant ragweed) when the weeds are killed with post-emergence herbicide, the larva are forced to move out of the weed and into something else (i.e. corn and occasionally soybeans).

Option 4 to be considered later. For "field border" infestations, if no previous method was used, apply insecticide during larvae migration (1,100 to 1,400 DD, base 41, Jan. 1). Larva too large

for a grass stem, leave the grass at this time to find a larger plant to live in (i.e. corn). Timing an insecticide at this time along the "field border" and the first rows of corn next to the "field border" catches many of the migrating larvae. This usually occurs in mid-June, but we will track the degree days.

## **PEAQ**

### **Timing First-Crop Alfalfa**

**Predictive Equations for Alfalfa Quality (PEAQ)** is a method used to estimate forage quality of a standing alfalfa crop. The field estimation is based on the height of the tallest stem and the maturity stage of the field. It has worked very well as a "ball-park" indicator to estimate harvest time for first-crop alfalfa. The following Fact Sheet explains the PEAQ procedure, and can be used to estimate timeliness of first-crop harvest of your own fields.

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/NR/rdonlyres/11CD336E-1D82-427F-9922-49A4C48230AF/12306/FactSheetBL22.pdf>

On average alfalfa quality will drop 3 to 5 points in RFV per day in spring. It is recommended to produce alfalfa forage around 150 RFV for milking dairy herds, and 120 to 130 RFV for heifers, stocker cattle and lactating beef cattle. Under typical hay harvest conditions, 15% of the forage dry matter will be lost. Therefore, it is suggested to cut at PEAQ readings of 165 to 170 RFV (bud stage alfalfa about 27-inches tall) to end up with harvested forage of approximately 150 RFV.

A random sampling of fields across northeast Iowa are being checked for PEAQ twice a week (Monday & Thursday).

#### PEAQ Results for Monday May 11:

County, Height (inches), Stage of maturity, RFV

Allamakee, 8, Vegetative, >260

Butler, 19, Vegetative, 219

Chickasaw site A, 15, Vegetative, 245

Chickasaw site B, 16, Vegetative, 238

Clayton, 15, Vegetative, 252

Delaware, 17, Vegetative, 230

Dubuque, 15, Vegetative, 245

Floyd site A, 15, Vegetative, 245

Floyd site B, 16, Vegetative, 240

Howard, 10, Vegetative, >260

Winneshiek, 14, Vegetative, 252

## **ORGANIC FARMING**

### **Funding to Transition to Organic**

Farmers interested in transitioning into organic agriculture or expanding their organic acres in production have a 3-week period to sign up for government support beginning May 11. For details go to the recent ICM News article at:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/CropNews/2009/0508delate.htm>

## **LAND RENT**

### **2009 Cash Rental Rate Survey**

Just released (May 2009) is the results of the ISU cash rental rate survey. You can find this information at: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/publications/fm1851.pdf>

## **EVENTS**

### **May 20, Forestry Field Day, Elkader**

1:00 to 4:00 pm, Marcotte Tree Farm 5 miles south of Elkader on Hwy 13. Topics include: 1) Direct Seeding Techniques, 2) Weed Control in Direct Seeding and Plantation areas, 3) Controlling deer damage (shelters, electric fence designs, depredation permits), 4) Seedling Planting (stock selection, planting techniques), 5) Tree planting demonstrations, 6) Corrective Pruning. For more information and a map to the farm, go to:

<http://www.forestry.iastate.edu/education/ffd/FFDmarcotte09.pdf>

### **May 27, Pasture Walk Grazing Field Day, Eldorado**

1:00 to 3:00 pm at the David Baker farm near Eldorado. One of a number of farmer lead grazing events in 2009 hosted by the Northeast Iowa Graziers. This program will highlight seasonal organic dairy with a discussion on transitioning a dairy to grazing. Directions: On Hwy 150, go either 4 miles south of Festina or 1.3 miles north of Eldorado to King Rd., then 1.1 miles to Kale Rd., then follow Kale Rd. to the end of the road. The entire 2009 Pasture Walk schedule is at:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/NR/rdonlyres/229080A5-0FEE-44E7-86C0-C63F2E81654A/97997/2009PastureWalks.pdf>

### **June 3-5, World Pork Expo, Des Moines**

Annual World Pork Expo at the Iowa State Fairgrounds, Des Moines. Producers, industry professionals, exhibits, tours, seminars, trade show, etc. For details, go to:

