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Washington County Ag Report August 17, 2004

Contributors are Sandy Buxton, Colleen Converse, Aaron Gabriel, Laura McDermott, and JJ Schell.

“Parents are shuttles on a loom. They join the threads of the past with threads of the future and leave their own bright patterns as they go.” -- Fred Rogers

Announcements

Thursday, Aug. 26, 5-7 p.m. Heirloom and Specialty Tomato Variety Meeting, Vegetable Research Farm NYS Ag Experiment Station, Geneva. Come see and taste 116 heirloom and specialty tomato varieties from the US, Europe and Mexico! For a list of the varieties ahead of time contact Carol MacNeil at 585-394-3977 ext. 33 or crm6@cornell.edu by Tuesday, Aug. 24th.

Thursday, September 9, 2004 - Bus Trip to Wave Hill and New York Botanical Garden, sponsored by Washington County Master Gardeners. This is an opportunity for local horticulturists to look at the newest varieties in a landscape setting. For more information call 800-548-0881. LM

Thursday, September 16, 2004 - Organic Vegetable Production for a NYC Greenmarket, Westtown, NY. For more information, to register and directions contact Regional Farm & Food Project, 518-271-0744.

Tuesday & Wednesday, Sept. 28-29 – Agricultural Assessment School – a class offering 15 Continuing Education credits for local tax assessors who will learn about a number of issues that are important when assessing agricultural businesses and properties. A valuable experience for your town official that is being offered in Schaghticoke! For more information or registration, please call 272-4210.

Sun – Weds., October 17-20, 2004 - International Maple Tour, Roaring Brook Resort and Conference Center, Lake George. This multi-day conference offers tours, educational sessions and interaction with hundreds of maple producers from the entire Northeast region and Canada. Hosted by the Upper Hudson Maple Producers. For more information and to register contact Mike Hill, 518-623-9783. LM

Saturday, October 23, 2004- Barn Tour and Barn Dance, self-guided tour offers a look at 7 local barns and the Barn Dance finishes the day with down-home fun. Proceeds will benefit the programming of Cornell Cooperative Extension in Washington County. For more information call 800-548-0881. LM

Midwest Commodity Prices - from the Wall Street Journal

Corn per bushel	\$2.16/bu	Cotton Seed Meal per ton	\$154/ton
Soybean per bushel	6.14/bu	Corn Gluten Feed	63/ton
Hominy Feed per ton	69/ton	Wheat, soft white	3.83/bu
48% Soybean meal per ton	207/ton	Tallow per pound	.19/lb

These prices are provided only to show where the general market trends are moving and to help you determine appropriate ration ingredients. Local prices will vary due to shipping, processing, and discounts.

Weather Data – 2004 and average of 1999 - 2003

	Argyle		Easton		Whitehall		Jackson	
	2004	Average '99 – '03	2004	Average '99 – '03	2004	Average '99 – '03	2004	Last Year
Rain Past Week	5.95	0.55	5.10	1.37	2.65	1.08	2.94	0.75
So far this month	6.62	2.48	5.50	2.69	2.79	2.54	3.28	4.69
Total since April 1 st	24.76	16.51	23.13	17.03	18.65	17.95	20.54	16.61
GDD Base 41 Growing Degree Days = [hi temp + low temp]/2 – 41								
Past Week	211	231	219	230	233	237	205	242
Since April 1 st	2866	2920	2926	3000	3226	3190	2892	3000
GDD 86/50 [hi temp + low temp]/2 - 50 High's >86°F are set to 86°F, low's <50°F are set to 50°F								
Past Week	150	161	157	158	171	166	142	175
Since April 1 st	1965	2001	2044	2063	2227	2194	2003	2071

FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT: With fall approaching (I know it is hard to think that we are actually getting there), it is important to remember that the federal government's fiscal year ends September 30th. For dairy producers who ship more than 2.4 million pounds of milk/year it may be important to think about when you will want your clock to start ticking for the MILC program if the milk price drops below the cut line. You need to notify Farm Service Agency by the 15th of the previous month (in this case September) if you think the price is going to drop. For more information, call FSA at 692-9940 ext. 2.

CROPS

Soil Quality: If we only knew what the soil conditions would be for corn silage harvest this year. If there is a potential for wet soils and compaction, plan ahead and take appropriate action relative to tires, air pressure, harvest speed, wagon axle weight, and other factors that will affect compaction and harvest in general. Plan for it to take longer to harvest corn silage. Can you load wagons to the top? Will you be able to drive trucks onto fields? Do you need an extra chopper to get the job done in a reasonable amount of time? Is one chopper better suited to wet soils of some fields compared to drier soils of other fields? In a two words – *“plan ahead”* to minimize compaction and make corn silage harvest go as smooth as possible.



