

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



News and Notes

Clinton County MSU Extension and Conservation District

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Events & Happenings

Clinton Conservation District Fall Tree Sale – now in progress.
Call 989-224-3720x3 or visit the [Clinton Conservation District](#) website to order.

September 12, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. – Equine Fire Safety Expo, 5260 Mt. Hope Road, Carson City

September 15, 3 p.m. – “The Cutting Edge” Tillage Demonstration and MSU Corn Variety Trial Twilight Tour, Jorgensen Farm, 2215 Dietz Rd., Williamston. RSVP 517-676-7207

September 24, 10 a.m. to noon – Soybean Field Day, Bob Fitzpatrick Farm, 7920 N. Tallman Rd., Fowler. RSVP 989-875-5233.

October 22, 10 a.m. to noon – Central Michigan Ag Market Update, Clinton County Courthouse

December 3, 10 a.m. to noon – Central Michigan Ag Market Update, at MAC in Middleton.

Wheat Management Tips

Marilyn L. Thelen, MSU Extension

Are you looking for a few things you can do to give your wheat an advantage?

Begin by selecting the right field – The field should be well tilled, have enough slope to allow for good surface drainage and be free of quack grass and other perennial weeds.

Pay attention to seed placement - Wheat should be drilled in 6 – 8 inches rows between $\frac{3}{4}$ and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. Too deep decreases germination and emergence. Too shallow and you risk winter kill.

Calibrate the drill - MSU Research indicates that seeding rate should be between 1.6 and 2.1 million seeds per acre for seed with 90% or greater germination. However, if you are planting late – after October 15, seeding rate should approach 2.5 million seeds/acre. See Table 1 for the number of seeds/foot of row needed for different combinations of row spacing and target seeding rates.

Select the right seed - Seed selection is also an important part of a successful wheat crop. The MSU Wheat Variety trial data is available [on-line](#) or through the Clinton County MSU Extension Office in St. Johns.

Know your planting date - Wheat can be planted anytime after the Hessian fly-free date, in Clinton County that is September 17.

Table 1. Seeds/foot of row needed for different combinations of row spacing and target seeding rates

Desired Rate million seeds/acre	6 inch rows Seeds/foot	7 inch rows Seeds/foot	8 inch rows Seeds/foot
1.6	18.4	21.4	24.5
1.8	20.7	24.1	27.5
2.0	23.0	26.8	30.6
2.2	25.3	29.4	33.6
2.4	27.5	23.1	36.7

Western Bean Cutworm

Marilyn L. Thelen, MSU Extension

Thanks to the many folks that stepped up to monitor Western Bean Cutworm traps, we are getting a good picture of the progress of this pest. Clinton County had 13 traps this season and was named, along with Montcalm, Gratiot and Isabella, a “hot-spot”! On August 12, the trap counts for 50% of traps near corn fields were still increasing in numbers in the mid-Michigan area. According to Dr. Chris DiFonzo, MSU, WBC is new to this area and the lighter soils in parts of central Michigan increases the survival of the overwintering population. The western side of Michigan has had heavy infestations in previous years and their number indicated that some natural enemies may be catching up with the pest.

As we see the population increase in this area, we need to make plans for 2010 to manage the pest. Management for corn involves scouting fields when the corn is in the whirl stage. Once the corn is fully tasseled it is not as attractive for laying eggs. The threshold is 5 percent of the plants with egg masses on leaves or small larvae in the tassel. Recommendations for spray will be in the MSU Insect, Nematode and Disease Control in Michigan Field Crops 2010, E1582, which will be available through or bulletin service of the MSU Extension Office this winter. The spray window is very limited on corn. Once larvae moved down the plant into the ear, control is reduced. Herculex 1 or Herculex Xtra provides some protection from WBC, but the refuge would still need to be scouted.



Special thanks go out to Brooke Denovich, an Ovid-Elsie Middle School student. Last June, Brooke built five WBC traps during the Clinton County RESA “On Location” program. Her interest in the project lead her to put a trap in a corn field near her home and monitor it throughout the growing season. The highlight for Brooke was the day she found 33 moths in the trap! I truly appreciated the opportunity to work with Brooke on this project and value the contribution her data made to the understanding of the WBC as it moves across the state.

Conservation Stewardship Program Sign Up Announced

August 10 through September 30

Edwin Martinez, District Conservationist, NRCS

Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan has announced the first farmer sign up period for the new Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). The CSP will make payments to farmers for maintaining existing conservation practices and for adopting additional practices on cropland, grassland, improved pasture, rangeland, non-industrial private forestland and tribal lands. Payment will also be made for adopting resource conserving crop rotations.

Farmers can submit applications at their local Natural Resource Conservation District offices between August 10th and September 30th to be considered for this 12.8 million acre sign up. Enrollment for the new CSP is nationwide and the program is not limited to certain watersheds.

Application will be a two step process.

Step One: Farmers must submit a short, basic application to NRCS by September 30th. NRCS has developed a self screening tool to help farmers evaluate their eligibility and suitability for the program.

Step Two: Farmers who submit a basic application will then work with NRCS staff on a more comprehensive assessment of the farm's existing conservation baseline and the proposed additional practices and crop rotations for the 2010 through 2014 crop years. NRCS will use a new software system called the Conservation Measurement Tool (CMT) to assign points by which all applications will be ranked. Farmers who submit the basic application to participate may then work with NRCS to complete the CMT at any time between mid-September and the end of October.

Conservation Activities

NRCS has provided a list of practices and enhancements that are considered by the CMT in assigning points for newly adopted conservation activities. Many of the same activities are also reflected in the baseline section of the CMT used to measure existing conservation on the farm today.

