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Reminder: AgraPoint Pasture Meetings

Join us for an informative evening with other producers and AgraPoint's forage and livestock specialists. All tours start at 6:30 pm, see Farm Focus or call Amy Sangster for more information (902-890-8629).

Monday, July 5th	Kings County	Jeff McMahon
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

CropLinks

information on forages, corn and cereals

Corn Comments

The earlier planted corn really got off to a slow start due to all the cool weather in late May and June. After this nice rainfall, let's hope the heat gets turned on so corn can still pollinate in late July and bumper crop yields occur this fall. This is a crucial period for corn when it's in the 6-8th leaf stage. Check your corn now to determine if: 1) nitrate topdress is needed; 2) weed control is adequate; and 3) cutworm or other pests are a problem.

Nitrate topdress? By now, corn should have a fairly dark green colour unless it's looking for additional nitrogen. If you're considering a nitrate topdress, this needs to happen in advance of the 8th leaf stage when ear length is starting to be determined in the corn plant. High yielding corn crops require 120 – 150 N which can be supplied from manure, other soil organic sources and fertilizers. If you're not pleased with the corn leaf colour by July 1st, get an additional 25 – 70 N topdressed very soon.

Weed control adequate? Whether you're on a pre-emerge or Roundup Ready program, hopefully most weed control has been applied and is effective. With the cool early spring conditions, some of the pre-emerge programs have had weed escapes (call us if you need advice on treating any escapes). Be on the lookout for field bindweed. This is a tough weed that is becoming more common in cornfields and should have a Pardner treatment at 5 – 8th leaf stage of corn.

Cutworm damage? Cutworm had left us alone since 2000, but this pest is back again. These black cutworms nip corn off at the base during the 3 – 6th leaf stage. If cutworms are causing 1 – 2 cut or wilted plants per 17.5 feet of row, then you'll need to decide whether an evening insecticide treatment is necessary. This decision needs to be made quickly; because with high amounts of cutworms present, corn damage can be extensive from one night to the next.

Scout your fields every 2 – 3 days up to the 6th leaf stage; if you need to spray for cutworms, use one of these registered products: Matador, Ripcord, Lorsban 4E, Pounce of Dylox. Product costs vary from \$8 - \$25/acre. These insecticides need to be applied in the evening hours after 9:30 pm; don't re-enter field for 24 hours, and check label for additional information. Cutworms over 1 inch in length are more difficult to control.

Forage Yields a Little Disappointing

First cut yields are down on many farms across the province. What looked like a bumper crop following an excellent winter did not materialize because of the very cool weather in May and early June. For most of

the province forage growth was delayed by at least a week compared to recent years. Quality however should be good with harvest occurring in the early boot and early bud stages on most farms.

Hog Manure Injection Demo: July 6th

Manure injection is an odourless method of using manure on corn that is in the 4-8th leaf stage. Anyone interested in seeing a 6-row tanker mounted injector unit put hog manure into a corn crop are invited to Meadowbrook Farm Ltd from 1:30 to 3:00 pm on July 6th (Exit 15 for Berwick, go north, take quick right onto Parker Condon Rd, swing left onto Pleasant Valley Rd, go 1 km to farm). The demonstration will be done by Jim Lamb who acquired the 6-row injector that mounts on the back of a 4500 gallon rear-bottom discharge Nuhn tanker. The injector unit is equipped with no-till coulters (16 inch) followed by the S-type narrow tooth injector with side mounted soil deflectors.

This manure injector is being assessed under a 2003-2004 research trial by SCIANs, NSAC, and AgraPoint. Our injection trial will measure corn yield response, ammonia-methane-nitrous oxide gas emissions, along with a cost analysis of manure injection versus conventional nitrate fertilizer topdress applications. *Come to Meadowbrook Farm Ltd on July 6th from 1:30 – 3:00 pm if you're interested in seeing hog manure injection without the usual aroma.*

Fall Seeding of Timothy

After years of experience we can confidently say; it's possible to fall seed timothy with great success. Warm soils, fall rains, less weed pressure and cooler temperatures in September and October all help get good establishment, but it's the exceptional winter hardiness of timothy that makes the fall seeding of this grass so successful. No other grass will establish and over winter as well as timothy when sown in the fall.