Natural Enemies of Insects:

This wet weather may make your life difficult, but it is killing aphids and some other insects because it creates good conditions for fungal pathogens which kill bugs. This photo (courtesy Ken Wise, Cornell IPM Specialist) shows two small healthy aphids and one large fuzz one consumed by the fungus.

Cover Crops: It is time to plant cover crops such as red clover and hairy vetch. Annual ryegrass is a good cover crop. Sometimes it will survive the winter in our area. If it reaches the reproductive stage before the winter, it is more likely to die with the cold and act like the annual that it is.

Alfalfa: What can I say. Do what you can. If fields have no value for feed, then a flail mower (like they use on the side of the road) is a good tool for putting the crop back into the field. If fields have had a long rest period this summer, and you can cut them before September, and they are adequately fertilized, then perhaps we can safely take a cutting late in the fall after alfalfa goes dormant. (Provided Mother Nature smiles upon us.) Diseases are setting into some fields – leaf spots and downy mildew. Potato leafhoppers should be held at low numbers by this weather.

Field Corn: Plan ahead for corn silage harvest. Because of our variable start in the spring, expect the whole plant moisture to vary considerably within many fields. For this reason, it would be wise to use an inoculant that will aid fermentation of forages with varying moisture. How will you store your good quality corn silage separate from your poor quality corn silage? Will your corn silage mature in time? Following are some *averages of local weather data and growing degree days to maturity* *It is just a hip shot!* The “milk line” in a kernel begins to progress from the outside toward the ear after the full dent stage.

GROWING DEGREE DAYS REQUIRED FOR CORN DEVELOPMENT

	<u>Early Dent</u>	<u>Late Dent</u>
From late milk stage to	225	450
From silking stage to	700	900

Average Growing Degree Accumulations (86/50) 1999 to 2003

<u>Ave. GDD Accum.</u>	<u>Argyle</u>	<u>Easton</u>	<u>Whitehall</u>
8/17 to 9/15	498	540	524
8/17 to 9/30	745	780	743

Hopefully your corn is now silking, Check your fields. Determine how much storage is needed for corn that is now silking or older, and how much is needed for corn that is younger and may not reach maturity.

Pasture: Between now and Sept. 15 or so is a good time to apply herbicides to kill existing pastures for renovation. Roundup works well on grasses and many broadleaf weeds. However, if you have bedstraw, you need Crossbow to control it. Crossbow is expensive, but there are not other recommended herbicides.

VEGETABLES

‘WORKAMPER’ LABOR ON OUR FARM . Leslie and Ron Blair, Blair's Berry Farm, Rochester, VT

During the summer of 2002 we some customers come to our berry farm who were volunteering for the Forest Service as 'workampers'. They gave us a copy of Workamper News, a bi-monthly magazine that matches up businesses and workers who travel in their RVs, working as volunteers in exchange for a camp site and the necessary hookups (power, water, septic, telephone). We advertised in the winter issue of the magazine and received about a half dozen inquiries and resumes. After speaking to the applicants on the phone, we asked two couples to come work with us in the summer of 2003. It went so well that we put in a third campsite for 2004 and one of the three couple had returned from the previous year.

Workampers are generally retired, ranging in age from 55 to 70. Each couple works as a unit. Their priority job is taking care of customers (you-pick as well as those buying pre-picked berries from our shop), in addition they do some picking, sorting, weeding, and other crop tending as well as keeping the shop clean. Some workampers want extra hours for hourly pay and some don't. This is established from the start and helps determine whether or not they are a good match. In our case, we offer the site from May to October in exchange for 8 weeks of work, approximately 5 hours per day, 5 days a week per person. We have offered only a small amount of additional per-hour work. Two of our sites are gravel and one is a grassy pad. The cost of putting in the sites can be considerable and depends upon what you need to do to get power, water, and septic set up for each of them. And of course there are various state regulations to be dealt with. We highly recommend the program. We've been enjoying all of our workampers and find them to be very congenial and hard working. All of the information you need is available on line at www.workamper.com or call (501)362-2637.

