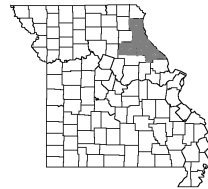


Ag-Info

February - March 2006

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



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Calendar of Events

February 25	Lewis/Marion Cattlemen's Dinner & Scholarship Fund Raiser , Palmyra
March 6	Private Pesticide Applicator Training , 7 p.m., Ewing
March 13	Private Pesticide Applicator Training , 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., Palmyra
March 15 <i>(date change)</i>	Monroe County Ag Night , Paris
March 16	Ralls County Beef Night , 7:30 p.m. Mark Twain High School, Center
March 25	Northeast Missouri Performance Tested Bull Sale , 7 p.m., F & T Livestock Market, Palmyra
March 30	Northeast Missouri Beef Cattle Improvement Association Annual Meeting , 7 p.m., Hannibal
June 16	First Annual Spring Show-Me-Select Heifer Sale , F & T Livestock Market, Palmyra

Input Costs for 2006

Farmers have felt the pinch of high input prices over the past year. Input costs are anticipated to continue to increase in 2006. With large world supplies expected for corn and soybeans in the coming year, this means tighter crop budgets, implications for cash rents and some tough production decisions ahead.

Some recent influences on increased input prices include the war in Iraq, hurricanes, high world demand, diminished capacity in spare crude oil production, relatively high freight rates, political unrest in Nigeria and Venezuela, and fuel prices (natural gas) affecting nitrogen costs.

A Congressional testimony provided by The Fertilizer Institute in September 2004 indicated that over 20% of domestic production capacity for nitrogen fertilizer has been lost since mid-2000 due to permanent plant closures. In addition, other facilities have been idled, sighting the volatility of the U.S. natural gas prices as a cause. As the main energy driver for nitrogen fertilizer costs, natural gas has the ability to create volatility and the potential for higher nitrogen prices. Since the fall of 2002, the volatility and level of price increases for natural gas has far surpassed those of gasoline and diesel. The natural gas supplies are very tight in the U.S. As much as 80-90% of most nitrogen fertilizer is dependent on natural gas. The decrease in domestic nitrogen plants has increased dependence on nitrogen fertilizer imports. The traditional source for nitrogen imports has been Canada and Mexico, with an increasing number of imports coming from locations outside of North America. The result is an increasing impact of international nitrogen supplies and ocean freight rates on U.S. nitrogen prices.

Our economy has seen diesel prices climb upward since mid-2003, with pronounced increases in 2005. Part of this is because distribution centers in the South were affected by the hurricanes. They are still not working at full capacity. Reserves of natural gas were hurt as well.

In 2005, we saw an increase of \$14/acre for corn production mainly due to increased fuel and

fertilizer costs. We can expect an increase in 2006 for seed of about 5% over the cost in 2004. Chemical costs are expected to remain somewhat stable. Increases in metal prices have really affected producers in 2005 and we can expect that to continue into 2006. Metal prices are up about 12% from 2004 and are being felt in repairs, machinery, farm buildings and bin construction. Nearly 50% of the costs of producing corn are tied directly or indirectly to fuel. Corn fuel costs are expected to be 25-30% higher than 2004, making the per acre increases over \$20. In other words, corn cost per acre went up nearly \$14/acre in 2005 so budget for an additional cost increase of at least \$6/acre in 2006. Soybean production costs went up around \$5/acre for 2005 and we may see a shift to more soybean acres in 2006. Projections indicate that soybean fuel costs will be nearly 25% higher in 2006 than they were in 2004.

So what can producers do? Producers can soil sample so they are supplying crop needs and not any extra. Consider alternative tillage practices. Have combines and tractors properly serviced. Use alternative fertilizer if it is available. Manage crops throughout the season for maximum yields. Lastly, follow markets carefully and make the most of seasonal opportunities.

Annie's Project 2:

Women Marketing Grain

An Annie's Project 2: Women Marketing Grain course is scheduled for March 1, 9, 16, 2006 and June 1, 8, 15, 2006. This six week course will cover these topics:

- Introduction to marketing terminology and fundamental outlook
- Basic hedging problems, futures contracts, cash contracts
- Crop Insurance and marketing - options on futures
- Selling options and derivative contracts
- Hands-on workshop

If you are interested in attending this course or would like more information, please call me at (573) 633-2640.

AG & RURAL DEVELOPMENT NOTES

Amanda Cook

Have you taken these Ten Steps to Maintain Critical Wastewater Service and Protect Public Health in an Emergency?

