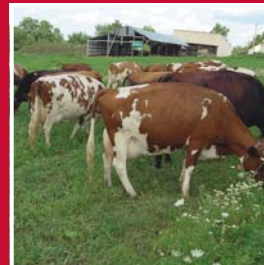


FIELD & FEEDLOT



NORTHWEST AREA EXTENSION

NOVEMBER 2008 ISSUE

Extension Web Sites

Ag Decision Maker

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/>

Beef Center

<http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/>

Manure Management

<http://www.agronext.iastate.edu/immag/>

Pork Center

<http://www.ipic.iastate.edu/>

ISU Extension Dairy Team

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/DairyTeam/>

Register NOW for Ag Chemical Dealer Update and ICM Conference

By Mark Licht, ISU Extension Field Agronomist

The Ag Chemical Dealer Update series delivers the latest crop production recommendations, news and information directly from Iowa State University Extension. Meetings will review the positives and negatives of the past growing season and prepare seed, chemical, and fertilizer dealers, crop consultants, farm managers and agronomists for the challenges of the upcoming crop production year. CCA credits and 2008 Commercial Ag Pesticide Continuing Education are available at these meetings. The closest location is Storm Lake on December 16. In addition to an insect, weed, and disease update, John Sawyer, Iowa State University soil fertility specialist, will discuss fertility management consideration and Matt Helmers, Iowa State University ag drainage specialist, will review water quality and ag drainage well research from Gilmore City. There will be 3.0 pest management, 1.0 soil fertility and 1.0 soil and water CCA credits available. For more details and registration, visit: <http://www.aep.iastate.edu/acu/homepage.html>.

The Integrated Crop Management conference has something to offer everyone involved in crop production and protection. Choose from over 40 different workshops featuring the latest crop production information from experts around the Midwest. Visit a large number of exhibitors representing all aspects of crop production and protection. Receive Commercial Ag Pesticide applicator recertification. Receive up to 13 CCA continuing education credits. Attendees can choose from up to 6 topics each hour, making it easy to customize the conference to peak your interest and meet

your needs. For more details on topics and to register, visit: <http://www.aep.iastate.edu/icm/homepage.html>.

New Outlook Seminars Offered

By Ron Hook, ISUE Farm Management Specialist

Iowa State University Extension is offering Agricultural Outlook and Management seminars throughout November 2008 to address outlook and management issues.

These seminars are designed to provide agribusiness leaders with a concise evaluation of current market conditions, expected trends in crop and livestock income potential, and management implications. Participants also will receive an overview of the agricultural industry and learn how changes may affect Iowa producers.

Meeting registration begins at 8:30 a.m. for each location with the program beginning at 9:00 a.m. and concluding at approximately 3:00 p.m.

The registration fee is \$35.00 and includes lunch, refreshments, and materials. Pre-registration is required one week prior to the seminar.

Northwest Iowa Locations

November 12	Fort Dodge Best Western Starlight Village
November 19	Cherokee Western Iowa Tech Community College
November 21	Atlantic Cass County Community Building

Program Highlights include:

- **Agricultural Industry Overview**
 - Bruce Babcock, Fort Dodge
 - Dermot Hayes, Cherokee
- **Corn & Soybean Market Outlook Information & Management Considerations**
 - Chad Hart, extension grain marketing specialist
- **Swine & Beef Outlook Information & Management Considerations**
 - John Lawrence, extension livestock marketing specialist

- **Managing Crop Margins for 2009**
 - Area farm management field specialist
- **Legal Issues**
 - Steve Moline, Atlantic, Fort Dodge, & Cherokee

The seminars are open to anyone who wishes to attend. More information on meeting locations and registration is available at: www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/info/meetings.html. For questions on registration, call (319) 433-1286.

Making Fertilizer Decisions as Prices Escalate

(Adapted from John Sawyer and Antonio Mallarino, Department of Agronomy, by Joel DeJong)

Fertilizer prices have rapidly increased. Total crop production costs are causing credit supply issues, which complicates decisions to allocate available funds for production expenses. These issues are causing producers to consider changing production practices, including cutting back on inputs like fertilizer. What can be done?

