



Eastern Iowa Agriculture & Natural Resources News

December 2010

Extension agriculture specialists, representing Iowa State University and serving the eastern third of the state, build partnerships and provide research-based learning opportunities to improve the quality of life in Iowa.



ISU Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Specialists serving Eastern Iowa

- [Kapil Arora](#) - Agricultural Engineer
- [Jennifer Bentley](#) - Dairy Program Specialist
- [Greg Brenneman](#) - Agricultural Engineer
- [Mark Carlton](#) - Agronomist
- [Jim Fawcett](#) - Agronomist
- [Jim Jensen](#) - Farm Management
- [Brian Lang](#) - Agronomist
- [Byron Leu](#) - Beef Program Specialist
- [Tom Miller](#) - Swine Program Specialist
- [Patrick O'Malley](#) - Commercial Horticulture
- [Virgil Schmitt](#) - Agronomist
- [Denise Schwab](#) - Beef Program Specialist
- [Terry Steinhart](#) - Swine Program Specialist
- [Mark Storlie](#) - Swine Program Specialist
- [Scott Timm](#) - Sustainability Specialist
- [Larry Tranel](#) - Dairy Program Specialist
- [Bob Wells](#) - Farm Management

ISU Extension Responds to Flood Crisis

When it's your home, farm or business that is under water, it doesn't matter if the weather forecasters call it a 100-year flood or just this year's flood. Many eastern Iowa counties have had more than their share of flooding to deal with over the past two years, and ISU Extension continues to assist those that have been affected. Delaware County responded to the disaster by sharing flood related information and vital updates with the public and local media before the disaster occurred. Links to [ISU Extension's disaster recovery](#) pages were among the first posted, most visited and remained available on the county's primary point of contact disaster website throughout the summer. Within days, staff in Delaware, Jones, and Buchanan counties, with assistance from council members, collected, printed and distributed roughly 400 flood recovery packets.

For one Jones County manufacturer that had been flooded twice in the past 11 months, CIRAS specialists were able to navigate the FEMA application process so the manufacturer could focus energies on repairs and getting back to full production. ISU Extension also provided flood recovery materials and moisture meters for home owner and business use. Extension's livestock and crop production specialists consulted with flood impacted producers to help them make the best decisions for their forage and crop situations. In communities most impacted, Extension remains deeply entrenched in the recovery and rebuilding process.

Iowa Drainage School Provides Hands-on Training

Agricultural drainage has become increasingly important in Iowa with the past several years being very wet. To help contractors and farmers with drainage design and installation, a three-day Iowa Drainage School has been conducted for the past four years in central and eastern Iowa. Participants learned the design and layout of drainage systems, calculated line sizes and spacing using actual field data, made connections and set up drainage control structures.

The Iowa Drainage School has reached over 110 individuals with detailed, hands-on training. Evaluations from this past year's drainage school indicated that the 40 participants are impacting more than 45,000 acres a year. All of the participants rated the school as good or excellent and anticipated increased revenues in excess of \$400,000 as a result of implementing changes learned through the program. Attendees said they would apply the knowledge gained in a number of ways. One said he would use the instruction "as a starting point to getting into the tile business." The training would help another participant have "better oversight of contractors and better design of my own tile installations", and another felt more confident about "trouble shooting current drainage problems along with laying out future tile projects."



Comparison of stalk samples with 50 lbs N on the left and 0 lbs N on the right.



The annual Crop Advantage Series provides practical, current and local information for anyone involved in crop production and protection in Iowa.

2011 schedule

Location	Date
Sheldon	January 4
Osceola	January 5
Ottumwa	January 6
Burlington	January 7
Ames	January 11
Mason City	January 12
Spirit Lake	January 13
Storm Lake	January 18
Cedar Rapids	January 19
Fort Dodge	January 20
LeMars	January 24
Carroll	January 25
Waterloo	January 26
Atlantic	January 27

For a complete listing of upcoming programs, visit www.extension.iastate.edu/calendar.



www.extension.iastate.edu

Farmers Use Nitrogen Education to Increase Profits

By the arrival of the 2010 Spring Field Day at the Southeast Iowa ISU Research Farm, crop producers in southeast Iowa had endured their third straight wet cropping season. Total rainfall in much of SE Iowa in June 2010 was three times the average amount. ISU Extension field agronomists, Jim Fawcett, Virgil Schmitt and Mark Carlton, recommended that producers add some additional nitrogen (N) due to the wet conditions. They also encouraged producers to follow up with stalk nitrate tests and leave untreated strips in the field to compare yields of treated areas and untreated areas.

Tom Miller, farmer and part-time ISU Extension program specialist, heeded the advice and research-based recommendations of the field agronomists. He applied an extra 50 pounds per acre of N to his own corn and also helped neighbors and the research farm apply extra N on their fields. Results of his on-farm strip trials showed increased yields of from about 10 to 45 bushels per acre when an additional 50 pounds of N was applied just prior to corn tassel. Miller estimates that on his farm alone, the extra N resulted in \$60-\$100 of increased income per acre for the year.

Iowa Pork Industry Center Creates Quantitative Tool

At the request of the National Pork Board education committee, ISU Extension swine specialists and Iowa Pork Center contributors Terry Steinhart, Tom Miller, Colin Johnson, and Mark Storlie programmed an Excel spreadsheet to determine the “real” economic impact of swine facilities, both local and regional. A great amount of economic activity is generated from new farm construction and daily operation. As a means to quantify these impacts, the spreadsheet tool provides categorical revenue and expense components that highlight significant economic impacts in the respective communities. The spreadsheet, user guide and presentation are loaded on a CD and available through ISU Extension swine program specialists or the National Pork Board.

Bill Kessler, a pork producer from Mexico, MO, used the spreadsheet and presentation to show the Northwest Missouri County Commissioner Association the economic activity that would be lost if a region lost a single hog farm. After Kessler’s presentation, the Northwest Missouri County Commissioner Association sent a letter of support for swine production to the Missouri Pork Producer Association.

Master Gardeners Bring Life to Local Communities

Green thumbs are getting greener – thanks to the ISU Extension Master Gardener program. More than 400 Master Gardener interns were accepted into the fall training session. The impact and success that the program has achieved is as diverse as the counties it represents; Master Gardeners bring life to local communities. Here are a few highlights:

- Des Moines, Keokuk, and Iowa Counties and others offered discounted shade trees to home owners through Operation ReLeaf, a partnership with Alliant Energy and the Iowa DNR- promoting long term community reforestation and energy conservation.
- The Linn County Master Gardeners recently held a ribbon cutting ceremony and dedication of a greenhouse at Lowe Park in Marion. The greenhouse will provide new educational opportunities for Master Gardeners and hands-on classes for youth and adults.
- The property surrounding the ISU Extension -Scott County office has transformed into an outdoor classroom with two water infiltration demos, a rain garden, an herbaceous plant garden with annuals and perennials, and a vegetable/herb garden.
- In Delaware County, Master Gardeners have shared their love of gardening with young and old alike - launching a 4-H Garden Club and leading “Growing in the Garden” programs twice a month at the local nursing home and assisted living center.
- Muscatine County Master Gardeners take great pride in the Weed Park Zoo Garden, at the site of a zoo that was closed in 1980 which became neglected and overgrown with weeds. The result: a garden with six smaller theme gardens inside, with plantings based on their animal names.
- In Bremer County, Jones County and beyond, youth are learning how to grow sustainable gardens, plant trees and build a sense of pride in their communities. To learn more, visit

www.mastergardener.iastate.edu

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... and justice for all

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