

Ag-Info

August - September 2008

**Northeast Missouri Agriculture Newsletter
 serving Clark, Knox, Lewis, Marion, Monroe,
 Pike, Ralls, and Shelby Counties**

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Calendar of Events

August 7 - 17	Missouri State Fair , Sedalia
August 21	Drainage Installation Field Day , Columbia
August 22	Drainage Installation Field Day , Columbia
August 22 - 23	Management Intensive Grazing School , Novelty
August 27	Lewis/Marion Cattlemen's Bus Tour
September 3	Farm Bill Breimeyer Seminar , Columbia
September 9 - December 16	Grow Your Farm , Macon
September 18	Beef Field Day , University of Missouri, Columbia
December 13	Show-Me-Select Heifer Sale , Palmyra

AGRONOMY NOTES

Alix Carpenter

Dodder

Dodder is an annual, leafless by appearance, parasitic plant. Resembling spaghetti or corn silks, it is yellow or orange in color, and can appear to take over a small area in very little time. In most years, dodder is an infrequent pest, more of a novelty than a real concern. This year, however, I have seen it in several pastures throughout the region.

Dodder is neither toxic nor unpalatable to some livestock. It can weaken host plants, reducing yield, quality, and stand. While dodder generally does not kill its host, it may if infestations are severe.

At least 10 known species of dodder exist in Missouri. When dodder locates a suitable host plant, it penetrates the stems of the host with structures called haustoria, and extracts water and nutrients from the host. The seeds of this annual plant germinate in the soil, and as the dodder grows from the soil and locates a host plant, the dodder roots die, and it is entirely dependent upon its host plant. Dodder quickly forms a mat over the host (and possible adjacent) plant.

Dodder actually has leaves; however, they so small that they are often undetected. Flowers are small and white, and produce a seedpod with two or four chambers. Dodder reproduces by seed, which can remain viable in the soil for long periods of time. Dodder will not parasitize all plants. In Missouri, frequent hosts of dodder include members of the legume and aster families; I have seen it in several fields on both alfalfa and clover this summer.

Control of dodder is somewhat of a challenge. Physical removal may leave small pieces of dodder remaining, which can regrow. Destruction of the host plant will effectively destroy the dodder as well; this is not a viable solution in most

situations. Dodder is susceptible to control by glyphosate.

Hay and Pasture Following a Flood

The effect of flooding on crop growth and recovery is dependent on many factors: the time of year of flooding, movement of the flood waters, length of flooded period, and crop height. Floods in late summer are often more damaging than those in spring, as the warmer weather at this time increases the speed with which crop damage and death occur. Standing water is more harmful than moving water. As time under water increases, so does the possibility of crop death. Plants not entirely submerged have a better chance of survival than those completely submerged. Crop recovery will be dependent on all of these factors, as well as some producer practices.

Alfalfa, when actively growing, can withstand less than three to four days of submersion without damage. Silt deposits greater than two to three inches deep will weaken the plant stand, which may need to be reestablished in these areas. *White clovers* are not as tolerant as alfalfa of silt deposits. If the ends of stems or stolons are covered, the plant will most likely not recover. *Ladino clover*, however, can recover such silt deposits by remaining plants filling in the gaps.

Grasses can withstand several days of flooding, and are able to grow despite silt deposits in most cases. Tall fescue is more tolerant of flooding than many other cool season perennial grasses. Mature legumes and grasses can be salvaged by ensiling with less mature forage. The quality of this forage is not ideal, but the removal of the crop will allow for regrowth, and a subsequent cutting of good quality.

Drainage Installation Field Day

Tile drain installation will be the focus of two field days at the University of Missouri's Bradford

Research and Extension Center in Columbia, August 21 and 22.

Research by University of Missouri agronomist Kelly Nelson has shown that installing subsurface drainage can substantially increase corn and soybean yields compared to nearby non-drained plots.

