

CROP NOTES for March 4, 2009

Iowa State University Extension Information for Northeast Iowa

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WEATHER

Comments from Elwynn Taylor

Ames, 28 Feb. 2009 – Historical record clearly show a shift in crop yield risk of the U.S. Corn belt for neutral and for La Nina conditions. The current La Nina event – ENSO – is showing signs of weakening, but no clear trend. Often the trend is apparent by mid-March and usually by mid-April. At this time I consider the chance of neutral vs. La Nina conditions by June 1 to be 50/50. The Corn supply and demand balance sheet of Feb. 23 2009, <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/cdoutlook.html> indicates that a trend line corn yield – 153.4 BPA – would have a likely Dec. contract value of \$4.53 at harvest time. Historical yield response to the ENSO indicates a most likely U.S. Corn Yield of 144 BPA should the La Nina continue (Dec. value at harvest \$5.45) and 155 BPA (Dec. value of \$4.37) for neutral conditions.

Soil Temperatures

As we approach spring, there is usually some interest in soil temperature. Please bookmark the following site for soil temperature readings across Iowa. <http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/NPKnowledge/> The current readings are still below freezing. There is still time to frost seed pastures, but do it soon.

FORAGES

Frost Seeding (a repeat from Feb. 17)

Consider frost seeding pastures in February and early March. If there is no snow cover, this is the perfect time to frost seed existing pastures that are thin, or pastures where you would like to increase the percentage of legume in the stand. Broadcasting seed in mid- to late winter gives time for freeze-thaw cycles to shallowly incorporate the seed. Some winter seasons have less freeze-thaw cycles than others, but fortunately, early spring rains also helps with seed coverage on bare areas.

Red clover has been the most consistently successful forage species to establish with frost-seeding. Other legumes can be frost seeded with slightly less success than clovers, and less success yet with ryegrass and timothy. Other grasses are difficult to establish with frost seeding because the seeds are larger or are less competitive in initial emergence. Iowa producer experience has been best when legume seed is broadcast on the thinnest, least vigorous pasture areas. Success has also been improved where the previous grass stand has been heavily grazed, thus, exposing more areas of bare soil. Successful frost-seeding also requires average to better than average rainfall in spring. While frost-seeding is the easiest and least expensive pasture seeding approach, using a drill for more precise seed placement and seeding when soil conditions are more supportive of quick germination, such as in April, usually provides better and more uniform stand densities.

Here is some related information available on pdfs:

1) Improving Pastures by Frost Seeding

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM856.pdf>

2) Interseeding and No-till Pasture Renovation

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1097.pdf>

3) Interseeding Small Seeded Forages with Conventional Corn Planters

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1097.pdf>

4) Selecting Forage Species

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1792.pdf>

5) How Pasture Plants Grow

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1791.pdf>

SMALL GRAINS

Variety Trials

Just a reminder as you look for oats or other small grains to plant in 2009, University small grain variety trial results are available at:

Iowa State University: <http://www.croptesting.iastate.edu/>

University of Illinois: <http://vt.cropsci.illinois.edu/>

University of Minnesota: <http://www.maes.umn.edu/09varietaltrials/>

University of Wisconsin: <http://agronomy.wisc.edu/index.php?c=12>

CORN

Seeding Rates, Yield & Seed Cost

Just posted at the ISU Corn Production web site is a summary of seeding rates in relation to maximum yield and seed costs. For the article, go to:

<http://www.agronext.iastate.edu/corn/production/management/planting/seedcosts.html>

SULFUR FERTILIZER RESEARCH TRIALS ON CORN

Summary of Research Trials 2007-2008

Summarizing results of 45 trials across the 2 years, 62% of the sites had a statistically significant yield increase to applied S fertilizer. The across-site yield increase averaged 13 bu/acre for all sites. Analyzed across S rates, the economic optimum S rate was 16 lb S/acre for fine-textured soils and 23 lb S/acre for coarse-textured soils. The research indicates that S application is an economically viable fertilization practice on many soils. However, the research also shows that corn does not respond to S application in all fields or field areas. The best way to determine this is to conduct 1 or more sulfur fertilizer strips trial on your own farm.

