ISU Extension and Outreach Offers
Weeds Week Aug. 3-7

Week of events focuses on herbicide effectiveness

ARTICLE | MON, 06/22/2015 - 09:37 | BY VIRGIL SCHMITT

AMES, Iowa – Weeds, herbicides and the effectiveness of herbicides to control weeds are topics of agronomic and economic importance to farmers and agribusinesses. It is so important that Iowa State University Extension and Outreach field agronomists are hosting Weeds Week, a weeklong series of informational meetings. The half-day sessions will be held Aug. 3-7 at five Iowa State University research farms.

“Farmers are challenged with producing crops and implementing effective weed management programs in a profitable manner,” said Virgil Schmitt, field agronomist with ISU Extension and Outreach in southeast Iowa. “Our goal is to help farmers develop effective weed management plans.” Schmitt said the meetings are intended to help farmers and ag retailers support each other in this process.

Each session will include presentations, hands-on weed management planning, small group discussion and plot tours presented by extension field agronomists. In the farmer-oriented session, farmers will learn how to select herbicides from the herbicide effectiveness table, identify which herbicides to apply and develop their own four-year weed management plan. Agribusiness representatives will receive similar information, but it will be presented with a focus on how to support farmers and their operations.

The schedule has been developed so that the morning sessions will conclude with lunch and the afternoon sessions will begin with lunch, which is included in the registration. Registration is $25 for each session and includes refreshments, lunch and materials. To assist with facility and meal planning there is a registration deadline two days prior to each meeting. There is an additional cost of $5 for late registrations. Register online with a credit card at www.aep.iastate.edu/weeds/. For more information, call 515-294-6429 or anr@isstate.edu.

August 3 - Southeast Research and Demonstration Farm in Washington County
3115 Louisa-Washington Road, Crawfordsville, Iowa
9:30 a.m. Farmer Session  1 p.m. Agribusiness Session

August 7 — Field Extension Education Lab. 1928 240th Street, Boone, Iowa
9:30 a.m. Farmer Session  1 p.m. Agribusiness Session

For additional locations please go to: http://www.aep.iastate.edu/weeds/
Farmland Leasing Meetings Will Increase Understanding of Rental Agreements
ARTICLE | WED, 06/24/2015 - 08:40 | BY ALEJANDRO PLASTINA, ANN JOHANNES

AMES, Iowa – Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is hosting multiple farmland leasing meetings during July and August at various times and locations throughout Iowa. The annual meeting is offered to address questions that land owners, tenants or other interested individuals have about leasing farmland.

“More than half of Iowa’s farmland is rented, and strong landlord/tenant relationships are important for the long-term viability of Iowa’s valuable farmland,” said Ann Johanns, program specialist with ISU Extension and Outreach. “Iowa farmland cash rental rates decreased by $14 an acre from 2014 to 2015; every district in Iowa showed a decline in reported rental values. The decreases ranged from $24 in Central Iowa to $4 in northeast Iowa. Northeast Iowa reported the highest average in 2015 at $273, and the lowest district value was $187 in south central Iowa.”

The three-hour workshop is designed to assist landowners, farm tenants and other agri-business professionals with current issues related to farmland ownership, management and leasing arrangements. Attendees will gain understanding of current cash rental rate surveys and factors driving next year’s rents such as market trends and input costs. Additional information on the 2014 Iowa State Land Value Survey, 2014 Farm Bill, flexible leases, Corn Suitability Rating Index (CSR2) and Iowa’s Nutrient Reduction Strategy will be presented.

Each registrant will receive a 100-page workbook with resources regarding land leasing agreements such as surveys, sample written lease agreements and termination forms and many other publications.

The leasing meetings being held across Iowa are facilitated by farm management specialists with ISU Extension and Outreach. A listing of county extension offices hosting the meetings will be available on the ISU Extension and Outreach online calendar for July and August, and at Ag Decision Maker.

