

CropLinks

information on forages, corn and cereals

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PASTURE TOURS: JULY 5-15th

AgraPoint will be hosting a series of pasture tours from July 5-15th. Please mark your calendars and come enjoy an informative evening with other producers and Agrapoint's forage and livestock specialists. All tours start at 6:30 pm. There is no registration fee. Below are the dates and the sponsoring farmers. Look in Farm Focus for specific locations or contact Amy Sangster at (902) 896-7299 or (902) 890-8629 for more information.

Monday, July 5th	Kings County	Jeff McMahan
Tuesday, July 6th	Hants County	Dean Manning
Monday, July 12th	Cumberland	John Duynisveld
Tuesday, July 13th	Antigonish	George Smith
Wednesday, July 14th	South Shore	Kevin Veinotte
Thursday, July 15th	Cape Breton	David van Zupthen

Inoculants: when they work best

There is no doubt that bacterial inoculants can aid in silage fermentation. Research has shown positive fermentation results for grass silage 71% of the time. Benefits include: less dry matter and energy losses in storage; reduced temperatures during ensiling; less protein breakdown; and longer bunk life.

However, inoculants are not always effective, especially at improving animal performance.

The primary factor determining the effectiveness of an inoculant is the number of naturally occurring lactic acid bacteria on the crop at harvesting. The inoculant bacteria must compete with and dominate the natural occurring population to have a positive effect on silage fermentation and animal performance. Factors such as higher temperatures during wilting, and longer wilting periods, enhance the natural occurring population and diminish the effectiveness of an inoculant.

A second critical factor determining the effectiveness of an inoculant is the level of sugar in the crop. Lactic acid bacteria grow on sugar. If the sugar content is low the inoculant will be less effective. Cool growing conditions and long days promote sugar accumulation in the plant and are two reasons why first cut forage is more likely to ensile better than subsequent crops.

The third critical factor determining the effectiveness of an inoculant is the type and number of bacteria added by the inoculant. The fundamental reason to buy a silage inoculant is to insure there are enough lactic acid bacteria for optimum preservation. Inoculants must apply 100 billion live lactic acid bacteria per tonne of crop to be effective. Inoculants must be applied uniformly to the crop and are probably best applied as a liquid at the blower or chopper. Check the label to see if the inoculant you are using is specific to the crop and is applying sufficient bacteria to make a difference.

So, when are bacterial inoculants most likely to be effective? Generally inoculants are most effective at first cut when: 1) temperatures during wilting are cool; 2) when wilting to the correct moisture takes no longer than two days; 3) when harvest moisture is 60% -68%; 4) when at least 100 billion bacteria per tonne are being added through the inoculant.

There is no doubt that silage inoculants often improve silage fermentation but they are no substitute for good silage harvest and storage management. Following the basic rules of good silage harvest and storage management is still your best assurance of success.

What is Liberty Link Corn?

Liberty Link corn hybrids are specific hybrids that have been developed to be tolerant to Liberty 200SN herbicide. There are four Liberty Link hybrids that appear on this year's Recommended Grain Corn Hybrid listing: Pioneer's 39T71 plus CO-OP's N03-D8 LL, 50P20 LL and N09-A5 LL. The latter two hybrids are some of our highest yielding grain corn genetics, but are only recommended for the Annapolis Valley. Some growers have disregarded these hybrids, because they don't want the complications of running 2-3 corn herbicide programs if they are already using a pre-emerge or Roundup Ready approach. Did you know that any normal pre-emerge herbicide can be used on these LL hybrids (you don't need to use Liberty 200SN) and the only "tech fee" you pay is for the Bt technology?

