

Washtenaw County MSU Extension Field Crops Newsletter

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Insect Trapping and Disease Monitoring for 2008

Soybean rust, soybean aphids, Western bean cutworm, Western corn rootworm, European corn borers, Corn earworms and wheat leaf diseases are insect pests and diseases that will be monitored by MSU Extension for Monroe, Lenawee, Washtenaw and Wayne counties this summer. This information is important to farmers who are raising crops affected by these problems to help them manage them.

Although Asian Soybean Rust has not been positively identified in Michigan, it was identified in nearby Ontario on October 16, 2007. USDA has also trapped live rust spores at their Ann Arbor area location this past summer. Cooperating farmers have been identified in all four southeast Michigan counties where regular scouting will occur looking for this disease.

Soybean aphids are monitored during the growing season at the Monroe County Extension office in cooperation with a five-state project coordinated by the University of Illinois. Currently aphids have not been found to have overwintered in large numbers in southeast Michigan. Therefore the projection is that aphids should not be a significant problem in 2008.

European corn borers were not a problem in 2007 because of the early season hot and very dry conditions. Female corn borer moths did not have enough moisture to lay their eggs and there is a significant amount of Bt corn that is resistant to ECB.

The new insect of concern is Western bean cutworm, which is a pest of corn, green beans and other crops. This insect was found in special traps in Monroe and Washtenaw counties in 2007 and will be trapped for this summer in all four counties.

Wheat diseases are of special concern to wheat growers and will be monitored in at least Monroe and Washtenaw counties this spring.



Lake Property Owners and Shoreline Protection

While environmentally friendly landscaping is gaining in popularity with many homeowners, lake property owners have special environmental needs when it comes to protecting and making lake frontage attractive. Lake property owners can learn strategies for “lakescaping” their shorelines by using a new website developed by Michigan State University Extension.

Located at www.shoreline.msu.edu, this new site offers information on lake-friendly shoreline management and restoration for Michigan inland lakes. Topics such as landscaping, storm water retention and erosion control using native plants are addressed using photos and descriptive graphics. In addition, the site details the many lake-friendly features of the Shoreline Management Demonstration Area located at MSU's W. K. Kellogg Biological Station (KBS) on Gull Lake in Kalamazoo County.

This new website offers tips from a Michigan perspective, including state and local permits needed for certain shoreline projects. This should help people understand the principles of lakescaping so they can apply those principles to a restoration plan.

The site includes links to additional resources from Wisconsin and Minnesota, where lakescaping is a more familiar term. This information should help shoreline property owners to choose to lakescape their own properties or hire professional landscapers.

MICHIGAN AGRABILITY – WHAT IS IT?

By Matt Shane, Regional Livestock
Extension Educator

Michigan AgrAbility helps people with disabilities employed in agriculture continued to farm and live independently. AgrAbility services are available to individuals and their families who are engaged in production agriculture. Services are provided through consultations and /or home or farm on-site visits. All consultations are kept confidential. Michigan AgrAbility staff helps farm family members find ways to manage with disabling conditions, find ways to manage with disabling conditions, such as, arthritis, chronic back pain, motion loss, hearing loss and any other conditions that limit their ability to work on the farm.

The Michigan AgrAbility Project links Michigan State University Extension services with Easter Seals-Michigan, Michigan Farm Bureau and Michigan Rehab Services to provide practical education and assistance that promotes independence in agricultural production and rural living.

Any Michigan farmer or family member who has a disability or chronic health condition, regardless of the onset of the condition, is eligible for AgrAbility services. Services offered include farm assessments, suggestions of assistive equipment, counseling and physical therapy.

- If the farmer has trouble accessing his/her equipment, an agricultural engineer or occupational therapist on the AgrAbility staff will make an on-site farm assessment to determine what can be done to help the farmer. The agricultural engineer will locate the equipment, help with installation, and assist the farmer with learning to use it.
- If a farmer needs personal assistance (e.g., hearing aids) that does not require an on-site farm assessment, Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) can assist the farmer.
- Once the farmer starts receiving services from MRS he/she can also receive counseling, physical therapy, and vocational rehabilitation if they are needed and wanted.
- Once the assistive technology/equipment is selected, MRS works with the farmer to help identify a means to pay for it.
- AgrAbility has Peer Network Support Groups to provide forums for farmers who would like to share their experience and seek advice from other farmers with a similar disability.

- AgrAbility provides a list of contacts for farm and disability-related resources, such as, assistive technology, farm equipment, ideas for modification of equipment, and national agencies that can offer assistance.
- The information and referral services and farm-site assessments are offered at no cost to the farmer. The cost of new equipment or modifications made to old equipment, the farm operation, or the farm home is not typically covered with AgrAbility funds. Although some assistance with the cost of the equipment may be available from MRS and Easter Seals, the farmer is always asked to share the costs to the extent possible.

For more information visit

www.michiganagrability.org or call toll-free at (800)956-4106.



Cover Crops for Vegetable Growers

There is a new online tool to help vegetable growers quickly narrow the choices of cover crop for your situation. In a few seconds, this tool will provide the growing instructions for the cover crop that will do the job needed.

This tool is based upon

1. The reason you need a cover crop.
2. When you have a chance to plant.
3. How long it will stay in the field until you need to plant your next crop.

Choose one or more criteria and the database will return the cover crops that might fit your criteria, along with additional considerations that will let you quickly eliminate those that don't fit.

