CROP NOTES for February 26, 2018
Iowa State University Extension Information for Northeast Iowa
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Past issues of Crop Notes are posted at:
http://www.extension.iastate.edu/winneshiek/page/crop-notes-brian-lang
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FARM ECONOMY
Current Farm Financial Situation
ISU Extension Ag Economist to discuss the “Current Financial Situations for Agricultural Producers in IA” on Tuesday March 6 in the Borlaug Learning Center. Following this presentation is a discussion about the “Critical Importance of Farm Succession Planning”. This and more is part of the Northeast Iowa Agricultural Experimental Association annual meeting at the ISU Research Farm, Nashua. More details are provided under “EVENTS” below in this email.

Small Drop in Land and Some Input Costs Expected in 2018
Cost of production has declined significantly since 2012, with total corn costs dropping 19 percent and soybean production falling 14 percent. These reductions in cost, however, are dwarfed by falling prices. The price per bushel of corn is down 53 percent since 2012 and soybean prices have dropped 35 percent. “This year appears to be a mix of good news and bad news,” said Alejandro Plastina, assistant professor and extension economist at Iowa State University. “The cost of some inputs are going down while labor and fuel costs are going up. The net result is a very small percent reduction in costs for 2018.” To read more, go to: https://www.extension.iastate.edu/node/44796/
**DISEASES**

**Newly Updated Corn and Soybean Crop Disease Publications**

Both the corn and soybean crop disease publications have been updated and are now available through the Extension Store. The following article provides additional information and links to the Extension Store for ordering.  [https://crops.extension.iastate.edu/blog/adam-sisson/save-isu-extension-field-guides-and-disease-references-through-bulk-deals](https://crops.extension.iastate.edu/blog/adam-sisson/save-isu-extension-field-guides-and-disease-references-through-bulk-deals)

**Frogeye Leaf Spot Fungicide Resistance Confirmed in Iowa Soybean**

An important soybean pathogen in Iowa was recently confirmed to be resistant to strobilurin fungicides (Quinone outside inhibitor, QoI). More details are available in the following article.  [https://www.extension.iastate.edu/article/frogeye-leaf-spot-fungicide-resistance-confirmed-iowa-soybean](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/article/frogeye-leaf-spot-fungicide-resistance-confirmed-iowa-soybean)

**ALFALFA**

**Overwintering**

I keep getting questions about alfalfa overwintering regarding some of the cold temperature periods that we had this winter. Any ‘normally healthy’ alfalfa plants will tolerate soil temperatures above 15 degrees F. With soil temperatures in the 5 to 15 degree range, some tissue damage could occur. To what degree depends on the health of the plants and extent of the cold period. Below is a graph from the Iowa Mesonet website showing 4-inch soil temperatures from Jan. 1 to today. There was only a day or two at the end of January where soil temperatures dropped just below 15 degrees F. This does not concern me with my alfalfa plots at the research farm. You might be asking why the chart can show some days with lower air temperatures but higher soil temperatures versus others. That’s the influence of insulation from snow cover. This is where a late fall cutting of alfalfa, especially if it was cut short late into the fall rather than left with 6-inches of stubble to help catch snow can make a difference on how much cold soil temperature stress plants may be subjected to.

![Graph showing soil temperature](image)

**PASTURE**

**Frost Seeding** (repeat from the January 29 Crop Notes)

In winter and very early spring, once the snow clears so that broadcast seed can make seed-to-soil contact, it is time to ‘frost-seed’. The typical window for this is February through early March. It is alright to have snow fall on top of a frost seeding, but it is not recommended to apply seed on top of snow. Frost seeding tries to mimic nature in that mature forages would drop seed to the ground in fall, winter and spring. A small percentage may germinate and establish. To improve our odds, we use quality seed and techniques to optimize the practice. In fall, overgraze the site (stress the forage) intended for frost seeding to better open up the canopy for the seed to achieve seed-to-soil contact and reduced competition early in development. While frost seeding attempts to take advantage of freeze-thaw cycles to achieve seed-to-soil contact, if feasible let cattle walk on a frost seeded area to improve seed-to-soil contact. Frost seeded areas should not receive nitrogen fertilizer in early spring in order to minimize early growth competition from already established plants in the area. It is
understood that frost seeding is a hit-&-miss practice that only succeeds about 60% of the time, but it’s a very easy low cost method of trying to improve pasture quality. More details about frost seeding is available in the ISU publication at:  [https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/Improving-Pasture-By-Frost-Seeding](https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/Improving-Pasture-By-Frost-Seeding)

**ON-FARM TRIAL OPPORTUNITY**

**Are You Interested in Cooperating with an On-Farm Research Project?**

ISU Extension and Iowa Soybean Association are looking for farmer cooperators interested in a specific field trial focused on the effects of cover crops and green manure amendments on soybean diseases (specifically SDS, White mold and Fusarium root rot).

For the 2018 season, we need some grower fields with a history of White mold where we can establish strips of ‘spring oats’ and ‘no oats’. Ideally the growers would have an idea of the areas of their fields where there is highest disease pressure so we could plant the strips there. Strips would be about 100 feet long and replicated four times for a total of eight strips.

