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Washington County Ag Report
August 16, 2005

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"Always do right. This will gratify some people, and astonish the rest." -- Mark Twain

Announcements

THERE WILL BE NO "AG REPORT" NEXT WEEK . It is our Fair Week. Hope to see you all there. Our next "AG REPORT" will be 8/30/05.

August 22-28, 2005 Washington County Fair – make sure that you check out the exhibits, meet people including Sandy F. the new Dairy Educator, and take a minute to socialize and unwind!

Date to be Announced at Moses Farm in Eagle Bridge. We will look at a biodegradable mulch trial as well as some pepper trials etc.

Thursday, September 8th – Coach Bus Trip to Wave Hill Gardens and Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture. Sponsored by Master Gardeners of Washington County, but opened to the general public. Cost is $50/person for guided tours and transportation. Please call 746-2560 for more information on this trip, or check out our website at http://www.cce.cornell.edu/washington/washington.html. Registration is due by August 25th, but trip should fill quickly.

Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 17 & 18, 2005 Small Farm Expo in PA – a conference on topics related to beginning, part time and small farmers. For more info check out www.smallfarmexpo.org

October 8 - NYS Nursery/Landscape Association Region 3 - Used Equipment Auction, held at HURB Landscaping, 4278 Albany St. Albany, NY 12205. An opportunity for members to buy and sell used equipment. Preview at 7:00am, Auction starts at 8:00am. Sellers must register and get info on bringing items to sell. For more info contact: Jerry Parmenter 765-5002, or Brian Fleury at (518) 438-9823

November 15-17 - Empire State Green Industries Show (formerly the Turf and Grounds Expo) Programs will be offered from the NYS Turfgrass Association, NYS Nursery/Landscape Association, NYS Arborist-ISA Chapter, Inc. and the NYS Flower Industries. Credits will be offered for courses; 41.25 DEC Category specific credits; 3.75 CORE credits; 2.05 GCSAA education points and 22.5 ISA continuing education units. Riverside Convention Center, Rochester, NY Contact: NYSTA (800) 873-TURF, www.nysta.org/greenshow/home/html.

Weather Data – 2005 and average of 1999 - 2004

	Argyle		Easton		Whitehall		Jackson	
	2005	Average '99 – '04	**2005**	Average '99 – '04	**2005**	Average '99 – '04	**2005**	Average '03 – '04
Rain Past Week	**1.66**	1.36	**0.50**	1.70	**0.49**	1.28	**0.90**	1.58
So far this month	**1.81**	2.65	**0.85**	2.76	**0.70**	2.48	**0.90**	3.69
Total since April 1st	**16.99**	17.36	**15.47**	17.65	**16.40**	17.96	**16.47**	12.18
GDD Base 41 Growing Degree Days = [hi temp + low temp]/2 – 41								
Past Week	**264**	224	**253**	227	**283**	235	**262**	224
Since April 1st	**3094**	2878	**3109**	2955	**3561**	3162	**3157**	2917
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	**188**	158	**177**	157	**204**	165	**184**	160
Since April 1st	**2130**	1972	**2175**	2038	**2458**	2175	**2218**	2018

Midwest Commodity Prices - from the Wall Street Journal

Corn per bushel	$1.93/bu	Cotton Seed Meal per ton	$146/ton
Soybean per bushel	6.05/bu	Corn Gluten Feed	54/ton
Hominy Feed per ton	43/ton	Wheat, soft white	3.58/bu
48% Soybean meal per ton	193/ton	Tallow per pound	/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.

Advertising accepted in accordance with rules of Cornell Cooperative Extension and subject to final determination of acceptability by the Executive Director. Advertising space is limited to subscribers only.

Trading Post

For Sale: New hydraulic hoses 3/8" with JIC ends 4' to 9' long, $1/ ft.
JIC to 1/2" pipe fittings $1 each. 495-0531

For Sale: Gathering chains for John Deere 1 and 2 row corn heads, used but good shape $25 each. 495-0531

DAIRY NOTES: There have been confirmed cases of rabies in Washington county. It is very important that you make sure that your rabies vaccinations are up to date on your livestock and your pets on the farm. You also should keep an eye out for any suspicious acting animal's whether wild or domesticated and report them to your veterinarian and to public health.

FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT: Cooperatives Working Together (CWT) has announced their third round of herd retirements for this fall. They hope to remove about 70,000 cows and 1.9 billion pounds of milk over an 18-month period. There is a fairly short time to submit a bid for participation in the buyout--August 15th through September 16th.

