Late June Fruit & Vegetable Update

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

japanese beetles, hand washing stations, tunnel, temperatures, wind, bit, field, farm, windy, crops, june, designs, state, fruit, sidewalks, days, flies, pests, plants, talk

SPEAKERS

Speaker 3, Joe Hannan

Joe Hannan 00:15
Hello, and welcome to the Small Farms Podcast, a production of the Small Farms Program at Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Our podcast covers the opportunities and challenges associated with rural life.

Joe Hannan 00:29
I am Joe Hannan, Commercial Horticulture Field Specialist with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. And welcome to the Small Farms Sustainability Podcast. It's just me today I'm so offline, mostly due to being kind of busy last couple weeks and not getting guest hosts lined up. So let's jump right into this today. I want to talk just a little bit about what's happening in the field. Right now as we record, it's late June, June 24th, right now. So what's going on. So first up June 22nd to the 26th is Iowa's Fruit and Vegetable's Industry Week. Definitely take a few minutes to highlight and celebrate all the hard work you do on social media. And this is newly signed in from the governor here just this year, so something brand new to get excited about and celebrate.

Joe Hannan 01:21
So Japanese beetles are here, get outside and scout for it, look for it, for the bright, shiny coppering green beetle. Look for skeletonised on the leaves. I'm just hearing first reports of it really actually being out in the field here late last week, variability of when it comes out to the field and when you're actually see it, where it's at actually across the state tends to like set its variable across the state quite a bit, so you really need to get out and scope it out. I talked about the Japanese beetle quite a bit in the last podcast, I don't want to harp on it too much. Suffice it to say Amadei and rotate it with a whole host of other products should be effective at keeping it under control. A lot of people have seven on hand which yes seven works. It's labeled for a lot of crops, but you can cause some spider mite outbreaks and things with it. So be careful if you if you're using seven to manage it. Like I said, that's why I like Amadan and rotate it with seven or rotate it with a lot of other product options out there. Check the Midwest Fruit Guides, Midwest Vegetable Guides for the specific details on your pest or check out two weeks ago podcast for more details there.

Joe Hannan 02:36
Right now, long term weather trends, they’re showing the things are going to be both warmer and a bit wetter over the next 30 plus days here. Well, those longer term trends for the next month or so are still they’re still looking at the data and kind of thinking what they’re gonna really show and do. What that really though means is we’re looking at spotty showers and storms across the state here maybe not widespread, but definitely spotty. I always try to be fairly cautious when I’m looking at those long term trends. Those are big picture trends. That doesn’t necessarily mean that’s what you’re gonna have at your farm. I know they’re calling for rain quite a bit, just personally where I’m at over by Panora, a fair bit over the last couple of weeks. And we ended up missing most of that. And I was talking to Christa Hartsook, our other primary host on the program. And she’s been saying to even at her place, the storms have been going right around her. So while they may be gone for warmer and wetter, don’t necessarily guarantee you’re planning on getting those spotty showers and storms at your farm.

Joe Hannan 03:43
That really brings up a good point, make sure you’ve got your tensiometers in place and you’re checking and watching, those tensiometer quite a bit. I’ve been watching mine fairly regularly and mine have been definitely hanging, you know, right at about 20 for about two or three days and then just jumping and skyrocketing up to where I need to irrigate. You know, over the course of a six hour to one day timeframe, it’s been going from fine to needing to water. You know, as I’m watching those tensiometers though, make sure you’re getting enough water on, especially as our crops start to mature and develop. Try to make sure that 24 hours after you irrigate that the tensiometer reading is coming back down to you know five to ten center bars. If it’s dropping down and you’re only hitting 10 to 15 you probably need to update or increase your runtime a little bit. I feel kind of bad talking about tensiometer and drought because that’s where I’m sitting, but I also know a lot of folks are also sitting in quite a bit of water. I think I had heard over the Waterloo area, just earlier this week when I got a half inch rain for the first time in three weeks. I think I heard six and a half inches at one of one of the sites over there. So it’s kind of boom or bust it seems to be in some places around the state. Surprisingly enough, though, even with all the wetness that we had middle half of May into early June, and then turn it around and dispute some storms and things here across June here. I have not seen as bad of disease problems out there as I would have necessarily expected, though that doesn’t mean that I’m not seeing diseases out there. It definitely seems like we are seeing quite a bit of scab and Ross, quite a bit anthracnose across our crops out there. So definitely stay on top of getting your fungicide applications on, likely you have something out there and may just not be real severe yet, but we don’t need to give a opportunity or provide an opportunity for things to get worse out there.

