

Ag & Hort Update



September 2007

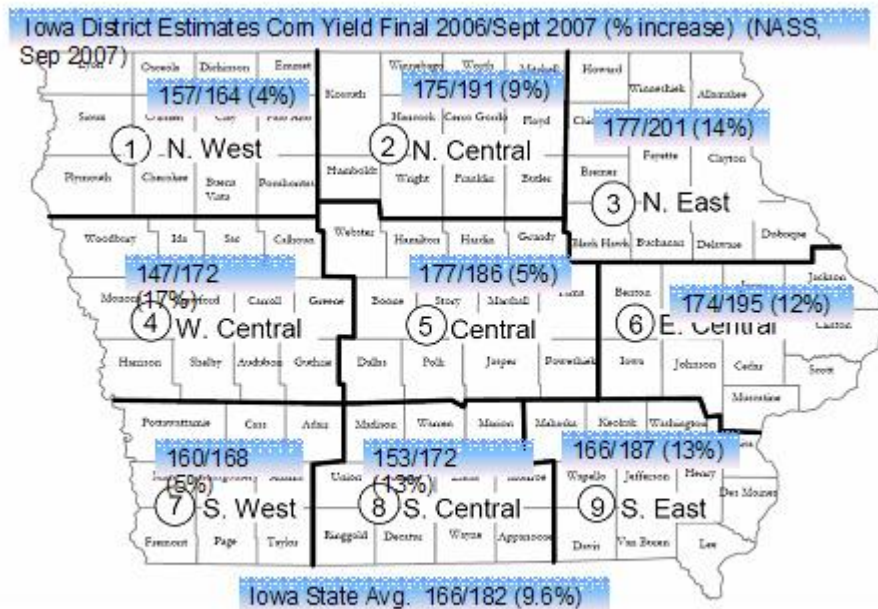
Combines are rolling in across Shelby County. Average yields are generally very good, but they do vary due to many factors so it is too early to draw any conclusions based on treatments or conditions. Good luck to everyone as the harvest season kicks into high gear.

It seems like it summer 2007 has been season of excesses. Too much rain in the spring-plant, then replant, proceed to replant the replant... then came spray season; as growers and retailers had a fight on their hands to get the corn sprayed between rains and winds. July and early August came in hot and dry, stressing pollinating corn and bringing us spider mites and soybean aphids in our soybean fields. Record amounts of rainfall in August?!

One parting thought. This seasons heavy rains left us another challenge- ditches. Drive carefully; everybody hates bent snoots and broken axles.

Surprise! 2007 Corn Yield Estimates for Iowa

By Roger Elmore, ISU Corn Specialist



September's 182 bushel per acre corn yield estimate for Iowa will be a record if it comes about. The new estimate from NASS (National Agricultural Statistics Service, 12 Sept. 2007) for Iowa surprised some Iowans; it is 182 bushels per acre. This is up slightly more than 2 bu/acre from the August report and 9.6% higher than the 2006 state average yield (166 bu/acre). More importantly, if this yield is realized, it will mark a new state record yield, 1 bushel/acre higher than the record set in 2004.

Regionally, the highest yields in the September yield estimate come from NE Iowa, 201 bu/acre, and EC Iowa, 195 bu/acre. The estimates for these two districts did not change from the August NASS report. The greatest change since the last report is in SC Iowa. The September estimate is at 172 bu/acre; this is a 2.4% increase from the August estimate. A yield of 172 bu/acre for this region would be 13% above 2006 yields for that part of Iowa.

Factors that contribute to Iowa's yield increases over time are clearly a mix of genetics, management, and weather. The dramatic swings among yields in the past several years points largely to weather as the main factor. We admit that continual progress in genetics and management occurs and adds to yield increases. In general though, yield increases associated with these factors are consistent without large variation existing year to year. Both factors simply increase at a steady rate.

We must be clear that although we are surprised the estimates are this high, we are also keenly aware that the data collection that supports the estimates is thorough and meticulous. Over 300 samples in Iowa go into the estimate. It is by far the best estimate we have. In August, ear number, and kernels per row are used to compare with previous data (prior years) to estimate yield. Since kernels are still gaining weight until black layer (physiological maturity) stress or especially good conditions can affect changes in seed weight and therefore impact yield.

As we approach maturity, the yield estimates will become even more accurate. Stay tuned for the next report on the Objective Yield Survey released October 12th.

Frost hits many parts of Iowa

By Mark Licht, ISU Extension Agronomist

Frost has hit many parts of northwest and west-central Iowa. A best guess is that most of the corn has reached black layer or is nearly there. And soybeans are for the most part at maturity, several soybean fields have been observed with wilted green leaves. Temperature drops in the low 30's will have little impact on the crops especially if maturity had been reached. If maturity has not been reached yield losses could result but would be very minimal. Roger Elmore, ISU Corn Specialist has indicated that corn at $\frac{3}{4}$ milk line up to a 3% yield loss could be experienced but up to 8% at $\frac{1}{2}$ milk line.