We would do the following operations on those fields:

1. Plant oat strips in mid-late March
2. Kill the oats ~ 2 weeks before planting soybean
3. Plant soybeans late April - early May
4. Visit the field 2-3 times in the season for disease ratings and taking plant samples
5. Harvest the strips

We would take care of all the field operations for the trial. For the 2019 season, we will want to include rye and fall oats as treatments, so we are also looking for fields where we can establish fall cover crops this Fall. But we have more time to find field for that.

If you are interested, please contact me and I will get you in touch with those running the project.

**USDA-NASS (National Ag Statistics Service)**

**NASS Just Released the County Crop Yields for 2017**


**EVENTS**

**Feb. 27-Mar. 1, ISU Extension Presentations at the Hawkeye Farm Show, Cedar Falls**

The Hawkeye Farm Show will be held Feb. 27-March 1 inside the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls. The event runs from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM daily. ISU Extension presentations at 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM are as follows:

**Tuesday, Feb. 27**

11:00 AM, 2018 Weather Outlook, Elwynn Taylor, Extension Climatologist
1:00 PM, Crop Disease Update, Alison Robertson, Extension Plant Pathologist

**Wednesday, Feb. 28**

11:00 AM, 2018 Crop Market Outlook, Chad Hart, Extension Grain Markets Specialist
1:00 PM, Iowa Cover Crop Research Updates & Recommendations, Liz Juchems, Program Specialist with Iowa Learning Farms

**Thursday, March 1**

11:00 AM, Timely Scouting for Insect Pests Utilizing a Crop Scout Calendar, Brian Lang, Extension Agronomist
1:00 PM, Dicamba Update, Terry Basol, Extension Agronomist

For more information, go to:  [https://hawkeyefarmshow.com/](https://hawkeyefarmshow.com/)

**Mar. 1, Southeast Iowa Ag Research Association Annual Meeting, Iowa City**

10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Topics include: “2018 Crop Market Outlook” by Chad Hart, ISU Agricultural Economist; “Dicamba Outlook for 2018” by Kristine Tidgren, Director of the ISU Center for Ag Law and Taxation; “Using ISU Weather, Soil Moisture, and Temperature Station Data for Decision Making” by Elwynn
Taylor, ISU Climatologist; “Crop Rotation and Profitability Research Results” by Matt Liebman, ISU Professor of Agronomy. For details about the meeting, please go to: https://crops.extension.iastate.edu/blog/greg-brenneman-meghan-anderson-rebecca-vittetoe-virgil-schmitt/southeast-iowa-agricultural

Mar. 6, Northeast Iowa Ag Experimental Association Annual Meeting (NEIAEA), Nashua
Free program, all are welcome. Come for whatever times/topics that interest you. Receive a free copy of the 2017 Annual Research Farm Progress Report which includes summaries of many of the research trials conducted at the farm.

Agenda:
9:30 AM, NEIAEA Board Meeting, call to order
10:00 AM, Alejandro Plastina, Extension Ag Economist, “Current Financial Situations for Agricultural Producers in IA”
11:00 AM, Melissa O’Rourke, Farm Management Specialist, “Critical Importance of Farm Succession Planning”
Noon, lunch available for purchase from Riverton Lucky Clovers 4-H Club
1:00 PM, Ken Pecinovsky, Farm Superintendent, “Summary of the 2017 Farm Research Trials”
2:00 PM, NEIAEA board of directors meeting
For more information, contact Terry Basol, 641-426-6801, tlbasol@iastate.edu Directions from Nashua Exit 220: Go west on B60 (1.5 miles). Turn south on Windfall Avenue (1mile) At the T intersection turn east on 290th street (1/4 mile). Free CCA credits.

Mar. 21, Crop Scout School, Nashua
9:00 AM to 3:30 PM at the Borlaug Learning Center, Nashua. Designed for growers and beginning crop scouts. Class size is limited, so register early to secure your seat. Taught by your local ISU Extension Agronomists. Registration is $75.00, includes lunch, many materials, and break refreshments. Live plants for weed ID & crop staging. Classroom and hands-on learning. For more details, please read the article at: https://www.extension.iastate.edu/node/44923/ To download a registration form, go to: https://www.extension.iastate.edu/blackhawk/news/crop-scout-school-march-21st-borlaug-learning-center

Mar. 29, Soil Health/Cover Crop/Bioreactor field day
12:30 PM at the Brian Meyer Farm near Readlyn. I will post more information at a later date, however, you can also contact Ron Lenth at the Bremer County Extension office (319-882-4275) for more information.

April 4, Cover Crop Field Day, Postville
Noon to 3:00 PM at the Don Elsbernd farm near Postville. Topics include: Cover crop seeding dates; Delayed cover crop termination; Soil health benefits of cover crops; Interseeding cover crops in corn. For more information, go to: https://www.practicalfarmers.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2018-Spring-Field-Day-Flyer-FINAL.pdf

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