

AG newsletter

ISU Extension Washington County

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April 2012

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"The fees for service will be used to off-set direct expenses and to support the County Extension ANR Program."

... and justice for all

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LAST CHANCE PRIVATE PESTICIDE APPLICATOR RECERTIFICATION

The last chance for farmers to attend private pesticide applicator recertification in Region 15 is as follows

Johnson County Extension Office, Thursday April 12, 1 p.m.

Washington County Extension Office, Thursday, April 12, 9:30 a.m.

Keokuk County Extension Office, Thursday, April 12, 9:30 a.m.

Iowa County Extension Office, Friday, April 13, 12:30 p.m.

Pre-registration is not required but applicators are encouraged to contact the Extension Office. Pesticide applicators who wish to recertify by training and not by exam must attend a continuing instruction course each year. There is also the option of taking an exam to recertify. The cost for the recertification class is \$20 per person.

Washington County Extension is a field test site for those needing to take pesticide applicator tests. The next test will be offered on April 13, from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. All tests are available at this site and will be given on a first-come, first-serve basis. Tests are administered by the Iowa Department of Ag and Land Stewardship. Please contact local the Washington County Extension office at 319/653-4811 for more information.

FSA PROGRAM REMINDERS

2010 SURE

Sign up is underway for the 2010 SURE program. SURE provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters. In 2010 Johnson County received a disaster declaration. The sign up deadline for the 2010 SURE is **June 1, 2012**.

2012 DCP SIGN UP CONTINUES

Sign up for the 2012 Direct & Counter-Cyclical Program continues. Progress has been good, but we have not heard from everybody. The deadline for the 2012 DCP sign up is **June 1, 2012**.

2012 ACREAGE REPORTS DUE BY JUNE 30th

All 2012 crops and land uses must be reported by **June 30, 2012** on farms enrolled in DCP and ACRE programs. All CRP acreage must be reported on an annual basis to be eligible for the annual CRP rental payments.

BUDGET CONSTRAINTS

A reduced FSA administrative budget for 2012 will reduce the use of mailings in an effort to save on printing and postage costs. Reminder postcards and newsletters will be curtailed. This e-mail flyer is one way we will try to keep you informed of USDA and FSA programs and deadlines.

BEST CORN PLANTING DATES FOR IOWA

Optimum corn planting dates range from mid-April to the end of April in North Central and Northeast Iowa and to the first or second week in May in other parts of Iowa (see Table). If we consider the differences between early-planting and late planting, yields are reduced less early in the planting season than late. That means that planting early during the optimum window is generally a better practice than planting a few days after the optimum window. Yields drop off dramatically in mid-May across Iowa. If possible, plant corn prior to May 15 to avoid this "slippery slope" of rapidly reducing yield potential.

One of my colleagues said, "Planting early insures that you won't plant late!" But, we'd both add, that doesn't mean that you won't replant. Be cautious. If conditions remain unseasonably warm in early April, this would be a good year for date of planting studies...on a small scale. The best thinking on corn planting dates is the understanding that we should begin to plant if:

1. Soil conditions are favorable in mid- to late April
2. **AND** they are expected remain that way for a week or so, or actually improve.

For example, let's say it is April 20 and soil temperatures are in the high 40s and rising fast. Soil conditions are excellent and you've got everything ready to go: the best hybrids, your planter is fine-tuned to perfection, the tractor fueled and you need to do something – and the five to seven day forecast calls for more of the same. Would you plant corn? Most of us without hesitation would say yes.

Let's change one element of that situation: all of the factors just mentioned remain the same but the five to seven day forecast is for cold-wet conditions. In fact it might even snow. Would you plant corn? At this point some of us may get uneasy and shake our heads gently no. Others pound tables and shout, "Of course I'd plant!" And, given their individual situations and aversion or fondness of risk, both may be valid responses. What I know is that yield will likely be compromised in the second situation due to the factors mentioned above. The situation described is very similar to what we actually experienced the second week of April 2011 and in mid-March 2012. Some planted with varied results in early April 2011, most waited to plant and were pleased they did. Once we cross the April 11 crop insurance date, if soil temperatures are in the high forties and rising, plant if soil conditions are favorable and conditions are expected remain that way for five to seven days, or improve.