Step 1: *Make an emergency contact list that includes all essential contacts.*

- Post by each phone
- Review and change as needed

Step 2: *Inspect your facilities daily.*

- Inspect pump stations, outfalls, chemical storage areas, fences, etc.
- Use a security checklist to log results
- Take immediate action to address vulnerabilities

Step 3: *Make security and preparedness everyone's job.*

- Make everyone accountable
- Report problems immediately
- Communicate regularly about security issues

Step 4: *Limit and control access to facilities.*

- Lock all doors and gates
- Remove keys and lock vehicles
- Limit key access to essential personnel
- Keep track of who has keys

Step 5: *Establish relationships with emergency personnel and neighboring facilities.*

- Involve emergency personnel in your emergency planning
- Establish mutual aid agreements with neighboring facilities

Step 6: *Practice safe chemical handling and usage.*

- Control chemical deliveries and be aware of delivery dates
- Store chemicals safely and securely
- Dispose of chemicals properly

Step 7: *Secure your records and maps.*

- Update and organize critical information
- Control access to maps and records
- Backup computer files regularly
- Install updated virus protection and firewall on computers
- Secure deeds, titles, reports, etc. with copies or protection from fire and water damage

Step 8: *Assess threats and identify vulnerabilities.*

- Prioritize key threats and vulnerabilities
- Install appropriate alarm systems
- Review security priorities annually

Step 9: *Have an emergency response plan for your wastewater system.*

- Know what steps to take in case of an emergency
- Identify sources of backup equipment and assistance
- Update the plan annually

Step 10: *Educate community members about how they can protect their wastewater system.*

- Do not place hazardous materials in a collection system
- Report suspicious behavior and vandalism immediately
- Use neighborhood watch programs to help protect collection systems and other wastewater assets

These ten steps, in greater detail, can be found on the Environmental Protection Agency's website at: www.epa.gov/safewater/, or by calling the National Environmental Services Center at (800) 624-8301.

LIVESTOCK NOTES

Al Kennett

Performance Tested Bull Sale

Our annual Northeast Missouri Performance Tested Bull Sale will be held Saturday, March 25, 1:00 p.m. at F & T Livestock Market. We have 55 head consigned. This includes 39 Angus, 4 Hereford, 6 Simmental, 5 Charolais, and 1 Gelbvieh.

These bulls have all been a part of the on-farm performance program of this respective breed association and the weights and measurements have been done by an Extension Livestock Specialist. Complete performance information will be available on all bulls including actual ultrasound carcass information on most of the bulls.

The bulls range in age from yearlings to two year olds. There will be 12 head of full two year old bulls in the sale. Most of these have been used some by the breeder and then held for the sale. So, they are very good bulls. Also, 15 head meet the calving ease requirements of the Show-Me-Select heifer program.

Heifer Sales

As you probably know, the Show-Me-Select heifer sales were a real success for the sellers last fall. Some would question how good they were for the buyers. The statewide results follow:

	No.	Ave.	Total
Southwest	309	\$1222	\$377,598
W. Central	177	1445	255,765
Southwest	187	1479	276,550
Northeast	282	1428	402,696
S. Central	316	1271	401,636
	1270	\$1349	\$1,713,170

Since the program started in 1997 there have been 15,725 heifers sold for \$16,393,900 for an average of \$1043. Some would call this a value added program!!

The northeast group has decided to hold our first ever spring Show-Me-Select sale of heifers that will calve in the fall. It will be held June 16, 7:00 p.m. at F & T Livestock Market. We hope to have 150-175 heifers in the sale.

By the way, the state SMS group voted recently to move the calving ease direct EPD requirement for Angus bulls used on SMS heifers up to 7. The former requirement was 6 and that will still work during 2006 for bulls or semen that was purchased before March 1, 2006. The 7 represents the upper 30th percentile for active sires in the British breeds.

Using Wet By-Product Feeds

This fall and winter wet by-product feeds have become more available in our area. Both wet corn gluten at Keokuk and wet distillers grain at Macon are readily available now.

The costs have been fairly economical if you don't have too much transportation cost! Moisture levels run from 50 to 60 percent which of course means you only have 40-50% dry matter. I have run analyses on a couple of samples that were very close to 50 percent moisture.

If it is costing \$20 per ton at the plant, what is a ton of dry matter feed really costing??

