

CROP NOTES for May 20, 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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WEATHER

Soil Temperatures

Currently, average soil temperatures are in the mid-60's F. This usually occurs closer to June 1, but we are in a bit of a heat wave right now. Assuming the temperatures will stay this warm, we could proceed with planting of warm-season forages such as sorghum-sudan, millet, teff and others. Soil temperature readings are available at:

<http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/NPKnowledge/>

Degree Days for Corn

From May 1 to Present:

Current for Nashua = 165 GDD (35 below normal)

Current for Cedar Rapids = 180 GDD (40 below normal)

INSECTS

Alfalfa Weevil

Some alfalfa weevil are being found now, but no reports of any significant problems. With this week's warm temperatures we should come up on first crop harvest of dairy quality hay before any weevil problems develop. See PEAQ report. Repeating from last week, the following article from the ICM News has everything you need to know about scouting for this pest.

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

Black Cutworm

The cool weather last week pushed back the anticipated accumulated 300 DDs (base 51 F) following a significant flight to about May 30 for northeast Iowa. To aid scouting for Black cutworm I attached a pdf file called "Scouting Tips for Black Cutworm". It includes many photos, an instar chart, scouting tips and how to calculate the economic threshold. If a treatment is needed, the following 2008 ICM News article lists many products labeled for control of Black cutworm. <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/CropNews/2008/0516RicePopeTollefson.htm>

Common Stalk Borer

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

Currently, option 3 may be considered with herbicide applications under the right circumstances.

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 in June. 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 degree days and notify when we approach that window.

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 18:

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

Butler, 24, Vegetative, 190

Chickasaw site A, 20, Bud, 201

Chickasaw site B, 22, Bud, 190

Clayton, 19, Vegetative, 220

Dubuque, 23, Bud, 185

Floyd site A, 20, Vegetative, 210

Floyd site B, 18, Vegetative, 225

Winneshiek, 21, Vegetative, 206

Many fields will be in “Early Bud” stage later this week. The alfalfa is growing at about 6 inches per week. Likely some fields along Hwy 20 (i.e. Dubuque Co. PEAQ report) are basically ready to begin harvest. Next week many fields throughout northeast Iowa will be ready to begin harvest approaching the 170 RFV (Bud stage, about 27 inches tall).

WINTER RYE

Forage Quality

Some winter rye is being harvested as forage this week. Many fields are in boot stage, approaching heading stage. This is important to know because winter rye drops rather quickly in forage quality beyond heading stage. At boot stage it has similar forage quality as all other small grain forages (oats, barley, wheat). Thus, this window is an optimal time for harvest. The attached pdf titled “Winter Rye” includes forage quality and yield estimates along with other information on utilizing Winter rye in crop rotations.

NITROGEN & WEEDS

Postemergence Application of Nitrogen & Herbicide in Corn

The prolonged wet period in the first half of May in northeast Iowa has a number of producers planting first and applying herbicide with 28% nitrogen second.

Be aware of two potential issues:

1) 28% application on emerged corn. Consider rate limits depending on corn size. This is discussed in the following article.

<http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/icm/2007/4-23/uan.html>

2) 28% with herbicide on emerged corn. This is not recommended, and is discussed in the following article.

<http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/icm/2006/5-1/postemerge.html>

Current “Hot-Spell”. Check for Soil Crusting

It's been rainy weather until late. Now it's hot and main remain dry for a while. It would be good to check on some of the not yet emerged fields for possible soil crusting and maybe the need for a rotary hoe pass. Of course, this can help with weed control too.

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.ucs.iastate.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-AB55-68AD3E46C9F0/100179/4StateDairyConferenceRegistrationinfomation.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 240th St. intersection. Take 240th St. west 4 miles to the farm at 3322-240th 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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