For registration information, contact the local ISU Extension and Outreach county office. Preregistration is encouraged, as an additional $5 fee will be added if registering fewer than two calendar days before the meeting date.

The Ag Decision Maker leasing section also provides useful materials for negotiating leases, information on various types of leases, lease forms and newly updated Decision Tools.

Wapello - (319) 523-2371
Wednesday, August 5 - 6:00 pm
Louisa County Extension Office
317 Van Buren

Donnellson—(319) 835-5116
Thursday, August 6, 9:00 am
Lee County Extension Office
414 North Main Street

Mt. Pleasant—(319) 385-8126
Thursday, August 6, 6:30 pm
Henry County Extension Office
127 N. Main

Fairfield - (641) 472-4166
Friday, August 7 - 9:00 am
Jefferson County Extension Office
2606 West Burlington Avenue

Chariton - (641) 774-2016
Tuesday, Aug. 25, 9:00 am
Pin Oak Conservation Center
Hwy 14 S

Corydon - (641)872-1755
Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2:00 pm
Wayne County Extension Office
100 N Lafayette St.

Burlington - (641) 673-5841
Wednesday, Aug. 26, 9:00 a.m.
Southeastern Comm. College
1500 W. Agency Road
W. Burlington
600 Building, Room 607

Keosauqua - (319) 293-3039
Wednesday, August 26, 6:30 pm
Roberts Memorial Center
20497 Hwy 1 North

Eddyville - (641) 673-5841
Thursday, August 27, 6:30 pm
IHCC Biotraining Center
Monroe-Wapello Rd. (Hwy T61)
Across from Cargill

Bloomfield - (641) 664-2730
Thursday, August 27, 6:30 pm
Southern Iowa Electric
22458 Hwy 2
Yard and Garden: Successfully Maintaining Summer Fruit and Vegetable Plants
ARTICLE | WED, 07/01/2015 - 16:17 | BY RICHARD JAURON, KENDALL EVANS

AMES, Iowa – The summer months are the perfect time to enjoy homegrown fruits and vegetables. With varying weather and temperature, maintaining healthy fruit and vegetable plants can sometimes be a struggle. Here are some tips from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach horticulturists on how to properly maintain fruit plants in the summer months to ensure high fruit production. To have additional questions answered, contact the ISU Hortline at 515-294-3108 or at hortline@iastate.edu.

My cucumber plants are blooming heavily, but aren’t producing many fruit. Why?
Cucumbers and other vine crops are monoecious. Monoecious plants have separate male and female flowers on the same plant. Male and female flowers are similar in appearance. However, the female flowers have small, immature fruits at their base. Pollen is transferred from the male to the female flowers by bees and other pollinators.

When properly pollinated and fertilized, the female flowers develop into fruit. The first flowers to appear on cucumbers and other vine crops are predominately male. As a result, fruit production is poor when the vines first begin to flower. The cucumber vines should start producing a good crop within a few weeks as the number of female flowers increases.

Poor weather and the use of insecticides can also affect fruit set on cucumbers. Cool, rainy weather during bloom reduces bee activity. Fewer bees visiting the garden can result in poor pollination and a poor fruit set. Apply insecticides in the garden only when necessary to avoid harming bees and other pollinators.

My tomato plants are flowering, but aren’t setting fruit. Why?
Unfavorable weather conditions are the primary reason for blossom drop in tomatoes. High daytime temperatures, above 85 degrees Fahrenheit, and low nighttime temperatures, below 55 degrees Fahrenheit, interfere with pollination, causing blossom drop.

Optimal growing conditions for tomatoes are daytime temperatures of 70 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit. Cherry tomatoes set fruit over a wider temperature range than most large fruited tomato cultivars. Strong winds and dry soil conditions may also contribute to blossom drop. Strong winds desiccate flowers, while dry soil conditions stress tomato plants.

Nothing can be done about the weather. Deeply water tomato plants once a week during dry weather. Fruit set should increase when temperatures moderate.

