

## CROP NOTES

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A Periodic Newsletter for Ag Professionals and Select Extension Staff prepared by George Cummins, ISU Extension field Agronomist serving Black Hawk, Bremer, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Grundy, Hancock, Mitchell, Winnebago and Worth Counties.

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In 2009 many had trouble getting the crop planted in a timely manner. The growing season has been cooler than normal with minimal moisture stress which generally results in excellent crop yields but has also delayed normal maturity. Fall conditions are delaying harvest and field work (tillage, manure/ fertilizer application) planned in preparation for the 2010 growing season. Replanted/ late planted crops and some full-season hybrids did not reach maturity before the killing frosts of October 9 – 10. Grain moistures are higher/ dry down is slower than normal for both corn and soybeans and are creating problems we have not seen before or for many years. In response to a number of questions, refer to the publications attached or linked.

1. Dr Hurburgh, the ISU Ag Engineer and grain quality specialist has addressed a number of these issues in recent ICM Newsletter articles available at [www.extension.iastate.edu/CropNews/](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/CropNews/). “Soybean Quality Issues in 2009” was posted on 10/19 and includes information on drying and storage of soybeans. This article also notes PM 1635 “Frost Damage to Corn and Soybeans” and PM1636 “ Soybean Drying and Storage” available on line at [www.extension.iastate.edu/store/](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/) for additional information. The ICM Newsletter article also addresses questions on shrink factors being used, moisture discounts and moisture meter accuracy.

2. Dr Hurburgh’s ICM Newsletter article on “2009 Corn Quality Issues” was posted on 10/15. It also refers those dealing with immature crops to PM 1635 (above). This piece has a discussion of minimum test weight and maximum moisture for delivery to ethanol plants. As in the soybean article above, the corn article discusses shrink factors being used, moisture discounts and moisture meter accuracy as well as expected storage life.

3. Attached is Fact Sheet #27 from Purdue University in Indiana on grain quality issues with immature corn and soybeans. This publication has information on combine adjustment to reduce harvest losses and grain damage and additional artificial drying information. Harvest moisture trends in Table 2 are for Indiana. Conditions in Iowa this year are probably similar to their Record High Moisture Content year (1992). Corn that was not black-layered before killing frost (5 – 10% in my counties?) would likely have grain moistures on 10/20 of 28 – 32%. Also the drying costs in Table 3 were calculated

with LP at \$0.60/ gallon, air temp of 50 degrees F and a relative humidity of 55%. Cooler air with higher relative humidity would increase drying time and expense. Current LP spot price (not contracted) is approximately \$1.20/ gallon effectively doubling the drying cost/ bu with various moisture starting points (20 – 25%). Current commercial drying rates are likely in the range of \$0.04 -\$0.05/ pt/bu.

4. Producers of specialty/ identity-preserved crops (seed, waxy, high-oil, etc) and those with buyer call contracts running into the summer of 2010 have additional management issues (maximum harvest moistures; more specific drying, storage and handling procedures; and more stringent grading standards) to deal with.

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