

# *Washtenaw County MSU Extension Field Crops Newsletter*

*By Ned M. Birkey, MSU Extension Educator for Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Contact Ned for Field Crop information @ 734-260-3442 or email [birkey@msu.edu](mailto:birkey@msu.edu)*

**Volume 2, Number 4**

**July—Aug. 2008**

## **Farm Bill Meeting**

An important meeting about the new Farm Bill will be held on Monday, August 4, 2008 from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Milan High School auditorium.

The Monroe and Washtenaw County Extension offices, in cooperation with Congressman John Dingell and the Monroe County Farm Service Agency office will sponsor this meeting. All farmers are welcome and invited to participate, free of charge.



## **Fall Field Days**

There are several field days and other events coming up starting in August that will be of interest to field crop farmers.

Center for Excellence is celebrating its 11<sup>th</sup> year and will be held on Wednesday, August 20. Registration begins at 8:00am at the Bakerlads farm, north of Clayton. There are several new plots including; nitrogen management, soybean population, soybean fungicide, soybean sentinel plots and trapping. Lunch will be at the Raymond and Stutzman farm, where the afternoon plots will continue.

Soybean plots will be the focus of a Wednesday, August 27 field day at the Jerry Kuhl farm, Pickens Road, north of Manchester. This field day will run from 5 to 8 pm and feature soybean population, soybean fungicide and soybean sentinel plots and traps.

Farmers are welcome to participate in a rib eye steak supper at a Tuesday, September 8 field day, hosted by Herb Smith at plots located on Dunbar Road, west of Strasburg Road in Monroe County.

The MSU Corn and Soybean Plots will be featured on Thursday, September 11 at a field day hosted by Dave and Jason Woods.

Ralph Nartker of Erie is hosting a corn nitrogen management study and Herb Smith has hosted a Carbon Sequestration project, coordinated by Ohio State University. Although a field day will not be held for these plots, both will be discussed this winter at a meeting at Cabela's.

## **2008 Soybean Yield Contest**

2006 was the first soybean yield contest in Michigan, with a high yield of 71 bushels per acre. For 2007, the high yield was 70 bushels per acre. For 2008, soybean farmers in Michigan are encouraged to consider entering one or two fields into a soybean yield contest. The Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee and Michigan State University Extension are sponsoring this yield contest.

The contest is a “fun” way to encourage farmers to get higher yields of their soybeans because they will be recognized for this by their peers and the soybean industry in Michigan. This contest is part of a Soybean 2010 initiative designed to increase soybean yields in Michigan. Corn and wheat yields in Michigan have increased dramatically in the past ten years, but soybean yields have not.

This contest is based somewhat similar to the National Corn Grower contest. There will not be a re-checking of yields in this case and there are other differences. Brochures with information about the contest are available to farmers through Ned Birkey at 734-260-3442 or Mike Staton at 269-657-7745.

## **Free SCN Diagnosis**

Farmers in southeast Michigan can receive free Soybean Cyst Nematode (SCN) diagnosis for fields in 2008. This laboratory analysis normally costs \$10 per sample, but is paid for by the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee with farmer checkoff funds.

In the past eight years over 400 fields have been sampled in southeast Michigan for SCN. Many of these samples have had a low, medium or high infestation. This level of infestation is a very important piece of information as it suggests the future crop rotation plans for that field.

Now is a great time to sample wheat fields that might be going into soybeans in 2009, or soybeans fields as they begin to mature and lose leaves. Farmers interested in sampling soybeans fields should collect some soil and root mixture from suspected areas of fields that show yellow or stunted plants. Dig up about one quart of mix for each sample. Do not dry this out or leave in a plastic bag out in the sun. This sample should be placed in a cool, shaded location until it is sent to Michigan State University for analysis.

Forms are available at the Washtenaw County Extension office. Special forms need to be used for this free program. For more information, contact Ned Birkey at 734-260-3442.

## **Driver's License for Workers**

There are a number of federal and state rules and regulations regarding the rights and responsibilities of temporary and immigrant workers and employers. One of these involves farm workers who may be driving in Michigan with a non-Michigan driver license.

A 2002 letter from the Michigan State Police states that the Michigan State Police must recognize other state-issued driver's licenses from non-residents employed temporarily in Michigan. This applies to immigrant farm workers who may be driving with a non Michigan driver license.

The State of Michigan also recognizes Mexican driver's licenses just like it does for those from Canada. A 2005 Michigan Attorney General Opinion #7171 (excerpt) re: residents of Mexico with a valid Mexican driver's licenses are entitled to exercise equal driving privileges in Michigan, without obtaining a Michigan driver's license.

**Some Fungicide Application Basics – how not to blow a great tool.**  
**Anne Dorrance, Pierce Paul, Dennis Mills – Ohio State University**

We have learned of some interesting new practices for fungicide applications this season and while not directly “off-label” they are cause for concern. As plant pathologists that utilize these tools and depend on these tools at times to manage epidemics caused by fungi – we thought this would be a good time for a few reminders.