Characteristics of frost damaged corn include small, misshapen, soft kernels in addition to undeveloped starch structure and pithy kernels. There if frost occurred early on test weights and average proteins would be lower than normal and digestibility would be decreased. As for soybeans, with frost before maturity they can be green or elongated yellow and will shrink down smaller than normal after drying. There will be less extractable oil and poor oil quality.

More information on frost damaged crops can be found in ISU Extension publication PM-1635; <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1635.pdf>.

A quick and somewhat unreliable indicator of the fall harvest... early yields and grain moistures. Reports have come in from several individuals who have harvested corn for grain in west-central Iowa. Moisture out of the field is ranging from 17 to 20 percent with yields in the 170 to 190 bushel per acre range. Again this is early and from past experience yield reports are almost always higher at the beginning of harvest than at the end. As you go out to harvest remember to or if you find yourself behind a slow moving vehicle (either red or green) give them some time and space.

IOWA FARM SAFETY AND HEALTH WEEK



Iowa Farm Safety and Health Week is being held in conjunction with the National Farm Safety and Health Week, which is also September 16-22, 2007. The national theme is "It's easier to bury a tradition than a child." The event is coordinated by the National Safety Council and supported by other organizations and groups with interest in agricultural safety.

Agriculture has the highest annual death rates for workers in the nation surpassing all the other industries including mining, construction, and manufacturing. It is important that Iowans use safe farming practices during harvest and throughout the year. This special week during September is the customary kick off campaign to reinforce this safety message. This tradition began with President Franklin D. Roosevelt signing of the first proclamation for farm safety in 1944 because the high injury rate in agriculture impacted the war effort.

In Iowa, farm safety efforts are a unique partnership between various organizations. As president of the Iowa Farm Safety Council, Grafft represents safety volunteers in Iowa that come together under the umbrella of the council. The Iowa Farm Safety Council with their volunteers strives to increase knowledge about agricultural hazards and dangers. In addition, the Iowa Farm Safety Council spends time at state events to share this knowledge. It's volunteer programs like these that educate people to lead safer and healthier lives.

The Iowa Farm Safety Council encourages Iowans to be wiser in their safety and health decisions this year. You can prepare to prevent serious injuries and death by:

- retrofitting tractors with rollover protective structures, ROPs,
- using and maintaining the slow moving vehicle emblem SMV correctly,
- making smart decisions while operating vehicles on roadways,
- selecting the proper ATV personal protective equipment, , and
- following safety recommendations for operating ATVs.

Join the Iowa Farm Safety Council and the National Safety Council to participate in the 64th annual National Farm Safety and Health Week Sept. 16-22, 2007. Encourage others to adopt safe practices and behaviors as we prepare to prevent injuries during this harvest season.

Dr. Grow-It-All Offers Fall Gardening Tips

It's hard to believe that fall has almost arrived. Gardeners can do many things to prepare for next year's lawn and garden. Here are just a few tips from Dr. Grow It All.

Planting and Keeping Tulip Bulbs

Several cultural practices can help prolong the life of tulip bulbs. Make sure to select the largest bulbs possible. Except for the species tulips, top quality bulbs are 12 centimeters or more in circumference. The larger

the bulb, the longer the life of the bulb. In selecting bulbs, also look to make sure there are no soft spots, blemishes or fungus growing on the bulbs. Tulips perform best in full sun and well-drained soils.

Tulips should receive at least 6 to 8 hours of sun. Tulip bulbs decline rapidly in shady locations. The bulbs often rot in wet, poorly drained locations. Plant the bulbs 6 to 8 inches deep. Planting depth is measured from the top of the bulb to the soil surface. After planting tulip bulbs, make sure to water them. This enables the bulbs to develop a good root system before winter arrives. October is an excellent time to plant tulips. However, tulips can be planted as late as December if the weather permits.

Controlling Creeping Charlie

This is the best time of year to rid your lawn of this invasive ground ivy. Apply a broadleaf herbicide product containing 2,4-D or triclopyr to ground ivy infested areas. 2,4-D is an active ingredient in many broadleaf herbicide products. Triclopyr can be found in Ortho Weed-B-Gon Chickweed, Clover, and Oxalis Killer for Lawns and a few other products. Herbicide applications should be made between mid-September and Nov. 1. Two applications are most effective. The second application should be made 28 days after the first.

Storing Cannas and Dahlias

Cannas are the easier of the two to overwinter. The most critical factor in the success or failure of storing canna rhizomes is moisture. If they are packed while still moist or wet to the touch, they will rot. Therefore it is best to lift the rhizomes and place in a well-ventilated location to dry for a couple days. Then find a paper sack, box or bucket and place the clumps inside. Store the cannas in a cool (40 to 50 F), dark location and keep them there until danger of frost has passed in the spring. Check the containers periodically to ensure rot has not started.