There is a lot of uncertainty, with no clear or definitively correct answer for all situations. There is no simple answer, and sometimes no change to production practices is the correct approach. Producers should work closely with their crop adviser and dealer to figure out the best options and production plans for this fall and next spring. This is always important, but more so right now as the fertilizer purchase/supply dynamics are changing dramatically and quickly.

Soil test to know what P, K, and lime applications are really needed. This might be a good time to avoid applications to fields or field areas that do not need the nutrients or lime. Compared to the cost of nutrient and lime inputs, soil testing is inexpensive and provides a good return on investment.

Evaluate soil test results to determine P, K, and lime requirements. See ISU Extension publication PM 1688, [A General Guide for Crop Nutrient and Limestone Recommendations in Iowa](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1688.pdf) found on the web here: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1688.pdf>, or it can be purchased at your local Extension office. As stated in that publication, the percentage of P and K applications expected on average to produce a yield response within each soil test category is 80 percent for Very Low, 65 percent for Low, 25 percent for Optimum, 5 percent for High, and less than 1 percent for Very High. This means that as soil test levels increase, the probability of a yield increase to fertilization and the amount of expected yield increase decreases. Net return also decreases and usually becomes negative at High and Very High test levels. Therefore, P and K should be applied where the chance of yield increase is large, and the expected yield increase is sufficient to at least pay for the applied nutrient. Remember, manure can supply P and K (as well as N and other nutrients)

but its market value has also increased with high fertilizer prices and is not available to many for various reasons.

Due to crop removal, withholding fertilizer or manure applications will result in a gradual soil-test decline. Therefore, if soil tests are in the High and Very High categories, some of the P and K “banked” in the soil can be used for next year’s crop production and no application is needed. Apply P and K to soils testing Low and Very Low, with optional application when tests are Optimum. However, application to maintain soil-test values in the Optimum category is considered a good practice to sustain profitable crop production over time. But, applications can be withheld until the next year especially when product supply is really short, funds are needed for other more critical inputs, or land tenure is uncertain, with relatively low risk. This is because the expectation for economical response to P and K in the year of application is small in the Optimum category and it becomes more uncertain as the price ratio between fertilizer and crop value becomes unfavorable. Crop yields in many fields are high again this year, so crop removal will be influencing soil test levels. Therefore, withholding applications may work in some fields or field areas, with the number of skipped years depending on the beginning soil test level, but will not work in other fields or field areas. Soil testing is the only way to know.

An option instead of not applying any P or K when the soil test is in the Optimum category would be to apply partial crop removal. This would slow the soil test decline and should provide adequate fertilization for the small and occasional first-year yield response.

For the corn-soybean rotation, many producers apply P and K needs for both crops once, before corn. This is as effective as applying those nutrients ahead of each crop as long as the fertilizer need for both crops is correct. However, if fertilizer price/availability will be better next fall, money could be saved now by applying the nutrient need of one crop and fertilizing again next year. Also, the cost of application, in relation to total fertilizer cost, is less now than in previous years so making single-year applications should be more viable.

Producers have lots of different scenarios they need to consider when they make these decisions – land tenure, money available for purchasing, attitude towards managing risk at different soil test levels. Knowing what nutrients are available in your fields (soil test), and understanding the odds of a yield response in different soil test categories can help producers make better decisions.

To see this complete article and another article on managing nitrogen in a higher cost world, go to the ICM News web page located here: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/CropNews/>.

Lamb Feedlot Meeting November 20th

By Beth Doran, ISU Extension Beef Field Specialist

Are there less expensive rations? How can feed efficiency be maximized? Will the volatility in prices subside? And if the answer is “not likely,” then how can lamb producers cope with this risk? This is the focus of a Lamb Feedlot Meeting on Nov. 20, 7:00 p.m., at the Community Center in Ireton, IA.