\$20 per ton plus \$12 per ton transportation means you have \$32 per ton delivered. At 50% moisture that is \$64 per ton of dry feed. Is it worth that?

The wet corn gluten feed we tested had 21.7% crude protein and 78% TDN on a dry basis. Those are pretty good figures at \$64 per ton. We have lots of hay selling for those prices with nowhere near those nutrition levels. The wet distillers grain will be even better.

There are several other things to consider. It handles about like silage and requires the same equipment and feed bunks for feeding. The storage life is fairly short (2 weeks in cold weather). Because of protein levels you are limited to how much you can feed. Call if you have questions.

Finally: When a man opens the door of his car for his wife, you can be sure of one thing: Either the car is new or the wife is!!

AGRONOMY NOTES

Alix Carpenter

Winter Weed Control in Wheat

In the past two years, I have noted an increase in wild onion and wild garlic presence in winter wheat fields. While wild garlic is not very competitive with wheat, it must be controlled, as wild garlic bulblets in grain will result in dockage at the elevator.

Wild garlic and wild onion are both perennial species which emerge from an underground bulb. Their appearance is similar, although the leaves of wild garlic are round and hollow, while those of wild onion are flat and not hollow. The bulb of wild garlic has a membranous coating on the outer bulb, while wild onion bulbs are covered in a net-like structure. Both species will produce aerial bulblets, which mature near wheat harvest.

According to Kevin Bradley, MU Weed Scientist, Harmony Extra and Harmony GT at 0.5 to 0.6 ounce per acre prevent the formation of wild garlic bulblets. These herbicides should be applied when wild garlic is less than 12 inches tall, with two to four inches of new growth. Peak (prosulfuron) also provides good control of wild garlic at ¼ to ½ ounce per acre, but soybean cannot be planted in Missouri for ten months after Peak applications. Harmony Extra, Harmony GT, and Peak do not control wild onion. Both wild onion and wild garlic are controlled with 2, 4-D ester at 1½ to 2 pints per acre. These rates may cause some crop injury; and the benefit of preventing aerial bulblet formation must be weighed against the risk of crop injury. It is critical that 2, 4-D applications to be made after tillering and before jointing, to prevent severe crop injury.

Asian Soybean Rust

Scouting for Asian soybean rust is currently underway in the southern United States. As of February 22, presence of the pathogen had been confirmed in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Texas. The rust found in Texas was found on soybeans which have since been harvested, and should not serve as an inoculum source this year. Soybean rust in the remaining areas was found on kudzu.

Soybean rust was found on soybeans during the 2005 growing season in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina; results of fungicide trials from these states should provide guidance as to the best course of action if soybean rust arrives in Missouri this year. In Georgia in 2005, soybean rust was first confirmed on volunteer soybeans in April, and the disease

moved northward at an average of 60 miles per week, far slower than the 300 miles per day reported as a possibility in Brazil. Layla Sconyers of the University of Georgia estimates that 60 to 70 percent of Georgia's soybeans were treated with fungicide in 2005 to combat soybean rust.

As last year, MU extension agronomists will be scouting soybean fields for soybean rust throughout the season. While the protocol has changed somewhat from last year, there will be regular monitoring and reporting of crop condition data from throughout the soybean growing regions of the continental U.S. The data collected from these sentinel plots will allow for predictions on the timing of soybean rust spores arriving in a particular area, as well as recommendations on when the most efficacious fungicide applications should be made in a particular area. A map of the most recently scouted sites, reports of confirmed soybean rust infection, and state-specific soybean rust status summaries can be viewed at the USDA's soybean rust webpage, www.sbrusa.net.

Drought and Herbicide Carryover

Despite some late fall rains, the risk of herbicide carryover remains for corn and soybeans planted this spring. Prior to planting, a review of last year's weed management program is critical. Three factors must be reviewed: the herbicide program used late year, the time of application, and the rate of application. Those herbicides which have soil activity are degraded primarily by soil microorganisms. Under drought conditions, soil microbes are not active, or are minimally active, and more herbicide which may have activity on the following year's crop remains in the soil. The higher the rate, and later the application, the more risk there is of herbicide carryover. In soils with a high pH, where atrazine was applied in 2005 and yield was low, there is a higher risk of carryover.

Bioassay instructions can be obtained at http://extension.missouri.edu/marion/ag_docs/bioassay.htm. Information on crop rotation restrictions is available online at <http://extension.missouri.edu/explore/manuals/m00171.htm>, or by contacting your local University of Missouri Extension office.