My hot peppers are setting fruit, but not my bell peppers. Why?
In regards to fruit set, bell peppers are more sensitive to temperatures than tomatoes. The optimum temperature range for flowering and fruit set on bell peppers is between 70 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Hot peppers tolerate high temperatures much better than bell peppers and often produce fruit in hot weather.

Perennials for Sun
Perennials are beautiful plants that live three or more years, die in the ground each fall and return in the spring. Horticulturists with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach identify different types of perennials and planting sites where perennials can grow successfully.

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Perennials for Sun is available through the ISU Extension and Outreach store. It can be purchased for $5.00 at: https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/Perennials-for-Sun
Iowa Drainage School

August 25-27, 2015 is the date set for the Iowa Drainage School offered at the Borlaug Learning Center, Nashua, Iowa.

Purpose
To train stakeholders in sub-surface drainage concepts, planning and laying out drainage systems including surveying a profile, laying out the system, calculating tile line sizes and spacing using actual field data, making connections, and setting up drainage control structures, NRCS program requirements, and fixing common drainage system issues.

Format
This is a three-day school with each day including a combination of hands-on training, lecture and discussion, and problem solving using examples. By attending this school, participants will be able to plan and layout subsurface drainage systems and workout estimated project costs.

Who should attend
- drainage contractors
- professional engineers and consultants
- NRCS professionals
- county administrators
- landowners
- IDDA officials
- anyone interested in subsurface drainage design and maintenance

For more information and to register for this school, please go to:
http://www.aep.iastate.edu/ids/

Fruit Cracking
Joe Hannan, Commercial Horticulture Field Specialist

There has been a few instances of apple and potato cracking. We are used to seeing this with tomatoes but it does occur on other fruits and vegetables. While it is not always possible to manage water from rainfall outside, many of the newer cultivars tend be less prone to cracking than new ones. At this point, there is not much that can be done.
Weather Impacts
By Rebecca Ahlers, Field Agronomist
We’ve had a wet spring indeed here in Southeast/South Central Iowa making it challenging to get all the field work done. It feels like it stops raining just long enough for fields to start drying out and then starts raining again. It’s been a challenging year to get hay cut, fields sprayed, and many are still trying to finish planting soybeans yet.

Below is a map displaying the unofficial and IEM computed climate district precipitation total ranks for June (Image 1). A value of one means that this June is the wettest June on record in the last 123 years (1893-2015). Most of this area is ranked as 4, meaning we’ve had the fourth wettest June on record. We’ve also experienced wind, hail, and tornado damage in this part of the state.

![Map of climate district precipitation ranks for June 2015.](image)

Although all the rain has made for pastures to be very productive, the rain is taking its toll on the crops. Saturated fields make it difficult for plants to take up needed oxygen and nutrients. Although things look tough right now, corn and soybeans are pretty resilient crops. If we can get some oxygen back in the soil, the plants will bounce back and be productive. If the weather we’ve had continues to persist, we are looking at a different story. Mother Nature holds the key, and hopefully we can dry out here and give a chance for the crops to recover from the weather events we’ve had lately.

Scouting Tips - Northern Corn Leaf Blight
By Alison Robertson, Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology
Northern corn leaf blight (NCLB) (Figure 1) has been reported from several fields in southern Iowa. You will remember that this disease was widespread in Iowa in 2014, and severe on susceptible hybrids. Since the fungus survives the winter in corn residue, we likely have above normal inoculum present. Cool weather with frequent precipitation favors infection of corn by the fungus and disease development. New lesions may develop every 4 days (Muiro et al., 2010) when conditions are favorable (susceptible hybrid, cool and wet weather). Warm dry conditions will slow or halt disease development until favorable conditions return.