Joe Hannan 05:50
Kind of continuing along the weather trend. Did June seem windy to you? It certainly seemed windy to me and apparently, according to Justin, our state climatologist at the Iowa Department of Ag and Land Stewardship, apparently we were actually windier than normal. Now Justin said we don’t have a lot of data, I think he said there’s really only like 14 years of data, good data from airport stations to look at. But when he looked at the data yet, it did seem like we are windier than than normal, at least two to three miles per hour windier. Though the data that he was looking at is about 30 feet above ground because that’s where the measuring wind at the airports can look back to I want to say it was June 13, 14, 15, 16. It was really windy. If I had a kite if I was hanging on to some some plastic mulch, I think I definitely could have gotten airborne and definitely gone for a little bit of a flight. Personally makes me wish I had a windbreak on the south side of my farm here based on the winds that we had, or honestly any side of my farm would be helpful. It really doesn’t help though that we had when a lot of June and temperatures were also up in the in the 90s, which you know we went through a lot of a lot of water. If you’re irrigating crops it seems like it was kind of a never ending battle there for a couple of weeks, seemed like for a while there was dumping water in the tunnel every three or four days. Granted I still kind of calibrating my system at that point because I wasn’t running it long enough but just seemed like we were putting on quite a bit of water here personally I wish I could see
what things going on a little bit more across the state but not being able to travel that's kind of what I'm here. Looking at the wind and interactions out in the field, or an even more so on the high tunnel, it really is a good reminder why gable vents and rooftop vents in the high tunnel are so important. Without them you just really struggle to close down the tunnel sidewalls or end walls to provide a little bit of wind protection to those plants inside the building and still vacate the heat you know it's a really tough call. Do you close it up to try to prevent the plants from getting beat on, do leave it open and let the plants get beat on a little bit, but if you close up the tunnel though and it's 90 degree days and windy, it's really easy to watch those temperatures climb up to 100 degrees 105-110 degrees depending on where you're at and where sun cover was. But you know you leave it open, and plants just get utterly destroyed and beat up from from the wind just whipping through there. I guess my best take home advice there if you don't have Gable vents, you don't have rooftop vents, if you're at a point to where you're ripening fruit, you're trying to set fruit, so you've got tomatoes, cucumbers, brambles, whatever in there, you just can't let temperatures get over that 95 degrees or plants just won't set up fruit so you've got to leave it up and going. Now if you say for growing cool season crops, still in the tunnel a little bit, yet, you can't let it get that warm. But if you're at a point where you're not doing a lot of fruits, you're not doing ripening fruit. Yeah, you could close up the tunnel you know if you're just putting on vegetative growth. Yeah, you can close up the tunnel let temperatures run up to 100 plus degrees, as long as you're putting enough water on things and keeping a good eye on it without a whole lot of detriment. At that point: Again, I think most people by mid-June know you've got tomatoes and cucumbers in there. You're setting fruit, you're ripening crop, you can't can't let those temperatures get up that high. I did have a unique opportunity to go and check out a high tunnel that had Spotted Wing Drosophilaph netting on the sidewalls, and it was really interesting to go inside that building with the curtains open. But yet the netting in place on the sidewall curtains and see how good of a job that did cutting the wind down as it came into the tunnel. The tunnel got warmer, obviously got warmer than just if it was no netting there in place, but there was also no wind in place. And so it was a kind of a unique situation, unique perspective to see how much wind control you can get by putting a little bit of netting or screening in place on the tunnel in order to knock down some of the wind. This particular tunnel they had raspberries growing in there, so they wanted the std netting in order to not have to do any insecticide sprays when they have crop out there later this this fall if you didn't have raspberries or blackberries in that building really interesting if you need to provide some protection to look at putting the netting in place but maybe not using the full netting or the full tightness of the woven fabric and going with more of a screen like mesh or something like that, in order to cut down some wind but yet still allow some decent airflow to go through. It's definitely something to consider, I was amazed at how well good of a job and did knocking down the wind in there. Anyway, that's that's enough on wind.

