

AGRONOMY

UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA
IFAS EXTENSION

NOTES

Vol. 31:6

June 2007

DATES TO REMEMBER

June 5	- Beef forage field day – N. FL REC, Marianna, FL
June 9	- Perennial Peanut Field Day – Moultrie, GA
June 25-27	- Southern conservation tillage conference – N. FL REC, Quincy, FL
June 27-28	- Forage Workers Tour – Hardee Co. Extension Office, Wauchula, FL

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Corn after Corn

There are very few corn hybrids that can be planted in June without major damage from insects and disease. Growing a *Bt* corn is critical for planting this late. Even most *Bt* hybrids will succumb to disease pressures of southern corn rust and corn leaf blight. However, there is one main corn hybrid (Pioneer) that is currently being grown for a late crop that has done well. Otherwise, the next best choice for silage as a second crop may be forage sorghum which usually has good disease resistance and will produce good yields with irrigation or rainfall. If corn is to be planted after corn, a soil insecticide should be used. Anytime that planting is done into green weeds or living crop roots, a soil insecticide is critical. It takes about 4 weeks between crops when the field is weed free to reduce the insect population. This is the reason for soil insecticide use at planting and there needs to be enough moisture to activate the pesticide and to be taken up by the crop.

David Wright

Nitrogen and Boron Applied at Tassel on Corn

There are always questions about the application of additional N to corn late in the season after tassel. Our research has shown that there is little value in applying N after tasseling. If corn is N

deficient until the tassel period, yield will be reduced no matter what rate is applied after this time. Late N has been shown to increase protein content of the grain but is not an economical protein supplement. If corn is dark green at the tassel stage, no yield increase is expected from additional applications even if the corn crop can take up an additional 100-150 lbs/A during this time until maturity; most of the N will go into the grain. Timing of N during the vegetative period is the key to high silage or grain yields. Boron helps to translocate sugars in the grain and most of Florida's sandy soils are deficient in boron. Boron may be applied with nitrogen applications during the growing season and may be more beneficial at the last application near tasseling. One pound of actual boron is usually adequate in split applications since the crop will not take up more than 1/3rd pound for the total crop and is as easily leached as nitrogen.

David Wright

Extended Deadline for 2007 Crop-loss Program

Due to the drought conditions Monsanto has just published the following letter which is of importance to cotton producer.

David Wright

Letter from Monsanto on following page.



May 24, 2007

Dear Cotton Producer,

The prolonged drought conditions in the southeastern cotton belt have prevented the planting of thousands of acres of cotton, and put a lot more cotton under early season stress. In response to recent discussions with a number of cotton producers, Monsanto will be implementing a change in the Trait Crop Loss Refund criteria for the 2007 crop year.

The current Trait Crop Loss Refund portion of the Roundup Rewards® program reimburses cotton farmers for trait fees paid for a crop that is lost or fails to make an acceptable stand in the first 60 days after planting. With the current dry conditions and in response to producer needs, **Monsanto is extending its 2007 crop-loss program deadline for cotton acres lost due to drought to August 10th, in the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.**

This 2007 program change will provide producers who plant prior to June 10th with additional days, beyond the normal 60 day period, to work with the insurance industry regarding claims and file for Monsanto's Crop Loss Refund, should the drought conditions continue to stay dry and a crop loss occurs due to the drought. As before, this program can be used under Roundup Rewards program guidelines for any cottonseed with Monsanto traits.

If you have a crop loss claim, you should report your claim to your seed retailer immediately. This needs to be done in a timely manner to allow for field visits and claim processing. Remember that your Monsanto Trait and Seed Representative will need to see your field prior to replanting or plowing-up your crop. Claims must be received by the August 10, 2007 deadline to be serviced in accordance with the Roundup Rewards requirements and guidelines. If you have any questions about requirements or qualifications for Roundup Rewards, call 1-800-ROUNDUP or talk with your local seed retailer.

We greatly value your business and hope this added benefit is a help to you in the event you need to utilize the Trait Crop Loss Refund portion of the Roundup Rewards program.