It will be very important this growing season to scout fields that are planted to NCLB-susceptible hybrids. If the disease is present on 50% or more of the plants in the field, the hybrid is scored susceptible and cool, wet weather is forecast, a foliar fungicide application may be required. In 2014, applications at V5-V6 reduced NCLB, but applications made at R1 were more effective at protecting the canopy through dent. In 2014 however, July was dry and NCLB development slowed or stopped before starting up again in August through September. If 2015 remains cool and wet, NCLB will win the “Disease of the Year” award for a second consecutive year.
**Family Living Expenses**

By Joyce Lash, Human Sciences Specialist, Family Finance, [lash@iastate.edu](mailto:lash@iastate.edu)

Family living expenses are one of the largest competitors for cash flow on a farming operation. It’s more likely this area of a farming operation will receive closer evaluation as the health of agriculture economics becomes less robust. Knowing how your lender defines family living costs and the standards they compare you to, is important to understand.

A measure of how to evaluate your family spending is to look at averages that are reported by those who track farm family spending. In a report from the [University of Illinois](http://www.illinois.edu) using data from the Illinois Farm Business Farm Management Association, the average dollar amount of family living expenses moved from just under $53,000 in 2004 to just under $81,000 in 2013. The non-farm expenses include family capital expenses, family living expendables, charitable contributions, healthcare related expenses, life insurance premiums, and taxes (federal, state, and social security). Family living expendables are the largest component and include groceries, meals away from home, clothing, entertainment, education expenses, personal transportation, non-farm interest, non-farm utilities, etc.

Spending for family living expenses is often stated as a per acre expense. In 2004, the Illinois report, showed an average cost per acre for family living of $84. The amount increased to $121 per acre in 2013. Lender’s at an American Bankers Association National Agriculture Bankers Conference recently heard data that reported grain producers with low-maintenance families averaged $80 per acre family living costs while high maintenance on average withdrew $240 an acre equivalent.

Farm families often reduce the demand that family living expenses place on net farm income by generating nonfarm income. Unfortunately lenders don’t always view this as separate from the total income available to repay debt. If you haven’t been giving some attention to this part of your farming operation, starting now would prepare you for difficult questions if cash-flows become tight.

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**Beef Producer Tour Planned**

Joe Sellers and beef producers in southcentral Iowa have planned a ranch and feedlot bus tour to north central Nebraska set for August 26-29. The bus will leave Chariton at 8:00 am August 26 and return by 7:00 pm on the 29th.

Tentative stops include Kennedy Cattle Company, the ISU Armstrong Research Center, Jindra Angus, Wulf Cattle Company, Rolling Stone Feedyard, ranch stops planned by the Sandhills Cattle Association, and other ranches and feed yards in Western Iowa and Nebraska. A full itinerary is under development. Overnight stays will be at O’Neill, Valentine, and Kearney, Nebraska. Sponsors include Midwest Heritage Bank, Zoetis Animal Health, and the Iowa Beef Center at Iowa State University.

Participants are responsible for their own room reservations, a registration fee of $150 fee payable to Lucas County Extension, and some meals during the trip. Room reservations and preregistration for the bus must be made by July 26 to assure access to lodging and a seat on the bus!

A block of rooms are held under “Iowa Beef Tour/Iowa State University” at these motels – Holiday Inn Express, O’Neill ($120 room rate) – 402-336-4500; Econo Lodge Inn, Valentine ($89.99 room rate) – 402-376-3131; and Fairfield Inn, Kearney ($114.95 room rate) – 308-236-4200. (Rates listed are for 2 Queen or 1 King standard rooms, plus tax.) The room blocks will be released on July 26.

To register for the bus send a check for $150 per person to Lucas County Extension, 48293 Hy Vee Rd, Chariton, Iowa 50049. For more details contact Joe Sellers at 641-203-1270, or email [sellers@iastate.edu](mailto:sellers@iastate.edu).
Opportunities for Custom Feeding
From the Iowa Beef Center blog

Based on an Iowa Beef Center survey last spring, we estimate that only 11% of the cattle on feed in Iowa are custom fed. While the number of cattle in Iowa feedlots is higher than it's been historically, the traditional concept of the farm feedlot marketing crops through their its cattle remains important. As corn prices remain at or below breakeven prices for many crop producers, and as young cattle feeders look for innovative business arrangements to grow or ease the challenge of generational transfer, custom feeding may have significant growth opportunities in Iowa.

