

Agronomy Notes

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Stinkbug Damage to Corn



Many of the popular varieties of corn have Roundup tolerance and a Bt gene to prevent larvae feeding from certain insects. However, one of the most damaging insects to corn can be stinkbug which is not controlled by the Bt gene.

Stinkbug damage often happens when a crop nearby is drying down as corn begins to silk and tassel. Stinkbugs move to the developing ear of corn and will stink through the shuck. The point at which it stinks causes the cob to stop development on that side of the ear while the back side of the ear continues to grow resulting in a banana shaped ear. Shuck development may also stop, or the ear curves enough that it is exposed as shown in the pictures below. Stinkbugs can be hard to detect but the damage is easy to see. In the pictures, note both the

brown and green stinkbug on ears. This damage can lead to poor grain quality since it leaves grain exposed to weather and other insects as it continues to mature and dry down. The characteristic damage is a banana shaped ear.

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Reserving Forage for Winter Feed: Stockpiling

Stockpiling is one method of utilizing forage grown during peak periods for use during periods of deficit. In Florida, this practice will leave a standing hay crop in the fall for use later when there is not much grass growth. Stockpiling is common in central and south Florida because of the milder winters that provides an opportunity to reduce the winter hay-feeding costs.

Stockpiling grass should be done by late summer. Letting the grass grow too early in the summer (June, July, or early August) is not recommended because the grass will become too mature and by November, cattle will likely refuse to eat it. Allowing grass accumulation too early in the season will also encourage the buildup of thatch which is ideal for spittlebug proliferation resulting in damage to the grass. The area to be stockpiling should have animals removed by mid August, and the area fertilized in September or October. The resulting quality of the stockpiled grass will depend on the management practices and climate conditions. Most grasses used for stockpiling like limpgrass (*Hemarthria* spp) or Pangola (*Digitaria* spp) will maintain a relatively high digestibility with increasing maturity. However, the decline in nutritive value does not stop, therefore, the stockpiled grass should be fed before hay or other feed sources are used.

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Watch Out For Asian Soybean Rust

Asian Soybean Rust has been found earlier on soybean this year than in other years. Much of the reason for this is the frequent rain fall. High temperatures on a few occasions have slowed the spread but early indications are for more rust than in past years.

There are sentinel plots across north Florida. The disease may be hard to detect early in the season if you are not familiar with it. Look for small pustules on the underside of the leaf; these lesions will not usually have a yellow halo around them until an advanced stage (shown in the picture left.) Many other leaf spots will have a yellow halo around the spot.

It is advisable to consider a fungicide application at early bloom if infected kudzu or soybeans are found near your fields. If there are other soybeans in the area that have been planted earlier, late planted soybeans may be at a higher risk to have a severe outbreak. Later planted soybean has a higher chance of being infected and causing yield loss than early planted soybeans.

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Calendar & Field Days

August 1-2

[Florida Small Farms & Alternative Enterprises Conference](#)
Kissimmee (Registration discount if received by June 1.)

August 4, 11:00am

[UF Historical Marker Unveiling](#), UF McCarty Hall A
(northside of building) commemorating 100th Anniversary of Florida 4-H

September 15-17

[Annual Georgia Peanut Tour](#), Douglas, Fitzgerald, and Tifton, GA

September 15-18

[International Citrus and Beverage Conference](#), Clearwater Beach

September 22-24

[Southeast Herbicide Applicator Conference](#), Panama City Beach

October 20-22

[Sunbelt Ag. Expo](#), Moultrie, GA

October 28th

[2009 Florida Ag Expo](#)
Gulf Coast REC, Balm

November 1-5

ASA, CSSA, SSSA annual meeting, Pittsburgh, PA.

November 14

[Florida 4-H Centennial Gala](#), Jacksonville

November 15-17

[Energy Conference](#), Orlando

Rotating Peanut & Cotton with Bahiagrass

Impacts of sod based rotations on crops - Our research has shown the value of rotating peanut and cotton with bahiagrass. Growers know that rotations work. However, there are rotations that can add extra benefits to the whole farming system.

Our research over the last 8 years has shown that peanut yields without irrigation when following bahiagrass are similar or higher than irrigated peanut following two years of cotton. Likewise, we have been building organic matter by 0.1% per year. The impacts of the two systems on cotton are shown in the picture below. Even though cotton is grown the second year after bahiagrass (following peanuts), tremendous differences in growth and yield have been observed. The differences between these two systems have been getting larger in terms of yield and quality of both the summer and oat/rye cover crops. The bahiagrass system had been compared to the best conservation technology farming methods that we have available.

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Pasture Herbicide Roundup

For many years there were few herbicides entering the pasture market. All the emphasis at the corporate level was for new corn and soybean products in the mid-west while pastures were a mere afterthought. However, this trend has changed and new products are now flooding into this market. Below are some recent additions to our weed control toolbox.