For fall seeding we recommend seeding timothy @ 8-10 kg/ha in late August or early September. If you want to add alfalfa it is best to sow in mid August. The risk of winter injury or kill to the alfalfa can be reduced by seeding earlier. Red clover is best over-sown into the timothy on the frost early the following spring.

Several farms are successfully establishing timothy following winter wheat or barley. It is important to control any volunteer grain prior to seeding. Even a moderate grain cover will smother the new seedlings during winter. Tillage soon after harvest will help get the grain lost from the back of the combine to germinate. A final tillage five days following will control the volunteer grain.

Be sure to soil test and add lime and use a starter fertilizer if needed. A moderate application of manure tilled in prior to seeding is often all that is required. Take the time to prepare a good seed bed, it really pays off when seeding small seeded grasses like timothy.

Subscriber Note

CropLinks email subscribers – We are updating our list for sending out future copies of this newsletter. If you prefer CropLinks in electronic format, please respond to j.vanroestel@agrapoint.ca For those of you receiving a copy in the mail, please call Bill or Jack if there are any errors in your address.

Measuring Planting Success in Spring Cereals and Corn

After the spring planting rush and 1st cut forages, many growers don't give spring grain and corn crops much attention until harvest time (providing weeds and pests are not an issue). I'd encourage you to spend a little time assessing your planting success.

Assess spring cereals in mid-late June for seeding depth and check for tillers. The seeding depth on most barley and wheat fields should be 2-3 cm (around 1 inch). On sandier soils especially, there was some deep seeding that took place this spring with seeds down at a 2-2.5 inch depth. Planting too deep delays emergences, stresses the seedling and predisposes it to more soil diseases, and reduces tillering (potential for additional heads/plant). Too deep a seeding is not always because of inadequate seed drill adjustment, but often occurs when the seedbed is too fluffy from just using a disc harrow or a light S-type harrow with rolling baskets. Tillage equipment is expensive, but with big acreages and for optimal seedbeds you need to have either a roller harrow or one of these newer heavy bar crumblers that hook behind a disc harrow or cultivator.

Re-assess spring cereals after heading to check the seeding rate and nitrogen fertility. Take a ruler or meterstick to the field, count heads and determine what the average head density is. Optimal plant populations are considered to be 300-350 heads/m² or 28-33 heads/ft². Head size and length should be fairly uniform if N fertility and soil moisture are adequate.

Corn fields should also be assessed around the 3-5th leaf stage for population, uniformity and colour. To determine your plant stand per acre, get yourself a 17.5 foot length of twine with a spike in each end. Count plants over this distance and multiply this figure by 1000 to find your plants per acre (x 2.47 = plants/hectare). Silage corn population should be 28,000-31,000 plants/acre and for grain corn around 26,000-30,000 plants/acre. Having occasional 1-2 ft seed gaps doesn't really affect corn yields very much (see recent Pioneer "Walking Your Fields" newsletter Volume 14-Issue 3). In terms of uniformity, most plants should be at a similar leaf stage if planting depth was good (about 2 inches or 5 cm depth). By the 5th leaf stage, plant colour should be a dark green, if the corn looks pale and growing temperatures have been warm, you need to consider a nitrate topdress. The ear length is determined at the 8th leaf stage of corn so nitrogen shouldn't be lacking at this growth stage.

Open House at Agrifest on June 30th cancelled

With the slow start to corn and soybeans, our forages just harvested on June 21st and many farm call requests lately, I've cancelled the June 30th open house at the Agrifest site; but pencil in the big event on August 5 – 8th. Agrifest will be a great show! You will receive an Agrifest information sheet in mid-July.