Black Layer beginning in Southwest Missouri corn

Jill Scheidt, agronomy specialist with University of Missouri Extension, scouted fields near Arcola in Dade County and north of Irwin in Barton County on Aug. 5.

Corn Report
Scheidt observed corn in the hard dough to dent stage. “Black layer may occur soon in a lot of fields,” said Scheidt. To identify how close to black layer corn is, Scheidt says to break a corn ear in half and observe the cross-section of the top half of the ear.

“There will be a dark yellow line, this is the milk line, on the kernel that starts at the end of the kernel; as corn matures the milk line moves toward the cob,” said Scheidt.

Black layer, or maturity, occurs about 20 days after the dent stage. Data from Mississippi and Louisiana show the field drying rate from maturity, or black layer, occurs at about 0.6 percent per day until the grain reaches 15 percent moisture.

Soybean Report
Scheidt observed soybeans in the first trifoliate to beginning pod set. Scheidt observed blister beetle and Japanese beetle feeding in more mature soybean fields.

“Defoliation thresholds for soybeans are 30 percent defoliation before bloom and 20 percent defoliation during and after bloom,” said Scheidt.

Cover Crops
Scheidt suggests, if ground is fallow, to either let volunteer wheat create a cover crop to lower weed pressure and soil erosion; or plant a cover crop, such as turnips, radish or a legume in mid-August. “Volunteer wheat may result in a very low level of Hessian Fly egg laying, but wheat planted after the Hessian Fly Free Date is not expected to be affected,” said Scheidt.

More Information
The weekly field scouting report is sponsored by University of Missouri and Barton County Extension. For more information on the scouting report, or to learn how to receive the information earlier by telephone, contact the Barton County Extension Center at (417) 682-3579.