

## 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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### Harvest Approaches, Think SAFETY!

We are rapidly approaching harvest. My fear – we will get impatient during harvest, and accidents will occur. Take your time, don't take safety shortcuts! Getting harvest from the field to market can be dangerous work, but doing it in traffic on Iowa's highways and county roads extends the hazards to other drivers and their passengers. Motor vehicle collision fatalities are well documented with over 42,000 people dying in motor vehicle crashes in 2006. The largest percent (53.7 percent) of fatal crashes nationally are those that happen in rural areas. While farm tractors and other farm equipment comprise a small percent of total motor vehicles nationally, the percentage of fatal motor vehicle collisions involving farm equipment is almost five times higher than other vehicle collisions. In crashes involving farm vehicles, the farm vehicle operator was killed nearly twice as often as an occupant of the other motor vehicle. 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.

Before you start hauling loads or driving equipment down the road, get behind each of your tractors, combines and wagons to insure that they are visible. I have frequently come upon equipment that isn't properly marked, the lights don't work right, or they just are not lit. Check them, and then check them again!

**Check for Stalk Rot – Prioritize Corn Harvest** - We had a wet spring, and really stressed some of these plants to fill. This can sometimes lead to stalk rot problems. Check for stalk rot by pinching the lowest above-ground internode. At least 100 plants scattered throughout the field should be checked. If more than 15 percent of the stalks are rotted (stalks easily crushed), harvest should be scheduled as early as possible to reduce significant losses. There can be some economic trade-off with increased drying costs for early harvested grain, but field scouting is the best guide for potential losses.

**Grain Harvest Losses** can be quite noticeable, especially if we have a repeat of last fall. Did you notice corn or soybean growth after harvest last fall? I did. If you did you may consider looking at your combine fan and sieve settings to reduce grain passing through the combine. REMEMBER, for corn, 2 kernels per square foot on average would be about 1 bushel per acre loss. For soybeans, 4 beans per square foot on average would be about 1 bushel per acre. Also, note how many pods we didn't get on the lower stem. What are we leaving in the field? Can we adjust to correct the problem? Start

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slowly and evaluate what kind of a job you are doing!

**What about Wheat?** Dr. Lance Gibson, ISU Department of Agronomy, has posted some very good basic winter wheat management items to review if you are considering this crop. See his article here: <http://www.agron.iastate.edu/faculty/lgibson/WheatProd.pdf> .

The following are some links to winter wheat variety trials. This is 2008 data –except the MN data – which is 2007 data.

<http://varietytest.unl.edu/winterwheat/2008.html>

<http://www.croptesting.iastate.edu/smallgrains/data/data.html>

<http://agbiopubs.sdstate.edu/articles/ExEx8136-08.pdf>

<http://www.maes.umn.edu/08VarietalTrials/redwinterwheat.pdf>

**Almost time to do Cornstalk N Testing** If our corn has reached “black layer” or physiological maturity, and as long as cornstalks have not badly deteriorated, we can still pull stalk samples to evaluate N availability from this year. This is a pretty good report card on our N management for the year – but note that soils which were overly wet could give us a confusing answer! N management changes might be in the works for some people – use this test to see if you would have had room for change this past year. Also, although one year of information helps, multiple years of stalk N tests give you a much better picture. Go to this site for Stalk N testing details: <http://www.exnet.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1584.pdf>.