The Missouri Land Improvement Contractors Association (LICA) is co-sponsor of the event, which will feature the same program on both days. Speakers include Nelson, who will give a presentation on drainage and sub-irrigation research; John Hester of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, who will talk about drainage survey and design; and Eddie Hoff, who will provide a producer's perspective on drainage performance.

Members of the Missouri Land Improvement Contractors Association will demonstrate all stages of the drainage installation process, including the use of specialized installation machinery. LICA members are also donating labor, materials and equipment use to MU. There also will be demonstrations of drainage control structures, which make it possible to use drainage lines for sub-irrigation.

The field day runs from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day. Lunch will be provided to the first 100 people to apply for a lunch reservation on each day. To apply, send e-mail to hubbardv@missouri.edu (include "lunch" in the subject line) or call 573-884-7945 and ask for Thresa.

AG BUSINESS NOTES

Karisha Devlin

A SURE Deal

The 2008 Farm Bill, officially known as the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, creates an Agricultural Disaster Trust Fund. A major part of this fund will finance **Supplemental Revenue Assistance (SURE)** payments, which are designed to supplement the protection producers can purchase from private crop insurance companies. In fact, a producer must purchase insurance for all crops produced each year to be eligible for the SURE disaster program. Farmers who have land in a county that has been declared a federal disaster county, or land in a county that is contiguous to a disaster county, may be eligible to receive a SURE payment. Farms in excluded counties could also be eligible if they have more than a 50 percent loss in crop income due to weather related causes.

SURE is a revenue guarantee program, similar to crop revenue insurance without the increasing guarantee feature. If the farm's actual crop revenue is less than the guarantee, the SURE payment makes up 60 percent of the difference. The actual crop revenue includes not only the estimated value of the crop produced, but also

any other USDA payments and crop insurance indemnity payments received. This prevents farmers from receiving double payments for the same losses. All guarantees and actual revenues under SURE are calculated as the sum for all crops and all insurance units for an FSA farm unit, even if land in more than one county or state is involved. Payments are not made for losses to individual crops or insurance units.

The SURE guarantee is simply the sum of all the crop insurance guarantees purchased for the current crop year, increased by 15 percent. The extra 15 percent is designed to fill part of the revenue gap not covered by insurance. For example, a producer who purchased a 75 percent guarantee on all crops would have that raised to 86.25 percent for SURE. There is also an overall "cap" on the SURE guarantee equivalent to a 90 percent insurance guarantee on all crops.

If the crop insurance proven yield (APH yield) is less than the yield used by the Farm Service Agency to calculate counter cyclical payments (CCPs), then the CCP yield is used instead for calculating the SURE guarantee. Producers who

have used “plug” yields to calculate their APH yields in some low production years will also have their SURE yield recalculated.

The SURE “actual revenue” includes the actual number of bushels harvested for each crop valued at the average cash marketing year price as determined by the USDA. For corn and soybeans this price is calculated from September through August, so the actual revenue and payments for 2008 crops will not be known until September 2009. Advance payments could be authorized, but this has not been announced. The cash marketing year price may be higher or lower than the harvest futures price used to calculate crop insurance indemnity payments.

In addition, the actual revenue includes any crop insurance indemnity payments and prevented planting payments received for the 2008 crop, and 15 percent of any direct payments, counter cyclical payments and loan deficiency payments received for the 2008 crop. Unless corn and soybean prices drop considerably in the next year, the direct payments will be the only commodity program received for the 2008 crop. If payments are received under any other USDA crop disaster programs, these are included, as well. If the actual revenue calculation is below the SURE guarantee, the producer will be paid 60 percent of the difference. There is a limit of \$100,000 per year per eligible producer, based on the same rules outlined for other commodity programs in the new farm bill.

To be eligible for SURE payments a producer must insure all of his/her eligible crops.

Approximately 72% of all eligible acres in Missouri are insured under some kind of multi peril crop insurance (MPCI). However, only a small percent of other crops such as oats, wheat and hay are typically insured. Even a small patch of hay that is not insured can cancel eligibility for SURE payments on all the acres of corn and soybeans on the same farm.

