



Ag & Hort Update



September 2008

August has been very busy and unseasonably cooler than average. Now that all the fairs have come and gone and the garden vegetables have been canned or frozen, we can now focus our attentions to fall crops and even, in some cases, to next year's crop. The time has come to say good-bye to summer, and those that were affected by the substantial rainfall and floods will have no problem in saying good-bye summer 2008.

In closing, fall is one of my favorite times of the year. I enjoy the fall harvest; it's the time when producers harvest their fields. All their decisions that they have made over the past year come to this one time, harvest. I enjoy the cool autumn mornings and the warm afternoon temperatures. It's when I lose several long sleeved shirts and sweatshirts. You leave the house in the morning with a long sleeved shirt and by 1:00, you shed your sweatshirt and that evening you're trying to remember where you put it. Think about your favorite time of year and what it means to you; it might bring back some childhood memory or maybe it will just brighten your day and put a smile on your face. Have a safe and bountiful harvest.

Kent Ganzer

Upcoming Dates

September 1 = Labor Day—Office closed

September 5 – 6 = Aronia Berry Festival

September 6 – 7 = Carstens Farm Days

September 11 = 4-H Leader Training

September 23 – 28 = Ak-Sar-Ben Livestock Show

Aronia Berry Festival, September 5 & 6

An Aronia Berry festival will be held on September 5 and 6 from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. each day at Sawmill Hollow Organic Farm, 2159 Kennedy Avenue, North of Missouri Valley, in Harrison County.

The festival is co-sponsored by Iowa State University Extension. Educational presentations about growing aronia and using the aronia berries will be given each day by Dr. Eldon Everhart, Vaughn Pittz, and Joan Benjamin. Dr. Eldon Everhart is a horticulture specialist with Iowa State University Extension. He will present information about sustainable organic commercial production, wildlife uses, and home garden

culture of aronia. Aronia berries contain very high levels of antioxidants that reduce the potential for cancer and heart disease. These plants are native to the Midwest and are adapted to commercial berry production, ornamental landscape uses, wildlife plantings, and windbreak plantings.

Vaughn Pittz, owner of Sawmill Hollow Organic Farm, will conduct tours of aronia plantings and share information about commercial aronia berry production. Aronia plants are easy to grow and highly productive. Sawmill Hollow Organic Farm is the first and largest commercial Aronia berry plantation in the United States.

Joan Benjamin is the Associate Coordinator of Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) organization. She will present information about SARE projects that help small farmers become more profitable and promote environmentally friendly agriculture.

During the festival, you will have the opportunity to taste free samples and purchase jams, jellies, juice, and other products made from aronia berries. They will also be taking orders for the purchase of aronia plants. Other activities include aronia grower's forum, as well as demonstrations and entertainment by local artists. There will be high tunnel presentations and demonstrations of a spinning wheel, wheat grass juicing, soap making, tanning hides, building teepees, painting designer bird houses. Locally grown vegetables, specialty preserves, jellies and natural meats will be for sale at the festival.

Live entertainment will be provided by Josh Evans, the Mid-American Fiddle Champion, on Friday afternoon. On Saturday there will be a jam session featuring Fork in the Road with acoustical artist Dan Allen and vocalists Andy Makey and Kerri Rush.

Children are welcome; they can participate in face painting and other activities that are specifically for them. Connie Betts, Naturalist with the Harrison County Conservation Board will give presentations about the Loess Hills as well as Native Americans and bison artifacts.

There is no entry fee to attend this festival. For more information contact the Harrison County Extension Office at 712-644-2105 or visit Sawmill Hollow website at www.sawmillhollow.com

From Logan, take Highway 127 west to Magnolia, turn left onto L-23 (Laredo Avenue), turn right onto Kennedy Avenue, go one-half mile, turn right at mail-box.

Iowa Beef Center Director says to prepare for country-of-origin labeling (COOL)

Ames, Iowa – If cattle producers are prepared, the mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL) requirements going into effect this month won't be a problem, Iowa Beef Center Director John Lawrence says.

Mandatory COOL, a provision of the 2002 Farm Bill, will go into effect September 30. This provision, although met with mixed feelings by livestock producers, is nothing to be feared. Instead of panicking, producers should pay attention and know what is to be expected of them. While buyers may ask producers to sign an affidavit stating the origin of the animals they are selling, the normal business records that producers keep are all that is needed to prove compliance if they are audited. These records include the inventory records, sales receipts, health papers, etc., that most farmers already have. Despite the worry, the main change that COOL will demand is an increase in communication. Cattle producers need to communicate with their buyers in advance to know exactly what kind of requirements the buyer will have. Along with communication with buyers to be clear on what they need, livestock producers should work on understanding the COOL requirements, producers can learn more from information provided by the USDA, and area producers can receive information from an Iowa resource, the Iowa Beef Center.