Edited from the **Vegetable Pest Status Report August 13, 2004** By John Mishanec, IPM Vegetable Program

General Conditions: The big news, as everyone knows, is the heavy rain experienced by everyone. Flooding in fields is very common. Hopefully, we will get some weather that will allow crops and fields to dry out. With all the rain, it is especially important to scout your fields. There are reports heavy-duty disease problems to our south. Late blight and downy mildew, two very serious diseases that can really wipe out a crop quickly are said to be very heavy in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The rains are coming up from the south, and these diseases will come up with the storms. Try to get out into your fields at least twice a week to look for disease problems. These diseases need to be found early before they spread throughout your whole farm.

Potatoes: The race of **late blight** reported at many locations in western NY is race 8. It only goes to potatoes. Bravo weather stick is still the best product to protect potatoes from late blight. Do not use Ridomil as it is not effective against late blight. For organic growers, copper is about the only product that will give some protection.

Vine Crops: With flooding in fields, the big risk is **phytophthora**. After harvest, a 10% bleach solution sprayed on windrowed fruit will help slow breakdown. Another serious problem you need to scout for is **downy mildew**. It is very important to walk and scout your fields at least a couple times a week to look for this problem. This disease migrates from the south and is carried on storms. A "spore storm" can land on a field. Look for dark green, angular shaped splotches the size of a quarter on the upper surface of the leaf. With humid conditions, you will see

sporulation on the underside of the leaf. If you find this disease in your vine crops, you have 3-5 days to apply a systemic fungicide. Ridomil Gold is recommended as is Quadris and Flint. If gone untreated, after 5 or so days, the leaves will go limp while the stems will stay upright and it will look like the field was frosted. This is a very serious problem. We usually do not see downy mildew every year. The last time we saw it was around 8 years ago. Photos of all these diseases can be seen on line at the following location, <http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/>. The fact-sheets will also give you more in-depth information on all the diseases.

Looking at a lot of fields, it is easy to tell which fields were treated with Admire at planting. **Bacterial wilt** can be found in the fields without Admire while the disease cannot be found in the Admire treated fields. It cost around \$200 to set up your planter with a pump, tank and hoses to apply Admire at planting. This is a very good investment because you cannot stop the first flush of cucumber beetles from feeding on your crop. The beetles carry the bacteria and once the plants are infected, it is too late to do anything. Bacterial wilt shows up around this time of year when the fruit is sizing up and vines are showing some powdery mildew.

As for **powdery mildew** (PM), it is beginning to be found in every field. PM likes hot, dry conditions so the weather we have been having does not push the disease too hard. We are finding some disease resistance to the systemic fungicides we have been using and so Prof. Tom Zitter from Cornell is recommended a rotation between Topsin M, Quadris/Flint (the same mode of action), Nova and the new product Quintec. All these products should be tank mixed with Bravo or copper to help avoid resistance.

Lastly, there is a new disease in NY. Prior to this year, a disease called **plectosporium blight** was found all around us but not in NY. Traveling with Professor Tom Zitter, we found the disease in Orange and Dutchess counties. It looks a lot like cucumber beetle feeding damage on stems - tan elongated spots. You need to also look at the leaves and you will find along the major ribs of the leaf, elongated diamond shaped lesions on and along the main veins. As the disease gets going all the vines and stems will be covered with these tan lesions. It can be controlled with the same fungicides used normally to control powdery mildew. Be on the lookout for this disease.

Tomatoes and Peppers

I want to stress the importance of copper sprays on tomatoes with **bacterial canker and spot**. You can still get a pretty good yield if the plant is covered with copper. Lower leaves will have a blackening around the edges and if you cut a stem, you will see a discoloration. You might also notice a lack of flowering in infected plants. If you look hard at the fruit, you will find black spots on the tops of the fruit under the cap. Also look for the classic "birds eye" type of spot. A small spot with a black outline, a white center with a black spot in the middle. It looks like a birds eye. These are classic signs of bacterial disease. The fungal diseases, which are also starting now to gain a foot hold in crops do not cause black spots on the fruit.

Late blight has been reported on tomatoes in NJ and could spread up north with the storms we have been having. Scout your fields as this disease can come in and spread throughout a field very, very quickly. Again, the spots will be big, the size of a half dollar. If you find the disease early, you may be able to slow the progression by killing and pulling out infected plants. Use a 5 day spray interval for late blight control. If this is not possible be sure to use one of the more effective fungicides such as Curzate, Gavel or Previcur Flex. Curzate and Previcur Flex need to be tank mixed with a protectant fungicide. Gavel is formulated as a mix with mancozeb.