Joe Hannan 11:38

So as I look at insects and diseases across the state, we saw some fireblight Napoles, then temperatures got hot and it became kind of a non-issue. I saw scab and russ, I'm still seeing some scab and russ around the state though with temperatures warming up and some areas starting to dry out that's becoming more of a non-issue. Overall, it should become less of an issue even over the course of the next couple of weeks and francoise and various other things, seem to be out there across the state, not rampid nothing too crazy. We've had a fair bit of southerly winds with our tropical storms and things moving through the southern area of the country, that definitely could push up some downy mildew that could definitely push up some other pests from our southern regions and we want to be kind of on the lookout for things like that, here over the course of the next couple of weeks starting to show up. Again, really nothing out of norm, nothing super uncommon, short of one exception that just came through the other day. I actually got a call the other day about white flies in the field and white flies are greenhouse pests. It's not common to see them in the field, especially not common to see them in grapes, but that's where they were. It certainly was interesting to see them out in the field, just from an extension standpoint, because again, it's not common. Though, I'm really not shocked. You look at the temperatures and how many growing degree days we accumulated over the course of June. I'm not shocked to see them out in the field. You're not used to white flies, they are a piercing, sap sucking insects. You don't tend to see the damage to the actual leaves themselves and they're not chewing and leaving holes in leaves, but they can cause decline chlorosis or necrosis on plant leaves, their poop, their honeydew
that they leave behind as a food source for other pathogens to come in and set in place and cause additional problems down the road. Thankfully, they're a soft-bodied insect, and are not difficult to control. If you just have them in a small area within in your field, you can use spot treatment, there's no need to treat the whole field. I like to go in and spot treat the area that they're there, follow up five to seven days later and come back in and do a second application just to verify, make sure you've gotten everything back under control. And then likely you won't need to do anything for the rest of the season. So again, spot treat, no need to manage across the whole field. Things like soaps and oils, they're very effective on whiteflies, aphids, spider mites, things like that as well. But soaps and oils are good for white flies. You do have to be careful that you don't burn the plants with those products. So always have a little bit of caution. Maybe don't do it in the heat of the day. Don't do it during a bright sunny day, wait until the evening go out and do it. Japanese beetles again are starting to merge across the state. So if you have white flies and you're spraying for Japanese beetles, that should also cover the white flies. Some of the other insecticides are well not necessarily labeled for white flies. If you're out there spraying for Japanese beetles, they may also pick up and cover the white flies and provide some protection there. So while timing might be beneficial for us, if you are seeing some white flies out there, then Japanese beetle control may end up taking care of it for you. If not, again, check out your Midwest Vegetable and Fruit Guides for specific controls.

Joe Hannan 15:05

On a completely different track, the Governor removed our farm market restrictions. So non-food and feed items can now be sold at farmer's markets, we can have entertainment activities at farm markets, but you still must maintain proper social distancing. We still recommend that you do extra hand washing, extra cleaning, try to minimize or restrict people from handling the produce, have you bag them and pull together the produce and/or don't allow all your produce to be sitting out at the table at once as people are coming through and shopping. We're starting to see more and more farms bringing their own hand washing stations to market with them. I'm seeing that really across the north central region where we're working my food safety stuff. It's become pretty common that people will bring their own hand washing station to their vendor booth. And frankly, I think that's a good idea. I get out and see a lot of farmer's markets, they don't have hand washing stations, or the hand washing stations aren't close to the booth. You can't just quickly run out of your booth and go and get your hands washed again if you need to, if you get on dirty. A lot of the premade hand washing stations, they're really nice, but they're $500-$600, and they're backordered, so it's not a great option. And they're kind of bulky to carry around, frankly. Chris Callahan at the University of Vermont has updated some design for portable hand washing stations, and I've got that linked in the show notes. (Found here: https://blog.uvm.edu/cwcallah/2020/06/09/improving-handwashing-stations/) The new design that he put together, it's really it's affordable. It's fairly cheap at about $150. He's moved away from a lot of the wood designs that we've previously seen. A lot of the farmers here are still using the designs that were put together by the Leopold Center Funding 15 years ago at this point, and those are a lot more wood based. Where Chris's new designs are more steel or that plastic wood based material. And so they're they're really nice new upgrades. They're foot operated. One of those upgrades is on wheels so it can be rolled and moved around. All the parts can be purchased at your local hardware store of choice. So I think they're nice designs, definitely take a look click on the show note links and go check out his materials. While you're there at that link scope out some of his other resources. Chris does a lot of design work intended for small fruit and vegetable farms, so there's a lot of post service equipment on his blog that I think you might find of interest, so again, show notes are there.

Joe Hannan 17:31

So again, I don't have a whole lot else to talk about unfortunately I haven't been able to get out and do a lot of site visits just due to the coronavirus pandemic. So kind of minimizing access there. I do want to always shout out and do a thank you to Olivia Hanlon for editing and making these podcasts almost better than how I record them. And of course I'm always looking for topic ideas. I'm always looking for guest hosts. I would love to have some farmers
joined me and actually talk about what’s going on on their farm and what they’re seeing on their farm, shoot me an email jmhannon@iastate.edu, and let’s schedule and talk about it. So again, thanks for tuning in and listening here today and I’ll be back next week. All the best.

Speaker 3  18:15

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