The research confirms that (1) The S soil test is no help in determining need for S fertilizer; (2) Plant analysis of %S in ear leaves sampled at VT is not accurate enough to determine S need either; (3) While organic matter is an important source of S, it is not a clear deciding factor either for S fertilization. (4) The only absolute has been the need for S on a sand or loamy sand soil lacking a recent manure application. In addition, this work indicates that more research is needed regarding plant and soil S tests, plant canopy S stress sensing, site characteristics, and S deposition in order to develop better predictive indices of S deficiency and need for S fertilization. Hopefully one of these tools conducted that right way could provide better decision making and enhance positive economic return to S fertilization for producers.

I Need a Few Serious Cooperators for 2009

ISU wants to establish 6 on-farm field scale replicated strip-trial in northeast Iowa in 2009. I am looking for the following:

- 1) Fields with no manure or sulfur fertilizer applications for at least the last 5 years.
- 2) A farmer &/or ag supplier willing to take the time to make sure that the field gets spread properly.
 - a) The product must be calcium sulfate (gypsum).
 - b) Application most likely done with a spinner spreader as a separate application from other fertilizer applications, alternating strips the entire length of the field with a minimum of 4 strips with sulfur and 4 strips without sulfur.
 - c) Application best done early April (or late March if field conditions are okay), before other spring field operations pick up speed. It could be applied before or after any secondary tillage passes, or also surface applied on no-till.
 - d) The strips are properly flagged.
- 3) Harvest could be done with a yield monitor (preferred) or weigh wagon. If by yield monitor, we would like a copy of the harvest data file.

Please email me if you are interested. As usual, I have no money to put towards this project. Any interested individual should be interested because they want to know if sulfur fertilizer can help their operation. Currently we do not have any analytical tool (soil test, plant analysis, etc.) that helps us determine if the corn crop needs sulfur. So this trial will help you on your farm, but you would have to afford the sulfur fertilizer and the extra time to harvest the trial. ISU would be 100% responsible for conducting some additional tasks in these trials, including: soil test, plant analysis, plant sensor readings, and a small plot multiple-rate sulfur trial overlaid in an untreated check strip.

WEEDS

Have You Checked Out the ISU Weed Management Home Page Lately?

This is a terrific site for information on many aspects of weed management. Go to the home page at: <http://www.weeds.iastate.edu/>

On the right side are articles posted at various times during the year. The last 3 include:

- 1) Jan. 2009, "The Cost of Waiting Too Long" (on weed control).
- 2) The posting of research farm herbicide trials. A bit technical, but many trials.
- 3) Feb. 2009, Corvus – A new 'one pass' herbicide from Bayer.

On the left side click on Reference Desk to take you to the Herbicide Manual, Herbicide Trials, Weed ID, Herbicide Injury, etc.

2008 COUNTY CROP YIELDS

NASS Posts 2008 Yield Data by County

In early March the National Ag Statistics Service (NASS) posts the estimated county yields for the previous year. This can be found at:

http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Iowa/index.asp

Click on the down arrow for the "IA County Level Data", then click on "Crops", then click on "Go".

EVENTS

Mar. 9-10, 2009 Iowa Water Conference, Ames

Information on the program, exhibits, registration, Soil & Water CCA credits, etc. is available at: <http://www.aep.iastate.edu/water/>

Mar. 10, 11 & 13, Dairy Parlor & Manure Handling Tours, Dubuque,, Luxemburg, Hawkeye, Waucoma, Volga & Luana

The tours are planned to give producers and agri-businesses who serve the dairy industry insight into how the TRANS Iowa parlor can be built to meet the operations goals in cow handling and their building/remodeling budget. Collecting, transporting and storing manure has become a larger concern on dairy farms as the cow numbers increase and more stringent manure spreading rules evolve. Each of these tours is open to the public. Plastic boots will be provided for bio-security, but you are urged to wear street clothes. There is no pre-registration required.