For growers interested in using a Liberty 200SN herbicide program on a Liberty Link hybrid, here's a little additional information. The Liberty 200SN herbicide is a contact product (having no residual activity) that's applied from the 1 – 8th leaf stage of corn. The timing of a Liberty 200SN application is dependent both on the amount and types of weeds. With most weed situations, the optimal timing for Liberty 200SN is the 3 – 4 leaf stage of corn. In situations where you are going to spray at the 3rd leaf stage, there may be a need to include a residual product in with the Liberty 200SN. The approved tank-mix options for Liberty 200SN are: 1) Atrazine; 2) Banvel; 3) Prowl; 4) Marksman (which is Atrazine and Banvel); and 5) Liberty Prime (co-packed with Primextra). In tank-mix situations with Liberty 200SN, residual herbicide rates can be lower than you'd normally use with other pre-emerge herbicide situations. Consult the product label for more information. Check out the Liberty Link corn and Liberty 200SN demo at Agrifest.

Consider AgraPoint for your Nutrient Management Plan in 2004

In 2003, some Nova Scotia farmers had their first experience with the three-year Nutrient Management Plan (NMP). There were about 175 NMP's done, and even more expected this year, where the Farm Investment Fund program is requiring a NMP to get the limestone transportation subsidy in 2004.

Nutrient Management Planning provides the opportunity to work with a qualified planner to determine the best fertilizer blends, manure placement, and limestone priorities for the 2005-2007 cropping situation on your farm. AgraPoint has several staff members in both field crops and horticulture that are trained to do your Nutrient Management Plan. Call us soon before you apply to the Farm Investment Fund program so we can discuss the NMP details.

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Odds & Sods

Forage quality is often missed in cool and wet springs as farmers scramble to get crops planted or don't think there's enough forage yield to start harvesting. We definitely need a few days of 20 – 25 C temperatures, but get that haylage gear ready. To get good fibre digestability and feeding performance, you need to harvest with the calendar in mind especially for alfalfa, orchardgrass, brome and reed canary (timothy and red clover seem to slow down more with cool spring temperatures). The forage quality "harvest window" for 1st cut haylage on most farms is usually only 6 – 8 days.

Determining whether **disease control on winter wheat** is needed is one of the toughest decisions for growers and crop advisors. Certainly the wet and cool conditions of late has increased mildew and septoria leaf diseases — but does a treatment pay? what is the application timing? do we use Tilt or Tilt/Bravo??? My advice is to scout your wheat fields, assess the amount of yellow-brown septoria flecking on the upper leaves. If you are applying Tilt, try to wait if you can (depending on disease pressure) until mid-June so that you have some residual protection on the grain head. In checking the research reports from Claude Caldwell and Doug MacDonald (NS Crop Development Institute, Field Trial Reports for 2002 & 2003) a three-year study of four popular varieties showed about .25t/hectare average yield increase with a fungicide treatment (hardly a payback). In 2003, at the Canning site, there was no extra yield response to using a fungicide. Disease control on winter wheat.... a tough call!

An early Agrifest tour will be held **June 30th from 1:30 -3:30 pm**. For growers that want a preview of the Agrifest plots and to hear more about the big show for **Aug. 5 – 8th** here's your chance. Plots that will be featured on June 30th are: 1) forage date of seeding; 2) winter wheat date of seeding; 3) barley seeding rates; 4) corn herbicide options; 5) and soybean row-spacing demo. Call if you need directions to the Canning Agrifest site.

Controlling Mustards in New Seeded Mixed Forage

The control of mustards, corn spurry, and hempnettle can be improved with the addition of MCPA to 2,4-DB as a post emergent weed spray for alfalfa grass mixtures. The addition of MCPA Amine (500 g/L) @ 70 ml/ha (28 ml/acre) gives better control of these weeds than 2,4-DB alone. It is critical to reduce the rate of the 2,4-DB to near half rate (application rates differ between product formulations so see label for specific rates) when adding MCPA. Apply when the alfalfa is in the 1-4 trifoliate leaf stage (alfalfa is only tolerant to the MCPA at this stage). It is also important to apply in at least 150L/ha (60L/ac) of water with a pressure not exceeding 275 kPa (40 psi). Do not apply in drought conditions or when the crop is under stress from too high or too low temperatures.