

Harvest Progress

With the difficult planting and early-season conditions, the Missouri corn crop has been behind season-long, which is extending into the harvest. The USDA Crop Progress and Condition report for Missouri states that as of October 12, 41 percent of the corn harvest was complete and soybean harvest was 20 percent complete. Corn harvest in west central Missouri is behind the statewide average, with only 35 percent of corn harvest complete as of October 12, and is significantly behind this similar time in 2007, when 94 percent of the corn harvest was complete.

SLOW DRYDOWN

Field drying of corn is primarily influenced by air temperature and humidity, with secondary factors such as ear and husk characteristics of hybrids also influencing the drydown process. Purdue University research has shown that the average daily drydown rate for corn can range from 0.8% per day for corn that matures late-August to 0.4% per day for corn that matures in mid to late-September. For more information, contact Julie Abendroth at 816/776-6961.



upcoming workshops

Landscaping with Native Plants on **11/6**

at 6:30-8:30 PM at the Nevada TeleCenter (\$15)

Putting Manure Values in Perspective on **11/18**

at 6:00-8:00 PM at the Nevada TeleCenter (\$20)

Regional Winter Crop Conference on **2/20**

at New Oak Vineyards near Wellington

Residual Feed Intake in Beef Cattle

Improving the feed efficiency of a beef cattle herd can mean big savings for producers. One way to make progress toward this goal is by selecting breeding bulls that are naturally feed efficient, since most genetic improvement comes through the sire.

Residual feed intake (RFI) is defined as the difference between an animal's actual feed intake and its expected feed intake for maintenance and growth. It is different from the traditional gain:feed ratio which favors larger, fast growing animals with large appetites. RFI identifies animals able to work and produce on less feed than predicted.

Researchers in New Zealand, Australia, and Canada have done considerable work with RFI in beef cattle. Australian researchers selected for high or low RFI measured in the postweaning phase for two generations using the same regimen on calves that had been applied to the parents. After 5 years, the efficient line was eating 20 lbs of feed daily and the non-efficient line was consuming 23 lbs daily. Both lines had identical growth and

performance. The resulting adult cows of the project were also compared on pasture with calves at their sides. The cows which had been identified as high efficiency calves were 7% heavier, had similar back-fat, produced the same amount of milk and weaned calves of the same weight as the low efficiency cows. The difference was in the amount of feed (pasture) consumed to produce a calf. The low RFI cows had a 15% advantage in efficiency.

Canadian researchers using RFI for selection have been able to a) lower maintenance requirements for the cow herd by 9-10%, b) reduce feed intake by 10-12%, c) have no effect on mature size or gain, d) improve feed conversion in fed cattle by 9-15% and e) improve calf weight per cow feed intake by 15%.

As feed and other input costs continue to rise, paying attention to feed efficiency in selection becomes increasingly valuable. For more information, contact Al Decker at 660/679-4167 or by email at deckera@missouri.edu

Regional County Offices

Bates County 660/679-4167

Cass County 816/380-8460

Clay County 816/407-3490

Henry County 660/885-5556

Jackson County

Blue Springs 816/252-5051

Kansas City 816/482-5850

Johnson County 660/747-3193

Lafayette County 660/584-3658

Platte County 816/270-2141

Ray County 816/776-6961

St. Clair County 417/646-2419

Vernon County 417/448-2560

*Nevada TeleCenter 417/448-1212

Treating your Cool-Season Grass Lawn Well

Core aeration is one of the most important cultural practices that can be applied to lawns, due to the heavy clay soil prevalent in this area of Missouri. Lawn aeration involves the removal of small soil plugs or cores out of the lawn. Core aeration can benefit your lawn by increasing water, nutrient, and oxygen movement into the soil, improving rooting, and increasing the activity of soil microorganisms that decompose thatch.

It is highly recommended that home owners aerate their lawn at least once a year, unless it is newly seeded or soil is of sandy texture. The best time to aerate cool season grasses, such as tall fescue or Kentucky bluegrass, is in the month of September or early October. At this time of year, grasses are beginning a period of vigorous growth following their summer dormancy and will recover quickly from aeration. Secondly, weed competition is minimal during this time.

Core aeration machines are equipped with hollow tines that punch and pull out a narrow core of soil and deposit it on top of the grass. Best results are achieved when soil moisture allows the tines to penetrate easily into the upper 3-4 inches of the soil. The proper time to core aerate is after a good rainfall or thorough irrigation. Aerate the lawn in at least two different directions to ensure good coverage. Soil cores are best left on the lawn surface; they typically work back into the grass in a few weeks time. Visit <http://extension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/hort/#lawns> for more information.



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