

CROPS NEWSLETTER

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It's the time of year that driving down just about any country road you will see the neat rows of tobacco, corn popping up, and the small grains coming to head. Short of harvest season, it is my favorite time of year. However, it often seems that we get really anxious just before planting time. Did I buy enough seed? Should I have gone with a different variety? Am I planting too late? Is my equipment ready? Am I ready? Where is that tractor? These are all thoughts that run through your mind while lying in bed the night before planting or setting. There is a lot of stuff to worry about on a crop operation. Anxiety, agitation, apprehension, concern, doubt, fear, uneasiness, and annoyance are all emotions that can be experienced leading up to planting. However, once those long, straight, and green rows start to take shape we all breathe a little easier.

Nothing is quite as calming as sitting on the setter and looking back at all the new transplants. The stress of worrying over greenhouse plants is finished for another year, and now we can focus on worrying about other things that we can't control. Like the weather!

In this issue we will discuss early season scouting of corn and tobacco, our small grains field day, target spot trials, and sprayer calibration.

Small Grains Field Day and Pesticide Credit Opportunity on May 24 at 6:00 p.m.

Forsyth, Surry, Stokes and Yadkin County Cooperative Extension will be hosting a Small Grains field day at the Capp Farm in Forsyth County. This will provide one hour of "X" pesticide credit. This is one of the best small grain plots that we have seen in several years with lots of exciting new research. The Capp Farm is located off of Highway 52 at the Westinghouse Rd. exit on Shore Road just north of Winston Salem. For more information contact Tim Hambrick at 336-767-8213.



Dates to Remember

Small Grains Field Day
Forsyth Co..... May 24

Nickels for Know-How
Referendum.....May 25



Scout Early and Scout Often

Mayor Daley was elected as Chicago's mayor in 1955, and served as Chicago's mayor until his death in 1976. A tongue in cheek slogan surrounding Mayor Daley's reelection campaigns was "Vote Early and Vote Often". While I can't condone his political tactics, I can urge you to "Scout Early and Scout Often".

What is scouting and why should I do it? Scouting is done to gain an objective summary of the pest situation in a field. Some of the information that is acquired in scouting is useful in making immediate pest control decisions. Other scouting observations are helpful in determining what to expect at this time next year. Scouting is simply walking through a field and stopping at a certain number of places to look for problems, pests, or pest damage. It is important to cover all areas of the field as problems and pests are not always uniform throughout a field.

Scouting Corn

Modern corn production has evolved into a highly technical, input responsive crop. Poor growth in corn is most often the product of inadequate fertility programs or environmental conditions. Most fertility inadequacies must be remedied before the plant reaches 18 inches in height. Any abnormalities in the field are indicators and should be investigated immediately. Inconsistent corn stands can come from any number of things, and may be confined *to a row* or run *across the row*. Damage confined to the row is often an indicator of planter malfunction, improper starter fertilizer application, or planting depth problems. Damage or abnormal growth that runs across the row may mean that soil type, weather, or pests may be at the root of the problem. For more information contact your Cooperative Extension office or visit the IPM Website: http://ipm.ncsu.edu/corn/Scouting_Corn/contents.html



Scouting Tobacco

Tobacco scouting is very important in producing a heavy, consistent crop. Some important things to keep in mind when you go out to scout a field:

1. Conduct an unbiased assessment of the field.
2. Determine a pattern of plant symptoms in the field.
3. Characterize plant injury symptoms.
4. Note the crop growth stage.
5. Obtain field history information.

Important!!



All of these are important steps in troubleshooting tobacco, and the most important thing is to scout the field with an open mind. Having a preconceived notion about what problems exist will put blinders on your scouting ability. Let the crop indicate the problems, not what your neighbor says. Often tobacco problems in the field do not have a defined pattern, and one specific example is cold injury. Cold injury symptoms will appear randomly throughout the field about a week following a cold snap and closely resembles atrazine damage. So how can we tell the difference from cold and atrazine injuries? We know that generally cold injury is sporadic throughout the field, and that most chemical injuries occur in a regular pattern due to residual effects, drift, or direct application. Remember that the lack of a defined pattern is as important as the presence of a pattern. Using this knowledge, cold injury can be isolated as the cause of our whitening of lateral veins and leaf cupping.

For more information on scouting tobacco contact your Cooperative Extension office. The Tobacco Scouting publication along with a scouting calendar are available on the IPM website: <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/resources/crops/tobacco/ag400/>.

And remember, when it comes to scouting think about Mayor Daley: Scout Early and Scout Often.

Test Plot Volunteers Needed

This year we are going to try to do a target spot test. If you have at least an acre of confirmed target spot and wish to participate, please contact Joshua Stamper at the Yadkin County office (336-679-2061).



Nickels For Know-How Referendum on May 25, 2006

Nickels for Know-How is a voluntary assessment on feed and fertilizer produced and purchased in North Carolina. This money goes to support agricultural research, extension activities, scholarships, fellowships and the kind of Know-How that advances agriculture in North Carolina. The polling location for Stokes County will be at Cooperative Extension office.

Polling in Yadkin County will be held at Burnette's Place in East Bend and at the Yadkin County Extension Office. The vote will be held in much the same manner as a commodity referendum. All users of feed and fertilizers in NC and their family members are eligible to vote.



Sprayer Calibration

A key to properly controlling weeds and pests is applying ag. chemicals at the proper rates, and the easiest way to assure that this is being done is to properly calibrate your sprayer. To set up an appointment to have your sprayer calibrated contact Joshua Stamper at the Stokes or Yadkin County Offices.



Mailing List Update

In an effort to reduce the amount of excess mailings we are updating our mailing list. Please reply to our office if you wish to remain on the mailing list. You may either mail this form or call 679.2061 and request to stay on the Crops Newsletter. This is a good time to add a friend.

_____ Please continue mailings to the following address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Please remove my name from your mailing list.

Newest Edition to Cooperative Extension Staff



Austin Armstrong will be joining our staff for the summer as the Phillip Morris Extension Intern. Austin, a native of Walnut Cove, is a rising sophomore at NC State University majoring in agriculture. Austin is no stranger to the farm community in Stokes county. He is the founder and manager of Armstrong Lambs, a lamb business that he started in 2004, and has had an active role in tobacco production since 1996. His honors and accolades include Northwestern North Carolina Grand Champion Showman, Eastern Carolina Reserve Grand Champion Showman, and served as a Lamb Camp Instructor. Austin will be working with 4-H, ECA, Environmental and Agricultural programs in Yadkin, Stokes and Forsyth counties this summer. We are very excited to have Austin as the newest member of our extension family.



Joshua D. Stamper
Extension Agent
Agriculture—Field Crops

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