Dr. Dan Morrical, ISU Extension Sheep Specialist, will discuss “Ration Options and Managing Change,” emphasizing how to control feed costs. Dennis DeWitt, ISU Extension Livestock Field Specialist, will visit about “Lamb Livestock Risk Protection Insurance: What Have We Learned.” He will discuss how the basis tracked the first year of the insurance program and recommendations for 2009.

The meeting is sponsored by ISU Extension, Northwest Iowa Sheep Producers Association, Iowa Sheep Industry Association and Iowa Sheep and Wool Promotion Board. For a flyer, contact doranb@iastate.edu or 712-737-4230. Participants are encouraged to pre-register (\$10/person) by Nov. 17.

Controlling Horse Feed Costs

By Beth Doran, ISU Extension Beef Field Specialist

Two horse feeds – grains and hay – are both going to be higher priced this winter than a year ago. And, feed costs represent the largest yearly cost in owning a horse. So controlling feed costs will be extremely important for horse owners. To address this, a meeting discussing “Controlling Horse Feed Costs” will be held on Nov. 24, 7-9 p.m., at the Extension Office in Ida Grove.

Dr. Peggy Miller, ISU Extension Horse Specialist, and Dr. Beth Doran, ISU Extension Beef Field Specialist, will present their top 10 ways to control feed costs, selecting feeds, pricing feeds, formulating rations, and improving feed efficiency. Horse owners will have hands-on experience in body condition scoring, evaluating feed quality and assessing how they can reduce feed costs.

The meeting is targeted for adults and junior-senior high school youth. Younger youth will learn best if accompanied by an adult. For a flyer or to register, contact the Ida County Extension Office at 712-364-3003. Participants should pre-register (\$10/person) by November 20.

V.I.P.

By Dennis DeWitt, ISU Extension Livestock Field Specialist

A new value added beef marketing program being promoted in Iowa is the Verified Iowa Preconditioned (V.I.P.) program. The V.I.P. program is a collaborative effort between the Iowa Cattlemen’s Association (ICA), the Iowa Beef Industry Council (IBIC) and the Iowa Beef Center (IBC). This program is available throughout the state of Iowa, although many producers may have not heard about it yet.

The V.I.P. program goal is to add value to all segments of the beef industry through a verified program. Benefits to cow-calf herds include access to premium markets, better utilization of a herd management program, and promotion of the reputation of known Iowa beef.

Benefits to the cattle feeder include verified enrollment in a USDA Process Verified Program (PVP), more uniform cattle health program, increased performance and more consistency in the size and quality of Iowa cattle.

The 3 letters, V.I.P. are for one simple and easily understood meaning. The program starts with obtaining a USDA PVP contact, such as to ICA to set-up an on-farm audit. Once a producer is approved and listed with the USDA PVP, the producer needs to EID tag the cattle and submit the data for processing. Once the data is processed, the producer will receive a certificate to ship with the cattle.

The second step is to have your calves processed in either the Green or Gold Tag preconditioning (PC) program. The Gold Tag calves are double vaccinated and weaned at least 45 days. The Gold Tag PC certificate is signed by both the veterinarian and producer/owner.

The final step is to be a Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) certified producer. The Iowa BQA program is designed to assist producers in preventing product defects based on their individual operation. The Iowa BQA certification applies to all segments of the industry including seedstock, cow/calf, stocker and feedlot.

For further information about the V.I.P. program contact Kellie Carolan at ICA, 515-296-2266; Brian Waddingham at IBIC, 515-296-2305 or Dennis DeWitt with IBC 712-336-3488.

Pork Quality Assurance (PQA)

By Dave Stender, ISU Extension Swine Field Specialist

Packers are now requiring PQA Plus individual certification replacing the old PQA program. Producers that are current with their 3 year PQA certification are OK for PQA Plus until their old certification expires (3 years after issued.) However, if the packer starts asking for PQA site certification, swine producers will need to become PQA Plus certified as an individual before they can certify the building site. More information and questions and answers can be found at pork.org, the PQA Plus link is on the right side of the page. The schedule for upcoming PQA Plus meetings can be found at the Iowa Pork Industry center web pages: www.ipic.iastate.edu