Approximate Region of Iowa	Planting window to obtain...	
	95 to 100% Yield Potential	98 to 100% Yield Potential
North Central and Northeast	April 12 to May 2	April 12 to April 30
Northwest, West Central, Central and East Central	April 15 to May 18	April 15 to May 9
Southwest, South Central and Southeast	April 11 to May 13	April 17 to May 8

REGISTER FOR PQA PLUS ADVISOR TRAINING SESSIONS

AMES, Iowa – People who need to recertify as Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) Plus® Advisors and those interested in becoming certified for the first time are invited to consider an upcoming joint session at Iowa State University. The Iowa Pork Industry Center (IPIC) at Iowa State University (ISU) has planned one session of each for April 19 in the Ensminger Room in Kildee Hall on the ISU campus. James McKean, IPIC associate director and ISU Extension swine veterinarian, said that while spots remain in these sessions, people who want to attend need to act quickly to assure their attendance. "There is a limit of 30 people for each session, so people need to complete and submit the appropriate form by the April 12 deadline," he said. "Both sessions will be taught simultaneously beginning at 9 a.m. The recertification segment ends at noon and the initial certification session continues to mid-afternoon, with an exam at the end." Those who are recertifying need to complete the registration form available on the IPIC website and pay the \$50 per person fee prior to the session. People who would like to become certified advisors need to complete and submit that application form. The \$75 per person fee is due from approved applicants by the time of the session. Both forms also are available by mail or fax by calling Sunny Hsu at 515-294-4103. The sessions will be taught by ISU animal science and veterinary medicine faculty members who are certified PQA Plus trainers.

JOIN WOMEN WALKING THE WORLD

On Sunday, April 29, women are joining in Women Walk the World, in response to an Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) obesity resolution and the goal to raise funds for ACWW projects. At any given hour of the day, women blessed with reliable food and water supplies, families and friends will be walking to support ACWW food production projects. Iowa County ACWW members and friends are organizing the local walk.

Women Walk the World will be held at Lake Iowa Park, 2550 G Ave, Ladora, Sunday, April 29, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. There will be three walking challenges: one-, two- or four-mile. Water and snacks are provided. Check-in for participants is at the Nature Center near the main gate. Shuttle service will be available, if needed. Preregistration of \$15 includes a T-shirt. Send your name, address, phone number and a check or cash to: Women Walk the World, P.O. Box 14, Marengo, IA 52301. Preregistration must be sent by Friday, April 13. Walkers can register the day of the walk for \$20 with no T-shirt included. For more information, call Loy Walker, 319-642-7787. Learn about more projects at www.acww.org.uk.

PQA PLUS CERTIFICATION APR. 10

Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) Plus certification training will be offered on April 10, 2012 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. in the Keokuk County Extension office for any adult (18 years and older) wishing to be certified. Pre- registration is advised, a fee of \$25.00 per participant will be assessed for the certification training.

The Iowa Pork Industry Center and Iowa State University (ISU) Extension are teaming up to provide training for pork producers and others who need certification in the Pork Quality Assurance Plus™ (PQAPlus™) program. A certification session has been set for April 10th in Keokuk County.

To locate the Keokuk County Extension Office in Sigourney, go to the Courthouse square, the office is on Northwest corner.

From the east or west on 92:

While on 92 coming into Sigourney, you will come to a four way stop (Main Street or 149 south) turn south until you reach the first stop light (4 blocks south to Washington Street). Turn east and the office is the second building east of the stop light on the north side of the street. The office is on Northwest corner of the square. For the PQA Plus program pre-registration please call the Keokuk County Office, Terry Steinhart in Sigourney, at (800) 515-2680, or email at tsteinha@iastate.edu.

EASTERN IOWA FORAGE PRICES

These are hay prices paid at auction in recent weeks. Much of the price information is obtained from USDA Hay Market News. Personal contacts of local Iowa hay auctions secured price information for these market outlets. Auctions were chosen to reflect prices across Iowa. No endorsement of the listed auctions is intended.

Keosauqua (SE IA) Sat 11:30A Alfalfa & Mixed Lg/Gr: SmSq \$6.00-9.25/bale Grass: SmSq \$3.00-6.25/bale; LgRd (CRP) \$70-77/bale Straw: SmSq \$2.00-3.50/bale; LgRd \$30/bale

Kalona Auction (SE IA) Thursdays 11:00 AM Alfalfa: SmSq \$3.60-6.25/bale Mixed Leg/Gr: SmSq \$3.00-5.25/b; LgSq \$32.50-70/b; LgRd \$47.50-95/b Grass: (SmSq \$4.00-6.50/bale Jan) Straw: SmSq \$2.00-2.75/bale; LgSq \$18-30/bale; LgRd \$50/bale Cornstalks: SmSq \$1.75/bale; LgRd \$36/bale