Wayne Knoblauch and Mark Stephenson have developed a calculator to help producers think about what kind of bid they may want to submit (if any). You can download the calculator at http://dairy.cornell.edu/CWT/ More information is available on CWT's website at http://cwt/coop/

CROPS

Soil Health: Last week I went to the Soil Health Field Day at the Cornell farm in Willsboro, Essex County and learned about a new way to assess soil health. Researchers have found that the proportion of small soil granules (clusters or aggregates of sand, silt, clay, and organic matter) in a clump of soil indicates if the physical structure (tilth) is good. To do the test, a clump of soil is shaken on top of a series of hand-held screens of varying sizes. The more granules that fall past the 2-millimeter screen the better. These little granules are formed by the soil particles being "glued" together from sticky substances made by soil microbes. As they come together, the granules form pores in the soil and give it "structure", space for roots, air, and water to move. **Call me if you want to use my set of soil screens to assess your soil health.** AG

Cover Crops: At the Soil Health Field Day I was reminded that sorghum-sudan is the cover crop that produces the most root biomass. It is best to mow it every time it gets waist high. Frequent mowing stimulate more root growth.

Alfalfa: Many folks are taking third cutting alfalfa. How much yield justifies the harvest costs? You can find estimates of machinery costs by Bill Lazarus (U of MN) at http://www.apec.umn.edu/faculty/wlazarus/mf2005.pdf. Using his figures for mowing ($10.09/ac), merging ($10.18/ac), and chopping ($23.38/ac), harvests cost are $43.55 per acre, which does not include trucking. As a rough rule of thumb, I value forage at $100/ton of dry matter. So, a half ton of DM/ac will maybe cover your harvest cost. **To ensure winter survival,** you can harvest alfalfa anytime in the late summer or early fall if the following conditions are met: 1) there is a 6 – 7 week growing period between the last two harvests; 2) the alfalfa is vigorous, disease-free, and growing on well-drained, fertile soil; 3) the first cut the following spring is not harvested unusually early.

Cornell has tested the following potato leafhopper resistant varieties with good results: Pioneer 54H91, Garst(?) 6325, Agri-culver WL 347 LH, Agri-culver WL 347 LH, Seedway FSG 400LH, Seedway WL 436 LH and Mycogen 4375LH. All the alfalfa that you plant should be PLH resistant.

Field Corn: Fortunately, some rain fell this past week, up to 1.55 inches in some places. Corn is still a bit stressed in some places. Ear development is variable. Severely drought stressed corn is just beginning to dent. Last week, I cut off the top three feet of a wilting corn plant, measured its initial weight, then sliced it length-wise and let it dry in my hot car all day. I weighed it again to get its dry weight. I came up with 72% moisture. Remember that the top part of the corn will be the dry portion of the plant and the smaller portion as well. **However, a Washington County**

farm chopped some plants and measured 60% moisture (yes, 60% water, 40% DM) and an Oneida County farm reported plants at 66% moisture. So, it is time to sample your early fields for moisture. Take a representative sample, not from just one spot.

Bugs never like to follow any rules. With all our warm (and sticky) nights, I would have expected corn borers to have laid loads of eggs and to have seen much more damage. I have yet to see any entire field with lots of ECB damage.

Check For Stalk Rots! (from Ken Wise, NYS IPM) It is important to monitor your fields for stalk rots as you start thinking of your corn harvest. If you have an infection of stalk rot it can cause the plant to die early losing grain or silage yields. Stalk rots are caused by many different fungi that enter the plant. They occur when the plant is under stress or when it may be injured by insect pests, hail, deer and bird damages, drought or soil saturation, lack of sunlight, extended cool weather, and the lack of fertility. The following are symptoms of specific stalk rots:

Anthracnose stalk rot symptoms may appear after tasselling as vertical, tan to reddish brown, water-soaked lesions (streaks) in the stalk rind. Lesions become large, dark brown to shiny black. Fields with high amounts of anthracnose leaf blight (both diseases have the same causal agent) should be checked for indications of anthracnose stalk rot.

Diplodia stalk rot symptoms may appear as numerous black pycnidia in the lower internodes of the stalk. The black dots are the size of a pinhead or smaller. When conditions are wet a white mold may develop on the stalk surface.

Fusarium stalk rot normally starts just after pollination and symptoms appear later in the season. When you cut open the stalk, the pith appears as a whitish to pink (salmon) color. There are also distinctive brown streaks on the lower internodes.

The first symptom of gibberella stalk rot is the onset of grayish-green color of the leaves. The stalk will turn dark green to tan near the base of the plant. The pith of the stalk becomes soft and will appear as a red to pinkish color.

Pythium stalk rot normally appears as a decay of the first internode above the soil. The pith will become soft, turn brown and appear water-soaked. Many times the stalk can twist and/ or lodge. Even though it may have lodged the plant will stay green for several weeks because the vascular tissue is not destroyed.