The Iowa Beef Center at Iowa State University was established in 1996 with the goal of supporting the growth and vitality of the state's beef industry. It serves as the university's extension program to cattle producers and is comprised of faculty and staff from ISU Extension and the college of agriculture and life sciences and veterinary medicine. Together, the Iowa Beef Center's members work to develop and deliver the latest in research-based information regarding the beef cattle industry. For more information regarding the Iowa Beef Center please visit www.iowabeefcenter.org For more information regarding COOL requirements and other recommendations visit www.iowabeefcenter.org/content/COOL.htm John Lawrence, Iowa Beef Center can be contacted at (515) 294-6290 or by email at jdlaw@iastate.edu

National Chicken Month

That's right, September is National Chicken month. There's the theory that chicken is boring. Chicken may not be the most popular, but I would have to say that it is far from boring. There are several ways to prepare chicken and it is probably the most versatile of all the meats.

If it wasn't for pizza or steak, chicken would most likely be at the top of my list; there are several excellent recipes available for chicken, and you can visit the www.NationalChickenMonth.com website to learn more. To help complement National Chicken Month I have included a recipe for you. I hope that you enjoy this recipe.

Triple Citrus Chicken Breasts

Ingredients:

- 6 – Skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- 1 – Teaspoon grated lemon zest
- 1 – Teaspoon grated orange zest
- 1 – Clove garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 – Tablespoon chives, chopped
- 1 – Teaspoon salt
- ¼ - Teaspoon black pepper
- 3 – Tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 – Tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 – Tablespoon honey
- 1 – Teaspoon balsamic vinegar
- 2 – Tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 – Tablespoons heavy cream

Nutritional Information: Per Serving

- 334 Calories
- 55 grams Protein
- 5 grams Carbohydrate
- 9 grams fat
- 2.5 grams saturated fat

Preparation Directions:

- 1.** Between two layers of plastic wrap, pound chicken breasts with meat mallet to an even thickness of about ½ inch. Place chicken in large, self sealing plastic bag.
 - 2.** In bowl, whisk lemon zest, orange zest, garlic, chives, salt, pepper, lime and lemon juice, honey and balsamic vinegar. Pour in a bag, over chicken. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours, turning occasionally.
 - 3.** Remove chicken. Shake excess marinade into a bag and reserve.
 - 4.** In large, nonstick skillet over high heat, warm oil. Sauté chicken until brown, lower heat and finish cooking chicken until done. Transfer to serving platter, keep warm.
 - 5.** Pour reserved marinade into skillet and bring to a boil for 2 minutes. Stir in heavy cream; cook for another minute or so. Pour hot sauce mixture over chicken breasts. Garnish with slices of lime, lemon or orange
- Makes 6 Servings*

Orange Lawns

Have you noticed that your shoes have an orange tint after mowing? Weather conditions have been very favorable for rust development, a fungal disease that causes stressed lawns to appear yellow or orange when viewed from a distance. The rust produces powdery orange spores that are easily transferred from leaf blades to your shoes, pant legs, or mowers.

Rust usually shows up now, mid to late summer, especially when grass growth has been slowed due to stresses such as lack of rainfall, low fertility, mowing too closely or compaction. The disease also thrives when temperatures are moderate (65-85 degrees) and leaf blades tend to stay wet for extended periods. Long periods of dew or nighttime watering can create moisture conditions that are ideal for infection.

We can't change the weather; however we can change some of our cultural practices that may predispose rust. Keeping your yard in good health will also help discourage visitation by numerous unfriendly fungi that cause problems to turf. The following are couple things that may inhibit or slow the spread of rust in your lawn.

Mowing. Avoid close mowing or scalping of your yard. During summer, lawns should be mowed regularly and at a height of 3 to 4 inches. The rust needs a living plant to survive. Regular mowing severs the leaf tips from the plant, helping to reduce the amount of fungus.

Watering. Avoid night watering. This increases the length of time that the leaf blades are wet. Watering in the morning or afternoon ensures that the leaf blades are dry by evening.

Soil Fertility. Apply fertilizer according to your soil test recommendations. When too much or too little of fertilizer is applied, diseases tend to increase. Spring and fall applications of slow-release nitrogen are recommended.