Dahlias need a little more attention. After a killing frost has destroyed the above ground foliage, remove the above ground parts and leave the tuberous roots sit in the ground for 1 to 2 weeks. This gives the roots a chance to cure before their removal from the soil. If the cultivar name is important, write the name of each plant on a tag or label before digging the dahlias. They all look similar after being dug.

Using a spade or potato fork, carefully lift each clump out of the ground and immediately attach its identification tag to one of the tubers. Next, wash off as much of the soil as possible. Allow the tubers to dry to the touch (usually one or two days), and then cut the stems back to the crown. Place the tubers upside down and cover with vermiculite, peat moss, wood shavings or sand and store in a cool and dark location.

Control of Broadleaf Weeds in the Lawn

By Richard Jauron, Department of Horticulture

A well maintained lawn is an integral part of an attractive home landscape. Unfortunately, dandelion, plantain, and other perennial broadleaf weeds can become problems. When broadleaf weeds invade lawns, mechanical and chemical measures can be undertaken to remove or destroy the weeds.

In small areas, some weeds can be controlled by pulling and digging. This method is best accomplished after a good rain or deep watering. Unfortunately, pulling and digging is often ineffective on deep-rooted weeds.

In many situations, herbicides are the only practical method of weed control. Effective broadleaf herbicides include 2,4-D, MCPP, MCPA, dicamba, and triclopyr. The most effective broadleaf herbicide products contain a mixture of 2 or 3 of these herbicides as no single compound will control all broadleaf weeds.

Fall (mid-September through October) is the best time to control perennial broadleaf weeds in the lawn with broadleaf herbicides. In fall, perennial broadleaf weeds are transporting food (carbohydrates) from their foliage to their roots in preparation for winter. Broadleaf herbicides applied in fall will be absorbed by the

broadleaf weed's foliage and transported to the roots along with the carbohydrates, resulting in the destruction of the broadleaf weeds.

Broadleaf herbicides can be applied as liquids or granules. Before applying any herbicide, carefully read and follow label directions. When applying liquid formulations, potential spray drift problems can be avoided by following simple precautions. Don't spray when winds exceed 5 mph. Also, don't spray when temperatures are forecast to exceed 85F within 24 hours of the application. Since coarse droplets are less likely to drift than fine sprays, select nozzles that produce coarse droplets and use low sprayer pressure when applying liquid broadleaf herbicides. When spraying, keep the nozzle close to the ground. If only a few areas in the lawn have broadleaf weed problems, spot treat these areas rather than spraying the entire lawn. Apply just enough material to wet the leaf surfaces.

Granular broadleaf herbicides are often combined with fertilizers. Apply granular broadleaf herbicides and fertilizer/broadleaf herbicide combinations when the weed foliage is wet. Broadleaf herbicides are absorbed by the weed's foliage, not its roots. To be effective, the granules must stick to the weeds and the herbicide absorbed by the weed's foliage. Apply granular products in the early morning when the foliage is wet with dew or irrigate the lawn prior to the application.

To insure adequate leaf surface and herbicide absorption, don't mow the lawn 2 or 3 days before treatment. After treatment, allow 3 or 4 days to pass before mowing. This allows sufficient time for the broadleaf weeds to absorb the herbicide and translocate it to their roots. To prevent the broadleaf herbicide from being washed off the plant's foliage, apply these materials when no rain is forecast for 24 hours. Also, don't irrigate treated lawns within 24 hours of the application.

Broadleaf herbicides are important tools in controlling weeds in the lawn. However, good cultural practices are also important. Proper mowing, fertilization, and other sound management practices should produce a thick, healthy lawn. A dense stand of grass provides few opportunities for unwanted weeds. Good cultural practices, along with an occasional application of a broadleaf herbicide, should effectively control most broadleaf weeds in the lawn.

PQA Changes to PQA Plus

Pork producers with current Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) Level III certification should be aware that the PQA™ program has been revamped and expanded to include an animal well-being assessment. Because of this new structure and the renaming of the program to PQA Plus™, all existing PQA certifications will not be renewed at the end of the certification period. The Iowa Pork Industry Center (IPIC) and Iowa State University (ISU) Extension are teaming up to provide the necessary certification training.

ISU Extension swine field specialist Jerry Weiss said that certification under the new PQA Plus™ program also will be for three years, and he encourages producers to plan for the future.

"When you need to recertify, you'll go through the new program with a trained advisor, similar to that in the old 'PQA' program," he said. "Getting this new certification meets the needs of many packer buying requirements."

There are differences between the two programs. PQA Plus™, like PQA III, has a producer education component, but it adds an on-site assessment of animal well-being. PQA Plus™ merges the concepts of the former PQA and Swine Welfare AssuranceSM programs -- food safety and animal well-being -- in two steps: Individual certification through education (named PQA Plus™ Certification) and Farm site assessment (named PQA Plus™ Site Status.)

Weiss said PQA Plus™ is a workable, credible and affordable solution to assure food safety and animal care. It will help meet the needs of customers including restaurants, food retailers and consumers.