Sincerely,

Ernesto Fajardo
Vice President, U.S. Crop Production

Growth Regulators for Cotton in a Dry Year

Cotton begins rapid growth in June in most years if moisture is not limiting. This is the period when the height needs to be regulated and some data has shown that growth regulators will help with square retention. If cotton is being grown in fields that normally have excessive growth, consider using half rates this year to slow growth. Otherwise, if summer rains begin it will result in very tall cotton. Cotton normally has about 20 total nodes and no more than 2 inches is desired between any node. During periods of high rainfall and high fertility, node length can stretch to 3-4 inches between nodes. If high moisture conditions happen, cotton can get so tall that pesticide application will not penetrate through the canopy. There are many management factors that can influence vegetative growth and they include N fertility, soil moisture, weed control, plant population, and insect control. Good fruit and boll retention will slow vegetative growth. However, most of the cotton growers in Florida use DPL 555 cotton which tends to set fruit a little later and have excessive vegetative growth under good growing conditions. Most research does not show a yield increase to growth regulators but it will keep the crop shorter and easier to manage. If cotton is under severe stress, do not apply growth regulators.

David Wright

Fall Armyworm in Pastures and Hayfields - Control

Armyworm worms are cyclical pasture pests that are present in pastures every year. They appear usually in the fall, but also in the short period at the beginning of summer rains. In the past, exceptionally dry years like the one we are experiencing have recorded damaging populations in pastures, usually, after the initial rains that follow the drought conditions. Based on these facts, it is good to be prepared and know the chemical control options that are available if this year happens to be one year where conditions will favor the build up of

armyworms after initial rains. Always follow product label directions for application and rates.

A relative new couple of products and options for control of armyworms are Tracer, manufactured by Dow AgroSciences and Dimilin 2L, manufactured by Chemtura. Tracer insecticide works better when used at the higher recommended rate of 2 oz/acre and worms are present. Tracer is toxic to bees but the label indicates that bees foraging sprayed crops will not be affected once the spray deposit has dried. To avoid developing insect resistance, Tracer manufacturer recommends not applying the product more than 3 times in any 21-day period. The second option, Dimilin 2L is an insect growth regulator that is registered for use in Florida at the rate of 2 oz per acre. Use of Dimilin might be more appropriate whenever there are many eggs being laid and no damage is evident on the grass, as it takes a couple of weeks to kill the insect; if larvae are present it needs to be used when larvae are small (< ½ inch). The difference in products is that Dimilin has a very long residual activity, probably 6-7 weeks versus 1 week at best with Tracer. The restrictions (or period of wait prior to use for grazing or hay production) when using Tracer are 3 days for hay and if grazing you need to wait until it has dried (usually few hours, 3-6 h). Dimilin 2L has no restrictions for grazing. There are some data to suggest that animals feeding or grazing on Dimilin treated grass will have a suppression of flies (such as face and horn flies) because the active ingredient of the product will pass through the digestive tract and end up on the manure from that treated grass. In some tests, the product was very effective on the fly control and 100% suppression of these flies occurred for 2-3 weeks as long as the animals were feeding on the Dimilin treated grass.

If we are spared the trouble of dealing with these insects in this first half of the year, still keep the recommendations at hand for they will be useful in the fall when they will very likely infest pastures.

Yoana C. Newman and Richard Sprenkel

Managing Pastures after Drought and Fire

This year Florida has received a good share of these two devastating conditions. Paying attention to some critical practices will help ranchers and farmers ease the impact of drought and/or fire:

- a. Wait longer than usual before turning cattle into pastures. Allow a 'generous' stubble height in order to build up the needed reserves that are critical for long term recovery. If you have some burnt areas, the green-up with the burnt soil background may give the impression that you have more forage than you really do. Do not fall into this visual illusion and allow the proper additional weeks for resting the pasture before grazing or cutting them. Buying hay for a couple more weeks will offset the potential damage and expense (due to weed control and replanting) that will result from overgrazed conditions.
- b. Make sure to have proper fertilization to guarantee root development. Drought brings an associated lack of growth and the natural pool of nutrients in the soil may be higher than in previous more wet years. However, if you need to fertilize assure that potassium levels are moderate.
- c. Make sure you control your weeds once the rains start. A weed-free condition will benefit your pasture plant and will give it a 'heads up' start after stressful conditions.

Yoana C. Newman

Manage Now for your Winter Hay Quality

Summer time is when most of the hay will be put up to be used mainly in the winter time. Do not place your efforts just on getting your tonnage levels up but think critically about how to raise the nutritive value of your hay. Timeliness in forage fertilization and herbicide application affects not only your yield but also your forage quality. The main factor affecting the quality of your hay is the stage at which is cut. Higher quality forage will result from harvesting at an earlier stage of maturity. Avoid cutting your hay when it is mature with well

developed seedheads present because the quality will be significantly reduced.