Thatch. Thatch is the layer of dead grass material on the soil surface of your lawn. This layer should be no thicker than ½ inch. When thatch becomes too thick the roots of grass tend to grow in the thatch layer rather than in the soil. The root system will then become stressed and causes the root mass to dry out. Excessive thatch can be removed mechanically using a soil core aerator machine to remove soil cores which provides better movement of water, air and nutrients into the soil.

Grass Cultivars. Many grass cultivars are resistant to certain diseases. It is a good idea to include one or more disease-resistant cultivars in a lawn blend when seeding.

Fungicides. Fungicides control many common diseases such as rust. These products cannot replace good cultural practices that reduce lawn stress. Effectiveness varies and is crucial on timing of applications, most products need to be applied before the disease shows up, which is difficult to determine. Fungicides are not recommended.

Cooler Than Average August? Fill 'er Up!

In a season that started with Mother Nature fouling up the spring planting season, Western Iowa has done fairly well in getting the corn and soybeans to reproductive stages. The growing degree-days in Shelby County are around 2089 about 112 days behind the normal. The focus is on grain fill. The cooler than normal weather of the last two weeks have been potentially beneficial, as cool nights tend to stretch out the grain-fill period. The longer that plant stays functioning, the more dry matter that can be stored in the grain. That is, as long as we don't catch one of those early frosts. Normal killing frost dates here are around that first week of October. Two weather factors that will enhance yields in the next six weeks are sunshine and rain. *Information gathered by Rich Pope, Department of Plant Pathology*

Wet Corn at Harvest, a Distinct Possibility

The corn crop will be nearing maturity in the next several weeks and many of you are starting to work on equipment, gearing up for the fall harvest. Producers always look forward to harvest but many have already looked beyond harvest and are now making crop input decisions for next year and next year's crop (which is a good idea). But before we go any further I would suggest that farmers take a look at this year's crop and the potential size that it could be and the potential need for grain drying. If everything stays on track like it has been and the corn continues to run 1 ½ to 2 weeks behind developmentally, I would guess that we are going to encounter some good yields that may encounter a big dryer. The last time many farmers had to deal with a great crop and wet corn was sometime back in the early 1990's. With this said, our harvest pace has increased tremendously since then and that the past several years had allowed the corn crop to dry down in the field. It has been several years since grain dryers have been used at peak capacity; this is something that we may very well be faced with this fall.

Proper grain drying is very important and can be beneficial if you take care in it and do it correctly. The more grain that you dry at one time the longer that it takes to dry it. So it's not faster to fill the bin because it will take longer to dry the grain and can result in spoilage at the top. Grain that is not dried and cooled within a couple days of harvest can result in higher instances of spoilage losses. Desired grain moisture for safe storage depends on the length of time that you plan on storing it. Soybeans stored less than 6 months should be dried to 13% and soybeans over 6 month storage should be dried to 11%. Corn stored less than 6 months should be dried to 15% while corn stored over 6 months should be dried to 13%.

Can I grow a peach tree from this year's pit?

I have had several people inquire about this and I told them to save the pit, let it dry and split and then freeze, but with further investigation I have encountered a new theory. If you plant a pit, chances are you will not receive the same nice peach tree that the pit came from. Most stone fruit are grown in grafted trees. A strong growing, but low quality fruit producer is used for the roots and the lowest part of the trunk and cutting from a high grade fruit tree is grafted onto the root stock so you get a faster growing tree that will put on high quality fruit. Unfortunately your pit gets its growing ability from the root stock. So planting the pit means that you will get a faster growing tree with poor fruit quality.

How do I control creeping charlie in my flower bed?

Hand pulling, digging and hoeing are your best options to control creeping charlie in garden areas. Yes, there are herbicides that control creeping charlie (aka ground ivy) in turf grass areas, but it is not an option in flower and vegetable gardens. Persistence is the most important key in control; you must repeatedly pull, dig, or hoe the ground ivy until it has been eliminated. Once you have it under control, maintain a clean, weed free border to prevent the ground ivy from "creeping" back into your flower and vegetable gardens from adjacent areas.

How do I control nimblewill in my lawn?

Nimblewill is a warm-season perennial grass. It is thin, wiry grass that is pale to grey-green. It spreads by above-ground shoots or stolons, often forming circular spots in the lawn. It is relatively easy to spot; it greens up late in the spring and turns brown early in the fall. At the present time there is no effective control for nimblewill in cool-season lawns, except for glyphosate (roundup) which will destroy all grasses. However, a new selective herbicide will likely be available in 2009. The herbicide Tenacity (mesotrione) will destroy nimblewill, but will not harm Kentucky bluegrass or other cool-season grasses.