If you discover certain stalk rot diseases make notes of the hybrid, tillage methods, rotation history, and planting date. By doing this you are able to avoid the disease occurrence in the future. The following is the effectiveness of specific management practices for stalk rots:

Corn Disease	Resistant Variety	Crop Rotation	Clean Plow Down of Residues	Fungicides
Stalk rots:				
Anthracnose	1	1	1	4
All other	2	3	3	4

1= highly effective, 2= moderately effective, 3=slightly effective, 4= not effective,
5 = not usually economical,
Reference: Purdue University Field Crops Pest Management Manual

As with most diseases that attack corn, if you can reduce stress on the plants you most likely can reduce the occurrence of certain stalk rots. Having a sound fertility program based on soil testing is important for keeping a corn plant healthy. Select a hybrid with resistance to

certain diseases and good standability that is adapted to your region. Some of these stalk rots can produce mycotoxins that can be toxic to livestock. You should consider having silage tested for certain mycotoxins if you had fields with stalk rots this season. For more information on corn diseases checkout our online publication: IPM for Corn Diseases

Grasses: Should you spend money on nitrogen for grass when it is so dry? Why not just spread some manure. Also, because the ground is hard, this is a good time to spread manure on alfalfa the day or two after it is harvested.

Pasture: Hopefully you have had enough rain to restart your pastures. Leave plenty of leaf tissue after each grazing (3 – 4 inches) to help a rapid regrowth.

FYI:
This website, http://virtualearth.msn.com/ was brought to our attention by Dr. David Wolfe at Cornell. It is incredibly intriguing and worth a few minutes of your attention. If you volunteer as a Town Councilman or on your planning board, or if you put driving maps together for events etc., we think you'll find this extremely helpful. The high-resolution aerial views and ease of manipulating the images are what is really unique. When you get to the site, double-click on "Try cool virtual Earth features" within the Welcome box on the left. Then put the town and state nearest to the farm or other location of interest in the "Where" box at the top, and click on "Local Search". Aerial view should show up. Now double-click on the map until you get the amount of blow-up of the aerial view that you want. You can also move the map around by just holding down on the mouse button. You can save or get printouts.

The Commercial Storage of Fruits, Vegetables, Florist and Nursery Stocks - This on line version of the USDA Agricultural Handbook 66 updates the previous draft from 1986. The intent of the Handbook is to provide guidelines for storing produce to optimize quality and safety. It presents summaries on the storage requirements of fresh fruits, vegetables, cut flowers and other horticultural crops, as well as provides information on quality characteristics, maturity, grading, packing, cooling, chilling sensitivity, crop physiology, food safety and retail display, among other topics. The printed version is not yet available. http://www.ba.ars.usda.gov/hb66/

Harvested Acreage for New York Fresh Vegetables Up 7 Percent - In New York**,** prospective area for harvest of 4 selected fresh market vegetables is 52,100 acres, up 7 percent from the 48,600 acres that were harvested in 2004. Sweet corn acreage rebounded from last year's low harvested acreage to normal levels. The prospective area for harvest of 11 selected fresh market vegetables in the U.S. during the summer quarter is forecast to be 305,400 acres, up less than 1 percent from last year. Acreage increases in celery, broccoli, sweet corn, bell peppers, tomatoes, snap beans, and carrots more than offset acreage decreases in head lettuce, cauliflower, cucumbers, and cabbage. Area forecast for melon harvest is 110,100 acres, down 2 percent from last year. Cantaloupe acreage is forecast at 41,200 acres, 5 percent below 2004. Honeydew area, at 14,800 acres, is up 7 percent from last year. Watermelon area, at 54,100 acres, is 3 percent below a year ago.*From NY Ag* ***Statistics***

VEGETABLES –

Solanaceae: *From Don Halseth, Cornell:* When considering potato harvest, remember that **rapid vine-kill** can cause stem end discoloration. Vine killing 10-14 days prior to harvest also improves skin set thus minimizing problems from **Pythium Leak** and **Bacterial Soft Rot**, both problematic when the weather is hot. Use low rates of chemicals on hot, dry days and make applications early in the morning. Vine kill choices:
1) Gramoxone Extra is labeled for fresh market potatoes on mineral soils and is the best material for grassy fields. Do NOT use on potatoes for seed or storage. Add a nonionic surfactant. Preharvest interval (PHI) is 3 days.
2) Diquat/ Reglone is labeled for all potatoes. Add a nonionic surfactant. PHI is 7 days.
3) Desicate II is labeled for all potatoes. Add ammonium sulfate at 5 lb./acre and LI 700 (or similar adjuvant) at 1 pt/acre unless soils are very dry. PHI is 10 days.
If you generally have trouble killing the vines and/or getting good skin set on some varieties reevaluate the rates and timing of your nitrogen fertilizer applications. To further reduce bruising at harvest be sure the surfaces of all harvest and handling equipment are well padded and drops are reduced to no more than 6 inches. Keep chains full and flowing uniformly. If you are washing your potatoes be sure to use around 100 ppm of chlorine in the wash water, checking the level frequently. Adjust the water to reach a pH of 6 – 7 for maximum chlorine effectiveness. Use new foam rollers to remove as much water as possible from the tubers after washing and use ventilation or refrigeration to dry them further.