Yoana C. Newman

24C label for Strongarm Postemergence in Peanuts

A special use label to allow Strongarm herbicide to be applied postemergence in peanuts was approved earlier this month by the Florida Department of Agriculture. This label allows for Strongarm to be applied up to 28 days after planting for the control or suppression of tropical spiderwort (*Commelina benghalensis*). The 28 days after planting restriction is in place due to concern of Strongarm carryover to cotton. Peanuts are very tolerant to Strongarm applied postemergence.

Strongarm is effective on tropical spiderwort if plants are small when the application is made. Larger plants will be severely injured and remain stunted for several weeks, but will rarely die. Strongarm will often not provide tropical spiderwort control as long into the season as Dual Magnum, but it will provide some postemergence control if that is necessary. Strongarm applied postemergence is also excellent on common ragweed, cocklebur, eclipta, bristly starbur, and wild radish, among other weeds.

Jason Ferrell

Cover Crops and Strip Till in Dry Years

Strip tillage is used widely for corn, cotton and peanut production in many of the north Florida counties. Florida research has shown that moisture in the soil can be improved under conservation tillage and that soil temperature can be reduced. However, in very dry years, conservation tillage cannot compensate for lack of moisture during planting and stand establishment. This year would have been one to kill out the cover crops early so that surface organic matter would reduce the amount of moisture evaporating from the soil. Growers who bedded their cotton fields this year may have been better off since they can knock the top

layer off the bed and plant into moisture. Another problem in dry years with strip tillage is getting a smooth seedbed without pulling up clods of dry soil while planting and getting a uniform seed depth. Rows can be stripped off early in the season (Jan.-Mar.) while there is usually good moisture; then to obtain stands, a planter can be run at planting time with row cleaners. Many of the conventional till fields had clods brought up from tillage and will require many tillage passes to have a smooth seedbed for planting cotton which requires to be planted shallow (1/2 inch deep).

David Wright

Planting Date for Cotton and Peanuts

Since many growers have not had adequate rain to plant either cotton or peanuts, the question becomes: when is it too late to plant either crop? Many fields of peanuts and cotton that were planted this spring have spotty stands if they were not irrigated. This dry condition can result in more TSWV in peanuts while cotton can compensate to some degree if rains come later in the year. Generally, both cotton and peanuts should be planted no later than the middle of June since they both require 150 days or more to mature. Frost can damage peanut and unopened cotton bolls; and bolls will never open. If crop insurance is carried, there is a requirement to have crops planted by a certain date. Farmers need to take this into consideration. If peanuts and cotton were planted and herbicide applied but stand failures prevent taking the crop to yield, be aware of plant back restrictions in other crops that can be planted later than these crops including soybean, peas, sunflowers, corn, and other shorter season crops.

David Wright

Spread of Asian Soybean Rust

Asian soybean rust had been present every month for 2 years at certain locations in north Florida until the late freeze in February. This freeze knocked back the kudzu and the soybean rust has not been found in many northern locations as of this point due to dry weather

since late February. However, we expect to see rust start up on kudzu soon in areas that are conducive to its development and it is still present in one of the sites that have continued to be positive for rust. Louisiana has received more rain than Florida and has had several positive sites identified. Research is continuing on soybean rust in Florida since it can have such a tremendous impact on the mid west. Plant breeding and management studies are being done here to prepare for the disease hitting the Midwest early in the season.

David Wright

Water Needs for Crops

This year is one for the record books for growers. Growers who have water to irrigate will find it expensive to grow the crop with high energy prices for pumping water. Producers with no irrigation find it difficult to plant or do any management since stand establishment, tillage and weed control are influenced by dry weather. Crops require different amounts of water at different growth stages. All crops require good moisture for stand establishment and most have low water requirements until late vegetative stages. Corn has a high water requirement starting about 42 days after planting until tassel but the highest requirement is during the ear fill period. Corn does not need to be under stress when it is silking and tasseling or ears will not be pollinated and this occurs over a short period of a week to 10 days. Other crops like cotton and peanuts need the most moisture during the bloom period and the bloom period for cotton is about 8 weeks long. The first 3-4 weeks of bloom are the most critical for cotton since 95% of the yield can be set during these weeks. Peanuts need moisture during bloom to help move calcium into the pegging zone for kernel development and for the pegs to enter the soil. Some insect problems are much worse in dry years and any damage that the plant receives will make recovery longer. Water is essential for good yields and quality crops. High numbers of spider mites have been noted on crops this spring due to the drought.

David Wright

The use of trade names does not constitute a guarantee or warrant of products named and does not signify approval to the exclusion of similar products.

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