Cleanwave

Cleanwave is a co-mix product containing both fluroxypyr and trace amounts of aminopyralid. Though originally developed for weed control in wheat in the plains states (hence the name, Clean-wave), it has shown great promise for pasture weed control in Florida. Fluroxypyr is the active ingredient in Vista and one of the components of *PastureGard*. It has been determined, after extensive testing, that fluroxypyr is highly effective on dogfennel and many other weeds. Experiments conducted by the University of Florida – IFAS have found that 16 oz of *Cleanwave* + 32 oz of 2,4-D is highly effective on dogfennel that is up to 36” tall. It has also proved to be effective on prickly pear when applied in the fall at a rate of 50 oz/A. At approximately \$65 per gallon, *Cleanwave* will control a number of weeds at a relatively low cost.

GrazonNext

GrazonNext is not a new herbicide, just a new name. *GrazonNext* is the exact same herbicide as Forefront (aminopyralid + 2,4-D), but was developed to be sold in the western US where Grazon P+D (picloram + 2,4-D) was heavily used. Grazon P+D is highly effective on a number of species and relatively inexpensive. But, the picloram component has environmental quality concerns that has led Dow Agrosiences to reduce the emphasis on this herbicide. To do this, *GrazonNext* was introduced into these “P+D” markets at a greatly reduced price – relative to Forefront. Currently, Forefront is approximately \$60 per acre while *GrazonNext* is between \$35 and \$40. Although Florida is not a P+D state, the decision was made to sell *GrazonNext* here and pass the savings along to the rancher. At approximately \$9 per quart and a 0 day grazing restriction, *GrazonNext* becomes a very attractive option for thistle, pigweed (carelessweed), tropical soda apple, and many other species.

Outrider

Controlling sedges in hay fields is a constant struggle. Most herbicides possess no activity on this species, or you choose to use a product that is highly injurious to the forage grass. But this dilemma may be over. Monsanto has recently began to sell *Outrider* (sulfosulfuron) for sedge control in pastures. This herbicide is labeled for use in established bermudagrass and bahiagrass. Application of 1.33 oz/A is effective on a wide variety of sedge species while causing little or no forage grass damage. *Outrider* will cost approximately \$20 per acre. *Outrider* is not a broad-spectrum pasture herbicide, but the effectiveness on nutsedge is remarkable.

Distinct

Distinct is a relatively new herbicide from BASF Corporation that combines dicamba and diflufenzopyr. Though little testing with this herbicide has been done, it is expected to add significant activity when used with herbicides such as 2,4-D and Weedmaster. The addition of 2 or 4 oz/A of *Distinct* will add approximately \$5-10/A and will likely assist in controlling species that are difficult to manage with 2,4-D alone.

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Web-Based Pesticide Labeling Under Consideration

Since 2007, EPA has been considering a web-based approach of distributing pesticide product labels to end users. If this will happen, traditional paper-made product labels will be replaced. *What is EPA trying to fix?* EPA's hope is that this approach will simplify information and provide the latest in product label amendments to the user. Ultimately, the system will provide greater protection of environmental and public health.



What will pesticide handlers have to do? Handlers would have to contact the official EPA web address or a toll-free telephone number listed on the product label to obtain use directions. This contact information would replace the product's use directions, advisory statements, and other selected information.

What will remain unchanged on the product container? On containers that are distributed, the product ingredients, a reference for use directions, the product's classification, such as restricted, storage and disposal directions, registration and establishment numbers, warning statements, and first aid statements will remain.

How does a pesticide handler without web access obtain label information? Those without access to the web site can call the toll-free telephone number, make a request, and EPA will send the label information, either by fax or the U.S. Postal Service.

Obviously, there are concerns and unanswered questions of such a system:

- Whether or not the web will become mandatory as the only means for obtaining information.
 - Label changes may occur within hours following product purchase, possibly resulting in a subsequent use violation. Who would be liable in such an event?
 - Who is responsible for ensuring proper label information is obtained – the product retailer, or the user?
 - What is the true definition of a label – the actual paper itself, the image on a computer monitor or cell phone?
- The U.S.D.A. recently estimated that only 55 percent of rural farms have web access, and of those, 47 percent are still using a slow and unreliable dial-up connection.
 - In the event that a product is stored for an extended period of time, such as until the next growing season, it may become unusable as its label may change. This poses a disposal issue.
- Currently, purchasers can feel confident that the paper label with the product they have purchased is up-to-date and legitimate. Under a web-based system, how will the user know the time period of label validity? EPA is looking at a few options. One is that a production date is placed on the container and requires that the user obtain the label in effect on or after that date. Another is that the web-based label would have a defined lifespan. Following the expiration date, the user would need to obtain a new label.

These are likely only a few of the unanswered questions that such a system would present. If and when this goes through the EPA process, there will certainly be more issues evolve with such a system.

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