Managing Bacterial problems on peppers and tomatoes in the field, by Margaret McGrath, Cornell

For bacterial susceptible peppers, two ways were examined to decrease the number of applications of copper needed to control bacterial diseases. Sprays were initiated after detecting bacterial diseases through scouting. The spray interval was lengthened when temperature was unfavorable (60 F at night) for the pathogen. Both were successful. BLS was managed with the IPM spray program (7-spray total) as effective as with the weekly preventive spray program (12 sprays). This IPM program saved 3 sprays in July before disease detection and 2 sprays in September due to lengthening the spray interval by 1 day for each night the temperature was at or below 60 F. The 2 sprays made in September for the IPM program were needed to maintain yield. Peppers sprayed from disease detection through 30 August (5 sprays) did not produce significantly more fruit than nontreated peppers.

The benefit of applying Maneb with Kocide was evaluated. Mixing Maneb with Kocide and agitating for 90 minutes before spraying reportedly increases the amount of copper in solution. In the pepper bacterial experiment, however, Kocide 2000 applied alone was as effective as Kocide + Maneb. Harvesting is restricted by a 7-day PHI when Maneb is used. The cost of controlling bacterial diseases with Kocide ($126/A for 9 sprays at $7/A for Kocide and $7/A application cost) was much less than the value of the yield gain ($929/A assuming 60% of fruit are marketed at $7.50/box). Refining the chemical control program is warranted because resistant varieties are not expected to completely replace chemical control: there is demand for specialty peppers that currently do not have resistance, new races of the pathogen may arise that are able to infect resistant varieties, and under severe disease pressure some FL growers feel an

Sweet corn: Another of the many aphids that are having a field day this summer are **Corn Leaf Aphids**. Corn leaf aphids (CLA) can build up in hot, dry weather. These insects are greenish blue with black legs and live in the whorl or tassel. They primarily damage sweet corn by producing large amounts of honeydew that can contaminate the ears or promote the growth of sooty mold. In fresh market corn, if 50% of the plants have > 50 aphids per emerging tassel, treatment is necessary to maintain acceptable quality. Metasystox-R, Lannate, Warrior, Asana, Capture, and Mustang MAX are labeled for CLA control.

Irrigating Sweet Corn for Consistent Quality, Ed Kee, University of Delaware (from Northeastern IPM Pest Report by John Mishenac)

Producing high quality sweet corn is crucial to building and maintaining sales. Attractive ears, fully filled with completepollination, that are insect, disease, or damage free are what buyers demand. This is true for direct consumer sales and wholesale sales. Providing consistent, reliable supply of product to the buyer is just as critical to maintaining a good customer. Quality and supply go hand in hand.

Irrigation during hot, dry weather, especially at some critical stages in the corn plant's growth, is necessary on the sandy, light soils. Applying the proper amount of water at the correct time is critical for achieving the optimum benefits from irrigation. the crop water requirement, termed evapotranspiration or ET, is equal to the quantity of water lost from the plant (transpiration) plus that evaporated from the soil surface. The ET rate is important to effectively scheduling irrigation. The ET rate is affected by heat, solar radiation, day length, wind speed, and humidity level. When temperatures are in the nineties, the ET rate can be 0.33 inches per day. In other words, 1/3 of an inch is being lost daily.

While the most critical time for adequate moisture in the sweet corn plant's life cycle is during tasseling, silking and pollination, it is useful to maintain soil moisture at adequate levels. Recent research indicate that maintaining soil moisture levels in a narrow range, just slight below field capacity (75 to 90% soil moisture) maximizes crop response. This may mean that more frequent irrigations of smaller amounts are better than delaying irrigations until the soil moisture reaches a lower level (40 to 50%) and then applying a heavy irrigation.

Conditions on heavier soils with cooler temperatures, may not warrant as much irrigation, However, to develop a reputation as a consistent supplier of high quality sweet corn, which enhances sales, irrigation planning and management is necessary.

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Gabriel
Extension Resource Educator
Crops and Soils