

SW Iowa Crop Update- July 18, 2008

Hot and humid, I guess this just about sums up the weather for the week. I noticed using the air conditioner in the truck this week was the norm. So is this weather beneficial for the crops? Well like anything, there is no right answer, and it depends.

Earlier this week the North Central American Society of Agronomy held its yearly meeting in Omaha. This year's speakers were very good and had very timely and informative presentations. There were corn physiologists, corn breeders, industry reps. from Pioneer and Monsanto, and professors from Midwestern Universities. In later updates I will give an overview of the major points in the presentations.

The common theme seemed to revolve around the need for more bushels of corn worldwide. How are we going to get there and what are we doing right now to feed consumption of our corn commodity. First thing first, we are increasing yield, but this is a function of simply planting more plants per acre. In Iowa we have increased our population by 425 plants per acre per year since 2001. That is almost an increase of 3000 plants per acre in the last seven years. Corn has been bred and has undergone genetic modifications that help it compete with its neighbor at higher populations than before. The traits that have been added so far aid in protecting our yield potential, they do not increase the corns yield potential. Well enough about corn yield philosophy for today.

Corn is tasseling in most of SW Iowa starting about 2 weeks ago and really coming on strong now. As most of you have noticed the corn looked uneven early, greened up and evened out, now the tassels are emerging and we see the unevenness again in the fields. Roger Elmore, ISU Corn Specialist recently wrote an article about silking dates this year in Iowa. He is finding:

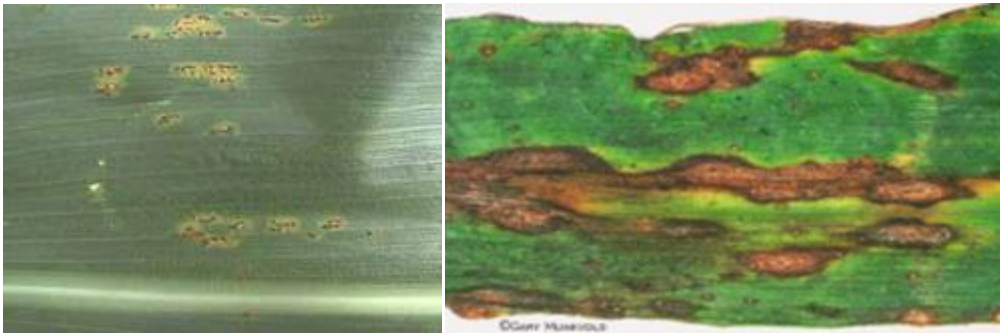
- Estimated silking dates may range up to 12 days later than in previous years
- A longer growing season and delayed frost will help maximize yields
- Excellent yields are still possible

In the fields I have found some goosenecked corn from some extreme winds and wet soils earlier this week. This does raise some concern; in an ISU study they found corn that was goosenecked at a 45 degree angle yielded 11-40% less when later in the year. Younger corn (V10) can "bounce back" and compensate for this without paying so much of a yield penalty. Corn rootworm beetles have emerged from the soil and have begun feeding on the above ground portion of the plants. Corn rootworm beetles very rarely cause problems that warrant control, but once in a while in a dry year the beetles can clip the silks just as fast as they emerge from the husk. If they keep the silks clipped back under the husk the chance that the pollen will come into contact with the silks decreases. Now that CRW beetles

have emerged it would be the right time to dig some roots, not pull, and wash off the soil with water to assess CRW larval damage. Here is the link to ISU's corn rootworm page:

<http://www.ent.iastate.edu/pest/rootworm/>

Diseases in the corn have also become a little more evident in the past week. Common rust and anthracnose are two foliar diseases that are becoming more evident. Below is a picture of each, common rust on the left, anthracnose on the right:



Soybeans are looking very good, some fields are reaching R3. First generation bean leaf beetles have been in every field that I have scouted. The beetles are not at high enough levels to do anything now, but they may be indicator of what the second generation beetle population may be. Second generation beetles may feed on soybean pods and decrease seed size, number, and quality. I have heard a few reports of soybean aphids. The aphids that I have seen have been at relatively low numbers. There was one field that had a very small area that had enough aphids per plant to stunt the soybean plants. Here is a picture from that field. Notice the ant eating aphids and also the aphid that is brown. The brown aphid is considered a "mummy", the mummies are aphids that parasitic wasps lay an egg into, the egg hatches and the larva feeds on the aphid before emerging.



Getting back to the heat and humidity, yes these conditions are great for decreasing aphid reproduction and overall numbers.

If anyone has any observations of aphids in your area, let me know. Thanks again and have a great weekend.

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