Mar. 10 tours will feature the TRANS Iowa Low Cost Milking Parlors on the Bill Kauffmann and Mike Deutmeyer farms. Kauffmann's farm is located north of Dubuque. From Dubuque take Highway 52 north to County Road C9Y on to Sageville. Take a right (east) on Mud Lake Road 3/4 mile, left to 12588 Sleepy Hollow Road. The tour starts at 10 a.m. and features a Double 8 Parabone with swing units. The Deutmeyer tour starts at 12:15 p.m. From Luxemburg go East on Highway 52 3/4 mile, turn north and proceed to 21710 Clear Creek Road. Deutmeyer has a Double 10 Parabone parlor with swing units.

Mar. 11 tours start at 10:30 a.m. at the Brian and Heidi Lantzky farm located at 21575 245th Street, Hawkeye. From Alpha go south to 247th Street. Turn east and go one mile to V Avenue, go south to 245th Street., turn east and proceed to Lantzkys on the south side of the road.

Lantzkys have a Double 12 low line Parabone parlor expandable to a Double 14. The second stop March 11 is 1:15 p.m. at the Ed Brannon farm located at 28226 W Avenue, Waucoma.

From Waucoma go south on W Avenue (also County Road V86) one mile. The farm is on the east side of V86. Brannon has a Double 8 swing Parabone parlor and uses the old stall barn as his holding pen.

Mar. 13 tours start at 10 a.m. at the Whittle Farms Inc. located at 12530 Bush Road, Volga. From Volga go west on County Road C2W to Bush Road, turn north and go 1/2 mile to the dairy on the east side of Bush Road (C24). Tom Whittle and his family have a freestall housed dairy and remodeled the manure system from mattresses and gravity flow to sand bedded and sand recovery lanes last fall. The second stop March 13 is at 1:15 p.m. at the Larry and Mark Lamborn farm located at 224 Franklin Road, Luana. From Luana take County Road X16 (Forest Mill Road) north 1-1/4 mile to Harding Drive. Go east on Harding Drive 1 mile. Turn north on Franklin Road and go 1 mile to the Lamborn farm on the west side. Lamborns have a gravity flow manure system with sawdust bedded freestalls.

Mar. 12, Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation Annual Meeting, Calmar

The agenda for the Dairy Foundation annual meeting:

11:00 a.m., Dale Thoreson, ISU Extension - Corn Silage Test Plot Results

11:40 a.m., Ben Grimstad & Larry Stevenson, Decorah Bank & Trust - How the Credit Crisis is Affecting the Dairy Industry

12:00 p.m., Meal Catered by: Lynch BBQ Company

1:00 p.m., Annual Meeting & Elections

Any questions, please email or call Kelli Boylen at boylenk@portal.nicc.edu or (563)534-9957 ext 107.

Mar. 16-24, Public Invited to Comment on Proposed Rules Restricting Winter Manure Application

New proposed rules would restrict surface application of manure on frozen or snow-covered ground. If manure can be incorporated or injected any time of year, these rules would not apply.

The proposed rules would mainly affect animal producers who are required to have a manure or nutrient management plan and producers who cause water quality violations. More information on these rules can be found at: <http://www.iowadnr.gov/afo/newrules.html>

People are encouraged to make oral comments or submit comments in writing at the following public hearings:

9:00 am, March 16: Wallace State Office Building Auditorium, 502 E. Ninth St., Des Moines

6:00 pm, March 16: Washington County Conservation Education Center, Marr Park, 2943 Highway 92, Ainsworth

6:00 pm, March 18: Dedham American Legion, 302 Main St., Dedham

1:00 pm, March 20: Room 115, Dairy Foundation's Dairy Center, 1527 Highway 150 South, Calmar