Yoder Auction (Frytown) (SE IA) 1st Weds, 11:30AM (winter 1st & 3rd Weds Oct-) Alfalfa: SmSq \$3.30-5.10/bale; LgSq \$75-80/bale; LgRd \$60-150/bale Mixed Leg/Gr: (LgRd \$90-137.50/bale Jan) Grass: (SmSq \$3.50-4.50/bale Jan); LgSq \$45-50/bale; LgRd \$65-87.50/bale Straw: (SmSq \$2.90-3.20/bale Jan); LgSq \$25/bale Cornstalks: (LgRd \$22-25/bale Jan)

SAVE ENERGY WITH VENTILATION MANAGEMENT

Proper management of furnace and ventilation controller settings in hog buildings can reduce propane and electricity costs. A new publication from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach illustrates the impact controller settings can have on furnace run time and energy consumption in swine production facilities.

“Managing swine ventilation controller settings to save energy” (PM 2089T) is available to download from the Extension Online Store, <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/>.

“By managing on-off temperature settings for the system controller, energy consumption for a hog facility can often be reduced,” said Jay Harmon, ISU Extension agricultural engineer. “With proper adjustments, furnace run time can be minimized to avoid expending excessive energy from the building while still maintaining proper air quality.”

This publication summarizes furnace and ventilation controller terminology such as setpoint, offset and differential. It also illustrates a specific example for modifying the furnace offset to minimize furnace run time while still maintaining good air quality within the building.

For more tips on energy efficiency around the farmstead, visit <http://farmenergy.exnet.iastate.edu>

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INFLUENCE OF SOIL TEMP ON CORN GERMINATION & GROWTH

We experienced June-like temperatures in March. Trees budded, spring flowers bloomed and fertilizer rigs crisscrossed fields. Soil temperatures matched what we normally experience in late April and early May, jumping well ahead of previous records.

Because of the unparalleled warm March weather, many wonder about planting corn. Perhaps some did plant. This year's warm spring temperatures encouraged early development of flowering trees and shrubs, as well as lawns, pastures and early weed-flushes in many fields - But wait until at least the April 11 crop insurance date to plant corn! Data from other scientists and Iowa planting date studies – suggests to plant corn after mid-April when soil temperatures are near 50 degrees Fahrenheit to maximize yield.

Germination process and soil temperature

Seed absorbs about 30 percent of its weight in water; temperature does not affect that process. But temperature does affect growth of both the radicle (first root) and coleoptile (shoot). With soil temperatures below 50 F, seeds readily absorb water but do not initiate root or shoot growth. This opens up opportunities for insects and pathogens to attack seeds resulting in poor emergence especially if poor seedbed conditions are prolonged. Even though soil temps are above 50 F at the time I write this, they can quickly plummet with a cold spell. The odds for more cold weather and or snow are still high before mid-April. With that in mind, to minimize risk, begin planting when soils are 50 F or greater or are near 50 F and rising quickly after mid-April.

Problems associated with corn in cold soils

Cool soil temperatures early in the season increase variability in final stands. We want to give every precious seed the chance of survival unless we intend to overplant to compensate for seed viability lost before emergence.

Cool soil conditions early in the season also lead to more unevenness in growth and development from one plant to another. In addition, once the seed begins to germinate, a significant change in soil temperature can cause problems for mesocotyl growth. To maximize yield, manage corn to reduce plant-to-plant variability.

In addition to the effects of early planting on seed development and growth, early planting also exposes seeds and seedlings to increased potential for frost. We know that since a corn seedling's growing point is below ground until V6 – the sixth leaf stage – it can withstand freezing temperatures when plants have emerged until the V6 stage. Indeed that fact has saved a lot of replanting and the associated costs over the years.

What we don't always say – or for that matter understand – is that frost often affects individual plants differently resulting in more variability from one plant to another. That variability can result in unequal interplant competition and lower yield potential. Depending on the potential date of replant though, keeping the surviving stand – albeit of variable plant heights and development – may still be the best option.

In addition to the impact on seedlings, extreme cold snaps can refreeze soils down to seeding depths. This can and does kill seeds and growing points, reducing stands and forcing a complete replant.