What is fungicide? This is a compound applied to crops to manage a multitude of fungal and fungal-like plant pathogens. Fungicides have been instrumental in managing late blight of potato, apple scab in apples, powdery mildews in wheat, cucurbits, and apples. Fungicides are primarily needed when a susceptible host is grown and the environment is highly favorable. Both conditions must occur at the same time. Better weather models and now predictive models, disease scouting are all used to save producers monies in that the fungicides will be applied only as needed. Many crops now have resistance to many of these pathogens and so the use of these fungicides is not warranted.

There are different classes of fungicides – basically this means that there are different chemistries and these have different features – ie: systemic movement in plants – some move up and down a few leaves, some don’t move at all. Some can be applied shortly after infection has started and have a “curative” effect – but none can be applied after the field has high levels of disease and lots of spore production. Know your chemistry so you know how to use it correctly. Don’t know what your chemistry is? Check out these resources for more information. <http://oardc.osu.edu/soyrustr/> - Chapter 7 has a nice discussion on fungicide basics.

Do fungicides provide a “plant health” benefit? This is questionable for Ohio. Across the US from a number of University based studies in fields with out disease, there has been both a negative and positive response. For our data to get the dramatic yield results – disease was always present. Another fact hidden in some data was insect pressure. Many of the strategies that have been promoted are an insecticide/fungicide combination and again where most of the dramatic results come from pertains to fields where insects had become an issue. Remember those aphid years of 2003 and 2005?

Timing is critical. Fungi (including the water molds) only have certain life stages that are vulnerable to fungicides. If the fungicide is applied too early – it is not effective; if the fungicide is applied to late – it is not effective. The recommendations and guidelines are based on the most up-to-date compilation of studies to optimize the best timing. Read the labels – if the recommendation says to apply at flowering – then a week earlier will not work nor will a week later.

The other fact about fungicides is they don’t last. Many fungi have developed resistance to these very important tools. Based on history, some things that favor fungicide resistance are i) overuse or repeated applications of one chemistry – constantly apply one type of chemistry repeatedly – even if it is a different product (a strobilurin is a strobilurin is a strobilurin no matter who makes it! And don’t forget the mixtures – a strobilurin combined with a triazole is still applying a strobilurin and not rotating) ii( half rates – we don’t know who came up with this idea but it is a really bad one. A half rate won’t be effective in killing the pathogens that you are trying to manage. The pathogens that survive this application have a high potential to be less sensitive to the fungicide the next time around; iii) applying fungicides when pathogen populations/disease levels are already high – this increases the chance that some will survive. You can’t rescue a bad field – let it go and learn the lesson to have better scouting and timing next time.

Fungicides don’t cure environmental problems – fungicides are not the answer for poor fertility, flooding, freeze, frost or hail damage, herbicide mistakes, or anything else. This is not the “take an aspirin” and it will feel better; fungicides are not placebos. If you’ve got a bad field – go home and forget about it, call the insurance guy and learn from it – don’t spray it.



## 2008 SUMMER/FALL/EARLY WINTER CALENDAR

**July 15-17, 2008** Ag Expo at MSU.

**Friday, July 18, 2008** MSU Diagnostic Field Day at East Lansing. **RUP.**

**Thursday, July 24, 2008** OARDC Northwest Research Station Agronomy Field Day. 9:00 to 11:30 am. Custer, OH.

**Wednesday, August 20, 2008** Center for Excellence Field Day. **RUP.**

**Thursday, August 21, 2008** Water Use and Regulation meeting for farmers. Washtenaw MSUE Office. Date and location are tentative at this time.

**August 26-28, 2008** Farm Progress Show, Boone, IA.

**August 27, 2008** Soybean Plots Field Day at the Jerry Kuhl farm. 5-8 pm. Butterfly pork chop supper.

**September 8, 2008** Soybean Field Day at the Herb Smith farm. 4-7 pm. Rib eye steak supper.

**September 11, 2008** MSU Corn and Soybean Field Day at the MSU Plots at Woods' farm. 11am -2 pm. "Leftover" rib eye steak and pork chop dinner.

**September, 2008 One-Day Clean Sweep Pesticide Collection, in mid September, at a site in western Washtenaw County. Contact Amy Gilhouse, Groundwater Stewardship Technician for an appointment and to submit a list of pesticides for disposal.**

**September 17, 2008** Clean Sweep Pesticide Disposal.

**November 12, 2008** Clean Sweep Pesticide Disposal. 9 am-1 pm at the Monroe Extension office.

**November 19, 2008** Pesticide Training and Review Class. 9 am-12:30 pm at the Monroe Extension office. \$10. **RUP.**

**November 20, 2008** Right of Way Category Training and Review Class. 9 am-12:30 pm at the Monroe Extension office. \$10. **RUP.**

**December 8, 2008** Monroe County Agriculture Banquet. 7:00 pm at the 4-H Activity Center on the Monroe County fairgrounds. \$10.

**December 9-11, 2008** Great Lakes Horticulture Expo at Grand Rapids, MI.

**December 18, 2008** Michigan Soybean Association Annual Meeting and Soybean Yield Contest Results Meeting. MSU, East Lansing.