Fortunately, producers who did not insure some of their crops in 2008 can still become eligible for SURE payments by paying the catastrophic (CAT) policy fee of \$100 for each uninsured crop to FSA by **September 16**. Crops not eligible for private insurance but which are eligible for the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) through FSA also need to be covered or have the \$100 fee paid. These include many horticultural crops.

The maximum charge is \$300 per producer per county, and \$900 per farm. Note that paying this fee only makes the producer eligible for the SURE payment--it does not make the uninsured crops eligible for crop insurance or NAP payments in 2008. After 2008 all crops must be insured by the sales closing date, which is March 15 for most Missouri crops. If all crops are already insured, no other signup is necessary.

If you would like more information about SURE, or would like assistance with a SURE spreadsheet, feel free to contact me at (660) 397-2179.

LIVESTOCK NOTES

Zac Erwin

USDA releases interim final rule for Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently issued an interim final rule for the mandatory country-of-origin-labeling program that will become effective September 30, 2008. The implementation of COOL represents a six-year

battle between various industry groups from producers to retailers. If you are not interested in reading the 233 page rule, there are several “cliff notes” versions of the law. I extracted the following information from a summary published by the American Meat Institute. I outlined a few

of the major highlights and their effect on different segments of the meat industry.

COOL Applies to Certain Retail Meat Products

COOL is a retail labeling law that requires retailers to provide country of origin information regarding “covered commodities,” which include certain meat products. Because COOL is limited to retail sales, products sold at food service establishments are exempt. For meat, a “covered commodity” includes “muscle cuts” of beef, lamb, chicken, goat, and pork, as well as ground beef, ground lamb, ground chicken, ground goat, and ground pork. However the law exempts from COOL a product that otherwise would be subject to labeling if that product “is an ingredient in a processed food item.” Thus, the rule treats all cooked items (e.g., cooked sausages, cooked roast beef) as processed food items and outside the scope of a covered commodity. The rule also exempts as processed an item if it has been cured, smoked, or restructured. Thus, other examples of meat products not covered are flavored pork tenderloin, smoked ham, corned beef, etc.

Four-Tiered Labeling Process

The law provides for four categories of origin for meat: Product of the United States, Multiple Countries-of-Origin, Imported for Immediate Slaughter, and Covered Commodity that is Foreign Country-of-Origin. **Product of the United States** is defined as a meat product “exclusively from an animal that is exclusively born, raised, and slaughtered in the United States.” **Multiple Countries-of-Origin** captures covered commodities from animals with an affiliation with more than one country, but are not from animals that are imported for immediate slaughter. For example, cattle that are born in Mexico, spend part of their lives there as well as in the United States, and then are slaughtered in the U.S. The label in this scenario could read “Product of the U.S and/or Mexico”. **Imported for Immediate Slaughter** refers to animals imported to the U.S. for immediate slaughter and will be labeled as Product of Country X and the United States. For example, the covered commodity from a market hog delivered directly

to a slaughter plant in the U.S would be labeled “Product of Canada and the U.S.” Immediate slaughter is defined as being slaughtered within two weeks from the date of entry. The last category, **Covered Commodity that is Foreign Country-of-Origin**, captures covered commodities from an animal for which no production steps (born, raised, or slaughtered) occur in the United States.

COOL Imposes Recordkeeping Requirements

The law imposes recordkeeping requirements on packers and processors and anyone else who supplies a covered commodity to a retailer. The packer requirement will trickle through the production chain and the recordkeeping system ultimately will begin at the producer level. The law also specifies that “records maintained in the normal conduct of business” can serve as verification of the country-of-origin of a covered commodity. Those records may include animal health papers, import or customs documents, as well as producer affidavits. The law is very clear that a National animal ID system is not to be tied to COOL or made a mandatory requirement of COOL. However, there are indications the USDA may provide a “safe harbor” for producers who are participating in the national animal ID program. This could alleviate some of the paperwork and traceability burden for producers. Also there is a grandfather date for all cattle within the United States before July 15, 2008. Any animal on U.S. soil prior to this date will be considered a part of the national herd and labeled “Product of the U.S.”, regardless of heritage. The supplier of an animal that enters the U.S. after that date has an obligation to ascertain the origin of the animal that yielded the covered commodity.