‘EARLY’ EARLY SPRING WEED MANAGEMENT

The unusually warm weather may create additional weed challenges this spring. Winter annuals in no-till fields will likely accumulate much more biomass prior to planting than normal and therefore use more soil moisture, tie up more nutrients and potentially interfere with planting and crop establishment. In addition, weeds such as horseweed (marestail) will grow more rapidly and reach growth stages that are difficult to control much sooner than in a “normal” spring.



Due to these potential problems, applications of burn-down herbicides in early April may be beneficial and improve the control of winter annual and early spring annual weeds. An additional benefit of earlier application dates for the burndown is minimizing the risk of including 2,4-D at the higher rates (i.e. 2 pts/A of LV-4) in the program. Of course, there is the important assumption that planting dates are not moved proportionally earlier.

Many farmers will want to include preemergence herbicides with these early spring burndown treatments. While this may provide a clean seedbed at planting and crop emergence, the longevity of weed control is likely to be shortened significantly. The magnitude of this re-

duction will depend on the time period and weather encountered between application and planting, and the herbicide rate. The rates of many preemergence products have been reduced due to the reliance on postemergence products, primarily glyphosate. If applications are going to be made a few weeks earlier than normal, carefully evaluate the product rates in order to maximize the contribution of the preemergence herbicide(s) to residual weed control after crop emergence.

Preemergence herbicides are a key component of herbicide resistance management. But to be effective, they need to be used in a manner that results in significant control of the target species. Very early applications of preemergence herbicides or reduced rates will greatly reduce their effectiveness on late-emerging weeds such as waterhemp, or large-seeded species such as giant ragweed. Many products specify split applications where a portion of the product is applied early and a remainder is applied at, or shortly after planting. This approach could be beneficial this year where an extended period of weed control may be needed due to early applications resulting from prevailing weather conditions.

MASTER GARDENER SUMMER WEBINAR SERIES “GARDEN GOODNESS” ANNOUNCED

AMES, Iowa — The Iowa Master Gardener program is once again offering a series of summer webinars. The 2012 series titled "Garden Goodness" will be hosted by Iowa State University Extension county offices on the fourth Tuesday of the month, May through August. Each session will provide information about vegetable gardening, but from a variety of perspectives. “We selected 'Garden Goodness' as our theme for the 2012 series because of the current public interest in growing food,” said Jennifer Bousset, Iowa Master Gardener and webinar series coordinator. “We want to introduce our participants to as many aspects of growing food as we can during these sessions.” Dates, presenters and topics for the 2012 series are:

- May 22, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Ajay Nair – Growing Vegetables. Extension horticulture specialist.
- June 26, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Angie Tagtow – Food Gardening and Health; and 7:30-8:30 p.m. Denise Fikes – Glenwood’s Giving Garden. Tagtow is an environmental nutrition consultant; Fikes is the Mills County Extension horticulture assistant.
- July 24, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Linda Naeve – Peoples Garden Project and Working with Youth; and 7:30-8:30 p.m. Cindy Haynes – Edible Ornamentals. Naeve is an ISU Extension value added agriculture specialist; Haynes is an associate professor in the Department of Horticulture and an ISU Extension consumer/urban horticulture specialist.
- August 28, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Angela Tedesco – Top Ten Sustainable Gardening Tips from Turtle Farm. Farm, an organic vegetable, fruit and herb CSA near Granger, Iowa. The series, in its third year, is offered by Iowa Master Gardener program in response to requests for more Iowa gardening educational opportunities. The sessions are open to all interested gardeners; participants are not required to have completed Master Gardener training to attend, however the session will fulfill Master Gardener continuing education requirements. www.mastergardener.iastate.edu/info/summerwebinar2012.html. Registration will be made through participating county offices.



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SAFETY WEB SITE LAUNCHED BY EXTENSION

AMES, Iowa – Answers to farm safety and health questions, case studies and a calendar of farm safety related events are available on one website – eXtension.org. Farm safety and health is the most recent community of practice, or topic area, to launch on the national research-based information and education site.

New farmers and seasoned farmers will find frequently asked questions, events, decision tools and research-based information on eXtension, said Charles Schwab, an Iowa State University Extension and Outreach specialist.

According to Schwab, Iowa State and other partnering land-grant universities are offering information on farm safety and health as a way to provide education and answers to questions.

“The agricultural industry has historically been a dangerous occupation, and continues to be so, based on the number of deaths each year,” said Schwab. “We’re providing this community of practice to the public to bring awareness to safe farm practices. It’s a great resource; answers to questions about what personal protective equipment can be purchased and where, along with information about the heat-related illnesses associated with agricultural production and much more information is posted online.”