Previcur Flex has systemic activity (movement up and out), Curzate has locally systemic activity, but Gavel should be treated as a protectant.

About the only good news for tomato growers is the price is still high as red fruit is scarce. Disease problems may also limit the amount of tomatoes coming up from NJ and keep the price high. **If you have noticed there are not a lot of flower blossoms on you tomato plants, it is caused by all the wet weather and botrytis gray mold. Flowers will just drop off once they have formed and you will not get a good late set.**

Sweet Corn

We are into late season push and **corn ear worm** (CEW) is here in force. We are catching lots of CEW moths in most locations. Storms from the south are bringing up the moths. On the other side of it, european corn borer (ECB) is being caught in low numbers probably because of the cool nights. Still, growers need to protect corn in silk. At this point in the season, with more than 2 CEW moths per night begin caught, you are in a 4-5 day spray schedule. Corn while it has fresh silks is susceptible to CEW. Once the silk turns brown, you can stop spraying that field.

Peppers

In peppers, with all the rain, we are seeing **phytophthora blight** on peppers. When the plant has a heavy fruit load, the stems will turn brown and the whole plant will collapse. The disease spreads fast to neighboring plants especially if there is standing water in the field. Again, you may want to disk a kill zone around the infected area to stop the spread of the disease.

Afterwards, wash and disinfect your tractor and equipment. According to Prof. Tom Zitter, an application of Ridomil Gold Copper on a 14 day interval may help protect other plants in the field. Also, it is fairly easy to find **verticillium wilt** in peppers. One side of the leaf will turn brown. Fortunately, the fruit will be largely unaffected.

Greenhouse: Keep your eyes open for **plant hopper** damage on fall mums. We also identified **stink bugs** on pot grown mums this week. These insects are leaf eaters and are usually not pests, but they must be around in large numbers because we also had them brought in by homeowners that found them on sweet corn and on an ash tree.

The following information came Amanda Hodges in Florida: Hibiscus plants potentially infested with **Pink Hibiscus Mealybug** (PHM), *Maconellicoccus hirsutus* (Green), originating from a nursery in Homestead, FL (First Foliage Nursery), have apparently been shipped to approximately 30 states in the U.S. The Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry (FDACS-DPI) has contacted the appropriate state departments of agriculture (SDA's) for states that have received suspect shipments. The State Department of Agriculture (SDA)

and/or the USDA-APHIS-PPQ individuals for each state involved are in the process of conducting trace forwards relating to these plant shipments. The Florida Foliage Nursery has cooperated in providing the appropriate distribution lists. For further information specific to the status of PHM interceptions in your state, please contact your SDA.

Please see the following websites for more general information:

<http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/pi/enpp/ento/pink.htm>

<http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/orn/mealybug/mealybug.htm>

<http://www.mrec.ifas.ufl.edu/lso/PinkMealybug.htm>

<http://www.mrec.ifas.ufl.edu/lso/Mealybugs.htm>

This page contains images of mealybug species that are sometimes confused with PHM, such as *Hypogeococcus pungens* (no common name), *Paraccocus marginatus* (papaya

mealybug), and *Ferrisia virgata* (striped mealybug).

As evident from the above extension publications, key field identification information includes: a pinkish body and bright pink egg masses.

NOTE: FIELD IDENTIFICATION IS OFTEN NOT SUFFICIENT. EXPERIENCED FIELD PERSONNEL HAVE PREVIOUSLY MISTAKEN OTHER MEALYBUGS FOR PHM.



Photo: Dale Meyerdirck, USDA, APHIS

Landscape: This turf weed control information is from Dr. Frank Rossi's electronic newsletter. Ground ivy is a huge problem for landscapers especially in lawns annual nitrogen rates above 2 lbs. N/1000 sq. ft. The broadleaf preemergence herbicide isoxaben reduces ground ivy. The full-labeled rate of broadleaf herbicides maximizes ground ivy control. Triclopyr, 2,4-D, and fluroxypyr are some of the better herbicides for controlling ground ivy. Dicamba, clopyralid, and quinclorac have little effect on ground ivy. Efficacy of slower-acting herbicides such as triclopyr applied in the fall may not become apparent until the following spring. Populations of ground ivy exist that have differential susceptibility to herbicides. For instance, one population may not be sensitive to 2,4-D while a neighboring population is extremely sensitive to 2,4-D. Therefore, it is important to alternate herbicides when attempting ground ivy control.

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Gabriel
Extension Resource Educator
Crops and Soils