

Extension Crop Update

This newsletter, and previous issues from recent years, can be found on-line at:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/plymouth/info/cropupdate.htm>

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Corn Stalk Rot – I have been in a few fields that are beginning to show some stalk rot symptoms. This might be a good time to check and use this information to prioritize which cornfields might need to be harvested first! The most common method to scout for stalk rots is to use the Push or Pinch Test. Walk through a field and randomly select a minimum of 100 plants representing a large portion of the field. To test for stalk rot, push the plant tops approximately 30° from vertical. If plants fail to snap back to vertical, the stalk has been compromised by stalk rot. Also, pinch or squeeze the plants at one of the lowest internodes above the brace roots (pinching the same internode on each plant). If the stalks crush easily by hand, their integrity has been reduced by stalk rot. If more than 10% of plants exhibit stalk rot symptoms, harvest that field first to reduce the potential for plant lodging and yield loss. Under severe stalk rot conditions, it may be more economical to harvest early at higher moisture and dry grain than to experience severe harvest losses. Nebraska's "Crop Watch" newsletter had a good article about stalk rot that came out over the weekend. Go take a look: <http://liferaydemo.unl.edu/web/cropwatch/archive?articleId=1499298>.

Check Harvest Losses! In average-to-good crop conditions when the crop is standing well, field losses attributable to the combine should be one bushel per acre or less. Two corn kernels or four soybeans on the ground per square foot equals one bushel per acre loss. Larger areas should be checked for dropped ears as a single dropped ear represents several hundred kernels. One three-fourth pound whole ear per one-hundredth acre (436 sq ft) equals a one bushel per acre loss. Check out Mark Hanna's ICM article for more discussion on this topic: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/CropNews/2009/0903hanna.htm>.

Fall stalk nitrate test (FSNT). When we send our kids to school, we expect a report card on how they performed. When we invest in nitrogen for our crop, shouldn't we want a report card on how it worked? We can get that – with the fall stalk N test. Since a lot of corn has reached black layer, it's now time to take FSNT tests. This test simply tells you if there was adequate nitrogen during the season. A total of 15-20 stalks should be collected for each sample. The 8-inch stalk sample is taken from the lower portion of the stalk. The first cut is made 14 inches above the ground; the second cut is made 6 inches above the ground. Place the samples in a paper bag, not plastic, and keep the sample dry and cool. Get the sample to a lab as soon as practical. The ISU publication that explains the FSNT is "Cornstalk Testing to Evaluate Nitrogen Management":

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1584.pdf>.

Extension Crop Update, continued

Top 10 List - Preparing for Fall Manure Application: Angie Rieck-Hinz, manager of the IMMAG web site (<http://www.agronext.iastate.edu/immag/>) recently wrote a top 10 list for consideration. Included are items such as reviewing your manure management plan, know and follow separation distances, have an emergency action plan, calibrate your applicator, consider your neighbors, and be safe. For the entire list, and details for each of the top 10, go to this site:

<http://www.agronext.iastate.edu/immag/info/fallmanureapplication.pdf>.

Think SAFETY! Remember, the percentage of fatal motor vehicle collisions involving farm equipment is almost five times higher than other vehicle collisions. The most likely types of collisions are left-turn and rear-end collisions. The left-turn collision happens when the farm vehicle is about to make a wide left turn and the vehicle behind begins to pass. The second most common incident is the rear-end collision, where another vehicle approaches farm equipment and is unable to slow down to avoid a collision.

Reduce the risk! Get behind each of your tractors, combines and wagons to insure that they can be identified as slower-moving by faster traffic. If traveling at night, make certain all equipment is easily visible!

"Thanks for Subscribing!"