The same IBC survey shows nearly 50% of the custom-fed cattle were owned by other cattle feeders. This arrangement works well for young producers with the skill to manage, feed and provide daily care of the animals. This arrangement also allows feedlots to add capacity without the increased risk of ownership or capital requirements to purchase the additional cattle. For the cattle owners, placing cattle in custom lots spreads production risk, allows them to feed more cattle without the long term fixed costs of the facility, and allows economies of scale for risk management, cattle purchase and marketing arrangements.

Crop producers owned 24% of the custom fed cattle in this survey. In the current economic environment, this represents perhaps the greatest immediate growth opportunity for custom feeding in Iowa. Local corn growers may deliver corn to the feedlot as dry or high moisture corn. High moisture corn eliminates drying costs, allows an earlier start to harvest, and provides increased energy value in the feedlot. Arrangements also may be made to return the manure nutrients to the land. With current fertilizer values, this has significant value. The concept of using livestock through contract feeding to provide alternative markets for corn and provide a source of organic nutrients for crop production has supported the growth of swine finishing in Iowa for several years. Custom cattle feeding provides another opportunity to do the same.

Cow-calf operators owned less than 9% of the cattle in custom feedlots. With current high calf prices most cow-calf producers opt to sell their calves at weaning or after a short backgrounding period. In the longer term though, retained ownership has been a profitable venture. For the producer who has invested in genetics for growth, efficiency and carcass value, retaining ownership is the only way to capture the value of that investment. Many professional custom feedlots offer services that will provide individual performance and carcass data to be used in further herd improvement decisions. For smaller producers, services like the Tri-County Steer Futurity can facilitate custom feeding and data services. As the beef industry expands, programs that add value to the calf crop will also grow. Retaining ownership can provide the producer an opportunity to capture that value.

For cattle feeders looking to increase capacity for custom cattle feeding, IBC has new resources. The Beef Feedlot Systems Manual was recently revised with updated information. Also, a new decision tool to evaluate facility decisions has been developed. For more information check out this link: http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/news/FeedlotManualCalculator.html.

Local County Fairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appanoose</td>
<td>July 20 - 25, 2015</td>
<td>Appanoose County Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>July 14 - 19, 2015</td>
<td>Davis County Fairgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>June 24 - 29, 2015</td>
<td>Jefferson County Fairgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas</td>
<td>July 24 - 30, 2015</td>
<td>Lucas County Fairgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monroe</td>
<td>July 23 - 27, 2015</td>
<td>Monroe County Fairgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Buren</td>
<td>July 12 - 20, 2015</td>
<td>Van Buren County fairgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wapello Expo</td>
<td>July 15—18, 2015</td>
<td>Bridgeview Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne</td>
<td>July 28 - Aug. 3, 2015</td>
<td>Wayne County Fairgrounds</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Emerald Ash Borer Informational Meeting to be Held in Wayne County

A very small (½ inch long x ⅛ inch wide), metallic green beetle is moving/being moved across Iowa and is destroying ash trees in its wake. More than twenty counties are now considered infested by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and this count is expected to increase in the coming year.

ISU Extension & Outreach, Wayne County and the Wayne County Board of Supervisors will sponsor a meeting to be held in the Courthouse meeting room to inform the public about the Emerald Ash Borer.

The talk is scheduled for Monday, July 20, 2015 from 6:30 – 8:30 pm. Dr. Mark Shour, ISU Extension and Outreach will speak on treatment options. Mike Kintner, Iowa Department of Agriculture Land Management, will cover the basics of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), its history in the country, and current distribution.

There is no cost to attend this meeting. For more information or to reserve a seat, please call ISU Extension and Outreach, Wayne County at 641-872-1755.