**Aflatoxins in corn.** Many questions have been coming into the Extension office regarding the drought and aflatoxin. A link with information can be found at [http://aes.missouri.edu/delta/croppest/aflacorn.stm](http://aes.missouri.edu/delta/croppest/aflacorn.stm). Dr. Sweets and Dr. Wrather discuss in detail this toxin and how to manage it.

**Drying corn is key with aflatoxin management.** In the listed reference above “Moisture content is by far the most important factor affecting the growth of microorganisms in stored grain. After harvest corn, should be dried to 15% moisture content within 24 hours. Grain going into long term storage should be dried to 13% moisture.”

**Contact your insurance company if you have aflatoxin before harvest.** Insurance companies will have policies which they will want you to follow before harvesting. Once the grain is binned, tests on the grain cannot be used. USDA’s Risk Management Agency has a fact sheet which discusses aflatoxin at [www.rma.usda.gov/fields/rmn.rs/2011/2011aflstoxin.pdf](http://www.rma.usda.gov/fields/rmn.rs/2011/2011aflstoxin.pdf) and additional state specific information can be found at RMA website.

Thanks Dave for sending the photo. He found the fungi on the ears that have not dropped yet. **Key! Just because you see aspergillus flavus, does not mean that you have the toxin, however the risk of aflatoxin increases!**

**Soil testing in dry soils can be misleading.** If drought continues, be aware that soil tests results will be impacted. Dry soils can result in lower pH levels. Potassium can be overestimated in lower testing soils and underestimated in high testing soils. Properly taken soil samples can be used for 3 to 4 years. Also, fertilizer added this spring may not have reacted with the soil and may cause additional problems in accuracy. Hold off until we obtain proper moisture conditions to sample or utilize older soil tests.

**Fertilizer carryover.** In low yielding corn fields, the portion of fertilizer applied whether a two year build of both corn or soybean combined or single fertilizer applications to crops can be used to determine the portion that may be available for next years crop. Use yield to determine amount of P and K remaining. Meetings
**Nutrient removal in corn harvested for forage.** The amount of nutrients removed is difficult to pinpoint. Differences in plant height and plants with and without ears along with soil moisture holding capacities across the field can impact nutrient uptake. The best way to determine nutrient removal is to do a nutrient analysis.

**Corn harvested for silage will remove large amounts of nutrients.** Potash will be much higher than that of grain yield. Silage will remove 9 lbs. potash per ton of 65% moisture silage. Areas harvested for silage will be at high risk of potash deficiencies next spring.

**Small grains create opportunity for fall grazing.** Livestock producers are facing feeding many months before we are able to get spring rains and grass growth. Winter wheat and winter rye can provide fall growth for grazing in fall and haying or silage in spring. Plant small grains in late August for fall growth. As we move forward, growers should plan for alternative plantings in the spring with summer annuals to fill the gaps of damaged pastures. Key is plan ahead and create flexibility.

**Insiling CRP hay may reduce weed seedling germination.** Growers considering ensiling CRP forage can reduce weed seed through this process but will not eliminate all. Ensiling research indicated common summer grass species germination was reduced to zero whereas others species still had 20% of the seed germinating.

**Sacrifice pastures may provide rests for stress pastures.** Growers may want to consider feeding cattle in sacrifice pastures to limit over grazing. Perennial grasses and legumes which are overgrazed reduce root systems which in turn are not able to explore for moisture and nutrients. This becomes a spiraling cycle in which plants decline.

*If you would like to be added to our electronic mailing list, please contact Charmaine Flint, Holt County Secretary at 660-446-3724.*

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