<http://www.worldpork.org/>

### **June 9-10, Agricultural & Food Traceability Conference, Des Moines**

A 2-day conference sponsored by the Value-Added Agriculture program, the Iowa Beef Center, and the Iowa Grain Quality Initiative. Features speakers from business, research, and regulatory environments with emphasis in 3 major areas (1) Risks and rewards of adopting traceability in business operations, (2) Standards, legislative actions and other compliance factors related to traceability, (3) Processes and management strategies which could assist businesses in the implementation of traceability protocols. For registration and other details, go to:

[www.ucsf.edu/mnet/traceability/home.html](http://www.ucsf.edu/mnet/traceability/home.html)

### **June 10-11, Cattle Feeders' Conference, Ames**

A 2-day conference hosted by the Iowa Beef Center & Iowa Cattlemen's Association. Industry professionals and cattle feeders will discuss management of forces both internal and external to your operation, from labor relations to understanding your carbon footprint. For a detailed agenda, registration and other information go to:

<http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/content/cattleconference.html>

**June 10-11, 4-State Dairy Nutrition & Management Conference, Dubuque**

For program and registration information, go to:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/NR/rdonlyres/46CA6FE6-29AC-4DFA-AB55-68AD3E46C9F0/100179/4StateDairyConferenceRegistrationInformation.pdf>

**June 12, Ag Professional Tour, Northeast ISU Research Farm, Nashua**

9:30 to Noon. Program details TBA. CCA credits available.

**June 17, No-till Field Day, Decorah**

Agenda and time still tentative, but likely to start at 11:00 am, include a free noon meal and conclude early afternoon. Speakers to include Farmer speakers to talk about their experiences with no-till, Mark Hanna ISU Extension Ag Engineer to talk about no-till equipment, a speaker to discuss economics of no-till, and Matt Helmers ISU Extension Ag Engineer to talk about no-till and water quality. Free CCA credits in Soil & Water available. Directions and other details to be provided soon.

**June 17, Pasture Walk Grazing Field Day, Ridgeway**

1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Jed Becker farm west of Ridgeway. One of a number of farmer lead grazing events in 2009 hosted by the Northeast Iowa Graziers. This program will highlight dairy grazing with Jersey-Holstein-Swedish Red crosses, with a discussion on cross-breeding lead by Dale Thoreson ISU Extension Dairy Specialist. Directions: On Hwy 9 to Ridgeway, one-half mile southeast of Ridgeway is the Hwy 9 and 240<sup>th</sup> St. intersection. Take 240<sup>th</sup> St. west 4 miles to the farm at 3322-240<sup>th</sup> St. The entire 2009 Pasture Walk schedule is at:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/NR/rdonlyres/229080A5-0FEE-44E7-86C0-C63F2E81654A/97997/2009PastureWalks.pdf>

**June 18, Train-the-Trainer No-till Program, Northeast ISU Research Farm, Nashua**

9:00 to Noon. This program targets staff from NRCS, FSA, SWCD, DNR and related agency staff, plus Ag Providers. Free 3 CCA credits in Soil & Water available. Agenda includes: 1) Carbon Credits 2) Equipment Options/Implement Adjustments 3) Cover Crops to Reduce Nitrate Leaching 4) Residue Management and its Value to Soil Quality. The program is free but pre-registration is requested by contacting the Floyd Co Extension Office at 641-228-1453.

**June 18, Northeast ISU Research Farm Field Day, Nashua**

1:30 to 4:30 pm. Also a poster session in the headquarters building from Noon to 1:30 pm for early arrivals. Field day speakers include (1) Elwynn Taylor, ISU Extension Climatologist, on Weather and Market Predictions for 2009, (2) Roger Elmore, ISU Extension Corn Production Specialist on Corn Production Issues, (3) Matt Helmers, ISU Extension Ag Engineer on Improving Water Quality with Biofilters and Cover Crops, (4) Erin Hodgson, ISU Extension Entomologist on Insect Pests in 2009, and (5) Ken Pecinovsky, Farm Superintendent with Introductory Comments. The Field Day is free and open to the public. Pre-registration is not required. CCA credits will be available for a nominal fee. Direct any questions about the field day to your County Extension Office, or George Cummins (641-228-1453) or Brian Lang (563-382-2949).

**June 24, Southeast ISU Research Farm Field Day, Crawfordsville**

Special morning session for CCAs followed by the annual afternoon research farm field day tour. More details to be posted soon at: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/eccrops/meetserc.html>

**June 25, North ISU Research Farm Field Day, Kanawha**

9:30 to Noon. The program will include presentations on Corn Production Issues, Insect Management in 2009, New Soybean Traits, and Current Crop Production Concerns. Additional information will be provided as plans are finalized. The Field Day is free and open to the public. Pre-registration is not required. CCA credits will be available for a nominal fee. Direct any questions about the field day to your County Extension Office, or George Cummins 641-228-1453.

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