Since COOL will be mandatory as of September 30, it is best to start keeping records now. If you are buying or selling cattle, moving your calves off the farm and onto the feedlot, keep a record of where and when you bought or sold cattle. A simple sheet of paper with the numbers and lots will be helpful come fall.

University of Missouri Beef Research and Teaching Farm Field Day

The 3rd annual University of Missouri Beef Research and Teaching Farm Field Day is Thursday, September 18th starting at 8:00 am. This year's field day is focused on using technology to increase efficiency in beef production systems.

Dr. Gene Felton from West Virginia University will present "Effects of residual feed intake selection: from conception to slaughter". His talk will offer insight related to genetic selection for improved efficiency from cow herd to the meat case. John Lawrence from the Iowa State University Beef Center will discuss the "Economic impacts of pharmaceutical technologies in modern beef production". Dr. Lawrence's presentation will illustrate the economic effects of de-wormer, implant, ionophore, and antibiotic use.

Field demonstrations during the applied technology session will focus on the "how to" aspects of the morning presentations, specific presentations include "Determining residual feed intake", "Selecting and using growth promoting implants", "Choosing feed additives", "Sire selection for feed efficiency", and "Keys to reproductive program success". In addition, producers will have the opportunity to participate in a pasture walk, vertical mixer demonstration and Co-product storage exercise.

Numerous vendors will be available to visit with throughout the day and during lunch. Visit <http://animalsciences.missouri.edu/research/brtf/> or contact Phillip Brooks or Angie Gallatin at (573) 882-2829 for more information.

Schedule

- 8:00 Registration / Donuts / Coffee visit with Sponsors
- 9:15 *Effects of residual feed intake selection: from conception to slaughter*
Gene Felton, West Virginia University
- 10:15 *Economic impacts of pharmaceutical technologies in modern beef production*
John Lawrence, Iowa State University Beef Center
- 11:00 Applying Technology Session 1
Determining residual feed intake
Selecting and using growth promoting implants"
Choosing feed additives
Sire selection for feed efficiency
Keys to reproductive program success
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Applying Technology Session 2
repeat previous sessions
- 2:00 Pasture walk
- 3:00 Equipment Demonstrations
Co-Product Storage exercise
Vertical Mixer
Hay wrapper

Johne's Disease

My co-worker, Eldon Cole, wrote about Johne's in his recent newsletter. Although we don't hear much about this in our area, I have seen a couple cases in the area.

Johne's is normally considered a disease that is more common in dairy cattle which is probably why we don't hear much about it in our area. However it can be a problem in beef cattle and is

a disease that those selling breeding cattle should be concerned about. It's caused by a bacterium which is distantly related to the one that causes tuberculosis (TB) in humans and animals.

It primarily affects the intestinal tract and outward symptoms may not surface for several years after the initial infection. The bacteria is passed out of the animal in the manure thus contaminating the soil and water. The organism reportedly can survive outside the animal for a year or more.

The classic symptoms of Johne's are severe diarrhea, weight loss, even though the animal continues to eat. They do not run a fever. Unfortunately, the symptoms are similar to other conditions thus testing becomes necessary.

Another source of infection is the milk from infected dams. For this reason it may not be desirable to obtain colostrum milk from a neighboring dairy to supplement your newborns. In addition, grafting a dairy bull calf to a beef cow that's lost a calf could be a chance to introduce the bacteria to your farm if that dairy had the problem.

Our University veterinarians have discussed whether the Show-Me-Select heifers should be tested for Johne's, but at this time it is not part of the health protocol. If you suspect you may have some significant symptoms in your herd, visit with your veterinarian about the desired course to follow. Management is the preferred method to control the disease.

Finally: Married men should forget their mistakes. There's no reason for two people remembering the same thing forever!!