

MESSENGER-INQUIRER



July 16, 2022

Tough Time for Some Right Now

The hot dry June weather conditions continued through the 4th of July holiday weekend across the area. Rain came over the 7th, 8th, and 9th with limited areas in the western and central part of the county reporting nearly two inches over the period. Most of the county received far less; no more than a half-inch was reported in areas north of HWY 54. Any moisture helped tremendously but it is important for landowners to be aware there will be wide variations in corn yields across the county this year. Most everyone agrees any record-setting yields are unlikely as the crop was planted too late and June was too dry for that. We also know there are fields that have gone too long without adequate moisture to produce yields close to what the same field has made in the last few years. I'm writing this so that landowners are aware that corn yields, in general, will be lower, possibly resulting in less income than usual, despite the price which is greater than in recent years.

Soybeans are a different story. In areas where moisture fell, they are growing and doing well. Areas that did not get as much rain are also growing and doing well. From tasseling through the milk stage, corn uses about a quarter inch of water from the soil each day for about 10 days. If water is limited during that time, yields suffer. Unlike corn, which has that critical 10-day window water requirement, soybeans bloom, set pods, and develop seed in the pods for

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nearly three months meaning that they too have significant moisture requirements but their opportunity to successfully produce seed is extended over a much larger period than corn. Rain will usually come at some point, allowing soybeans to yield well even in drier summers.

Pasture and hay fields are very concerning. I wrote about their lack of production a few weeks ago but their woes linger as they continue in decline. Again, even the limited showers helped green up fields but several are already feeding winter hay inventory. For those who have not needed to mow the lawn for several weeks, the same is true for pastures and lack of growth needed for the animals to consume.

A very common question during the past few weeks has been whether to apply fungicide to corn. For farms that received adequate rain and normal growth resumed, the decision is easier. For those still under severe stress, the decision is more difficult. Especially if areas of the fields are beyond benefit. That means the cost of treating those poor acres is added to the field acres that can benefit, lowering the return on investment. If you spray yourself, you can decide where to not apply product. If you are hiring it done, the entire field will be sprayed, whether it helps or not.

Whether you have sprayed, or are inclined to not spray this year, the disease to keep close watch over is southern corn leaf rust. While it doesn't overwinter in the U.S, it does make its way up from Mexico and into Kentucky every year. The hope is that it doesn't arrive early enough to affect yields. There is a convenient online map at <https://corn.ipmPIPE.org/southerncornrust/>. If you grow corn you should check this daily. As of last Tuesday, SCLR had been confirmed in several counties in the deep south. The farthest point north was central Mississippi. If it does deposit in Kentucky, it prefers temperatures in the 80's and high humidity. Corn growth stage is an important component of the decision to treat if

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SCLR moves in. Most of the local corn is now in silking stage or beyond. If SCLR is confirmed during silking or blister, the field should be sprayed and a second spray may be needed. If SCLR is found when the field is in milk stage, it should be sprayed but no second spray would be needed. If SCLR comes in during dough stage, fungicide would only be needed in severe infestations with no second spray. If southern rust is found after dent, it is unlikely to need spray. No spray would be needed after black layer.

Ag Development Council Meeting

The Daviess County Agricultural Development Council will meet at 7:00 p.m. Monday, July 18 at the Daviess County Extension Office.

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