This tool was designed for the soil, climate, cropping practices and seed market of New York. However it is suggested for use in Michigan with perhaps slightly different timing of planting or harvest dates. The website is; www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hort/faculty/bjorkman/covercrops/decisiontool.php

Tractors and Cars Don't Mix Well on Washtenaw County Roads

Tractors, farm implements and cars do not mix well on county and local roads. All drivers need to be extra careful as farm equipment is big, very slow and not easy to maneuver as it goes from field to field via the roads.

Now that the spring planting season has arrived, **slow moving** farm tractors, implements of husbandry and other equipment not only traverse farm fields, but also will be on local and sometimes narrow roads. The orange and red, triangular Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) emblems are a good sign for the protection of farm equipment on the road and for the motorist who sees it while driving. Whether you are a farmer or a motorist out for a drive in the country, a bright and visible SMV emblem can help protect you from traffic collisions.

The SMV emblem is **required by law** to be visible on farm tractors, implements of husbandry (wagons, trailers, etc.), animal-drawn vehicles, and special mobile equipment, such as road graders. The emblem must be used anytime these vehicles are on public roads, regardless of speed or time of day.

The SMV emblem should be mounted with the point up on the center rear of farm equipment between 4 feet and 12 feet above the road surface. If a towing unit obscures the SMV emblem, the towing unit should be equipped with an SMV emblem.

All farmers should replace damaged, faded or otherwise poorly visible SMV emblems with new and clean ones. The brand new SMV emblems are even brighter and more visible than before. Farmers should also use flashers, road lights and turn signals when on the public roads. They should make sure that **all** tractors, implements and machinery have clean, bright and visible SMV emblems.

Life in the slow lane can be dangerous. Sudden stops and turns can spell disaster. For everyone's safety as the spring farming season continues, everyone should always drive carefully and defensively.

Developing a Nutrient Management Plan

The starting point for assessing natural nutrient sources is an intensive soil sampling program. Due either to the past management history or to soil development, the pH, phosphorus and potassium values in most fields vary significantly. To accurately measure this variability, collect at least one soil sample for every few acres.

Determine the amount of nitrogen that will be available if a legume crop was grown in the previous year. Legume crops such as soybeans or alfalfa will provide some residual nitrogen for a succeeding crop.

Best Management Practices for nutrient use involves several steps.

1. Think about nitrogen rate, timing and credits.
2. Do not apply excess phosphorus, establish buffer strips at places where water leaves the field and match nutrient applications to crop needs.
3. Do comprehensive soil sampling.
4. Obtain a soil survey book at the Conservation District offices.
5. Assess nutrient needs for each field.
6. Consider nutrients from livestock manures or bio-solids.
7. Calculate and utilize "home grown" nutrients such as manure or green crops.
8. Calculate the amount of commercial fertilizer needs.
9. Determine the ideal time and method of application. However, do not hold up planting time (for several days or a week) because of a fertilizer application.
10. Select the most effective and convenient nutrient sources. When used properly, nearly all commercial fertilizer materials are equivalent in effectiveness for crop production.

Most Washtenaw County farmers currently take a test to be certified to buy and apply pesticides. It may not be very long before nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus are similarly regulated. All commercial farmers are encouraged to be proactive and do as much of the above, including record keeping.

2008 Soybean Yield Contest

2006 was the first soybean yield contest in Michigan, with a high yield of 71 bushels per acre. For 2007, 40 soybean farmers in Michigan entered the contest with a high yield of 69 bushels per acre. Jerry Heck of Monroe was one of the four class winners this past year.

For 2008 farmers are encouraged to enter one or two fields into a new 2008 soybean yield contest. The Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee and Michigan State University Extension are co-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. Farmers with interest can contact Ned Birkey at 734-260-3442 (local cell phone number) or Mike Staton at 269-657-7745.

2008 SPRING/SUMMER/FALL CALENDAR

Thursday, June 19, 2008 Advances in Wheat Production. 9:00 to 11:30am. OARDC Northwest Research Station, Custer, OH.

Monday, June 23, 2008 MSU Wheat Plot Pre-harvest Field Day. Dave and Jason Woods' farm, Deerfield. 5-8pm. Free porkburger supper with all the trimmings.

Tuesday, June 25, 2008 MSU Extension/ Farm Bureau/ MDOT Farm Truck meeting. 6:00pm. at the Monroe County Extension Office. Register by calling 734-240-3170.

Wednesday, June 25, 2008 Clean Sweep Pesticide Collection. 9:00am to 1:00pm. Free, but call for an appointment. Held at the Monroe County Extension office.

Wednesday, July 2, 2008 MSU Weed Day. East Lansing. RUP.

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 11:30am. Custer, OH.

Friday, August 8 Seeding Alfalfa. 12:00 to 3:00pm. Washtenaw County Extension office. \$25 fee. Register by calling 734-997-1678.

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

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

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

September 8, 2008 Soybean Field Day at the Herb Smith farm. 5-8pm. Ribeye steak supper.

September 11, 2008 MSU Corn and Soybean Field Day at the MSU Plots at Woods' farm. 4-8pm. “Leftover” ribeye steak and pork chop supper.

September 16, 2008 Clean Sweep Pesticide Collection in western Washtenaw County
DATE AND LOCATION ARE NOT CONFIRMED

September 17, 2008 Clean Sweep Pesticide Disposal. 9am-1pm at the Monroe Extension office.

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