6:00 pm, March 23: City Hall, 125 Central Ave. S.E., Orange City

6:00 pm, March 24: Lime Creek Nature Center, 3501 Lime Creek Road, Mason City

People may also send written comments directly to Claire Hruby, Iowa DNR, 502 E. Ninth St., Des Moines, IA 50319, or by email to Claire.hruby@dnr.iowa.gov. All comments must be submitted by 5 p.m. on March 27

Mar. 19, Northeast ISU Research Farm Annual Meeting, Nashua

Registration opens at 9:00 with a morning educational program that will include:

- 1) "Key Issues in Ag Law and Policy: How do they affect you and I?" by Roger McEowen
- 2) "The BioEconomy: Opportunities and Challenges" by Jill Euken
- 3) "NE Research Farm Update" by Ken Pecinovsky.

A dutch treat lunch over the noon hour and an afternoon Board of Directors meeting will follow.

Pre-registration is not required. Contact Fred Hall, NEIAEA Secretary, for additional information (hallfred@iastate.edu) or 641-394-2174. Directions: Exit Hwy 218 at the 220 exit at Nashua, turn west on B-60 (280th St., also Lexington Ave.) go 1.1 miles to Windfall Ave., then south 1 mile to 290th St., then east to the research farm.

Mar. 21, Blazing a New Trail Part 4, Cresco

9:00 am to 3:00 pm at the NICC Cresco Center. This is the fourth year for this organic conference featuring growing organic fruits, the organic market, climatology, locally grown greenhouse fruits and vegetables, contracts rights and wrongs, funding sources and soil quality topics. For more information about the program, brochure, etc., go to:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/howard/news/organicconf.htm>

Mar. 25, Pasture-Walk Grazing Program, Giard

1:00 to 3:00 pm, Pasture-walk field day hosted by Greg Koether on his farm at Giard. The program will emphasize pasture finishing beef, early season grazing, and handling facilities for weighing cattle. Directions: The farm is located across the street from the Methodist church in Giard. Giard is on Hwy 18, 7 miles E of Monona or 7 miles W of Marquette.

Apr. 1, RUSEL2 & Iowa Phosphorous Index Workshop, Altoona

Service providers and livestock producers can learn how to use the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation 2 (RUSLE2) and the Iowa Phosphorus Index in nutrient and manure management plans. The workshop runs from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. This hands-on workshop will provide the participant with software orientation and an introduction to the operating parameters for RUSLE2, selection of input values for RUSLE2, developing and saving management operations for RUSLE2 and its use in the P-Index. Real field examples will be used in the workshop and how to incorporate these numbers into manure and nutrient management planning requirements. Participants are required to bring a MS Windows compatible laptop equipped with a CD-ROM drive and Microsoft Excel Software. Participants must have their administrator password in order to install software on their own laptop. Additional details of the program are provided at: <http://www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/rusle2/home.html>

Apr. 2, Advanced RUSEL2 Workshop, Altoona

For those that have attended the introductory RUSEL2 workshop (above), this workshop is designed for service providers, regulators, and individuals that want to learn some of the more intricate uses of RUSEL2 and the P-Index. Each registrant must bring a laptop computer pre-loaded with latest versions of Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation 2 (RUSLE2) and Iowa Phosphorus Index Calculator. See additional details at: <http://www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/rusle2advanced/home.html>

Apr. 6-8, National Course on Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMP), Des Moines

Completion of the CNMP Development Course is required to become certified as a Technical Service Provider by the Iowa State national TSP certification program. If you are interested in becoming a CNMP Technical Service Provider, certification information is available at: <http://www.abe.iastate.edu/wastemgmt/cnmp-curriculum.html>

The CNMP program details are available at: <http://www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/cnmp/home.html>

Apr. 9, Understanding & Working with Nutrient Management Plans under the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) Final Rule, Des Moines

This program was developed to address the updated requirements released on Dec. 22, 2008 for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit process. As with the CNMP program on Apr. 6-8, additional information about this CAFO program is at: <http://www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/cnmp/home.html>

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