CSP targets practices that conserve or improve soil, water, air, energy, biodiversity, and wildlife habitat. Practices that sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gasses are also rewarded. Among the over 70 activities included are continuous cover cropping, resource-conserving crop rotation, management intensive rotational grazing, advanced IPM, organic cropping and livestock systems, prairie restoration, pollinator habitat, and a variety of nutrient management and water and energy conservation techniques.

State Resource Concerns

States pick between three and five priority resource concerns for their state or for regions within the state such as water quality. CSP applicants must demonstrate that they already meet a minimum sustainability level called the "stewardship threshold" for at least one priority resource concern and that they will address at least one additional resource concern to the stewardship threshold level during the 5-year contract period. Applications that address more resource concerns or that treat them more thoroughly will be ranked more favorably by the CMT and receive higher payments. To find out your state's priority resource of concern contact your NRCS state office.

Payment Rates

CSP payments are a reflection of land use type (crop, pasture, range, etc.) and environmental ranking points. Overall CSP payment rates are expected to average \$18 per acre nationwide. The rate, however, will vary by land type and the details and total environmental benefits of each contract. Payments will be made in the fall of each year beginning in 2010. Payments are limited to no more than \$40,000 per farm per year.

NRCS Saint Johns Field Office contact: 989-224-3720 ext. 3.

Cereal Rye: Manure and Livestock's New Best Friend

Natalie Rector, MSU Extension

Cereal rye is a versatile cover crop for livestock-based cropping systems. It recycles manure nutrients, especially nitrogen. It can provide excellent pasture in fall and spring when perennial pastures are least productive and vulnerable to traffic and winter injury. When green chopped in the boot stage, rye can produce one to two tons of dry matter per acre. Saving a few acres to harvest as grain will provide next season's seed, straw for bedding and, after harvest, a site for manure applications.

The combination of rye cover crop and manure applications are mutually beneficial. Manure nutrients aid in decomposition of the rye, offsetting any potential yield drag and rye captures and recycles the manure nutrients effectively to the future corn crop, reducing commercial fertilizer needs.

Rye is one of the best scavengers of nitrogen and reduces leaching losses on both sandy soils and tile drained land. The fast growing, fibrous root system can capture 25 to 100 pounds per acre of soil nitrogen. Seeding rye in late summer or early fall will allow it to scavenge nitrogen sooner. This is also the time when organic N (from manure or legumes) is still available. Rye can capture this nitrogen and recycle it to the following season. The actual amount of nitrogen that is recycled is highly variable. A pre-sidedress soil nitrate test can help determine the amount of nitrogen credit to take for the upcoming corn crop.

It is the hardiest of cereals and can be seeded later in the fall than other cover crops, and provides top growth and extensive root growth. It will germinate at cold temperatures—as low as 34°F and it will resume growing at 38°F in the spring. This makes it possible to seed rye after corn, sugar beet and bean harvest until the ground freezes, but planting as early in the fall as possible is preferred.

Easy to establish, rye can be aerial seeded in standing corn/silage and prior to leaf drop in soybean. Rye can be broadcast alone or with dry fertilizers, can be added to manure tanks for slurry seeding, or drilled (which provides the most consistent stands). Drill rye in at 60-90 pounds per acre (1 – 1.5 bu./acre). Broadcast it at 90-120 lbs./acre (1.5 -2 bu./acre.) Broadcast alone or with potash, before chopping corn stalks. Aerial seeding works well and generally produces good stands. Seed prior to silage harvest or before soybean leaf drop. Shallow discing or chisel plowing will improve germination. Drilling is always the most successful method but not always necessary for a cover crop.

A timely kill of rye in the spring is key to maximum yields. Killing rye about 10 days before planting your summer annual crop will give residue time to desiccate. Early spring control is critical unless rye is planned to be greenchopped and removed as a forage source. Rye is very forgiving at planting, but can be unforgiving in the spring.

Additional resources on manure management can be found at <http://www.animalagteam.msu.edu/Portals/0/cerealrye.pdf> and additional cover crop information at www.covercrops.msu.edu

Soybean Cyst Nematode

Marilyn L. Thelen, MSU Extension

Concerned about soybean yields? Did you know that Soybean Cyst Nematode (SCN) is the leading cause of soybean yield loss in North America? And, soybeans can have substantial yield loss without showing symptoms of SCN.

In fact, it is common for other soybean pathogens to be present in SCN-infested fields and for interactions among pathogens to occur. (SCN Management Guide, 5th edition). Essentially, the maturing female creates an opening in the root surface allowing other pathogens to enter such as, Pythium, Rhizoctonia, Phytophthora, Fusarium (cause of sudden death syndrome, Fusarium wilt and furarium root rot) and Marcrophomina (the cause of charcoal rot). In the case of Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS), research has shown that SCN has hastened its development and increased the severity of SDS.

The first step to reducing soybean losses is to determine the severity of the infestation. The best way to do this is to collect soil samples in the fall and submit them to Diagnostic Services at Michigan State University. The costs of the laboratory analysis and management recommendations provided by Diagnostic

Services are covered by the Michigan Soybean Checkoff. Your management strategies and tactics should be based on the SCN population densities found in each field. Proper sampling and handling of samples is critical to the success of your SCN management efforts. Because of this, sampling and handling instructions are listed below:

- Pick up free SCN soil sampling packets from your local MSU Extension office. The Michigan Soybean Checkoff will cover the cost of the first 20 samples per farm per year.
- Use a soil probe to collect soil samples from a depth of 6 to 8 inches.
- Collect about 50 soil cores from each field or uniform area up to 20 acres within a field. Follow a "Z" or a "W" pattern to ensure that the cores are collected randomly.
- Growers that produce soybeans and sugar beets should submit soybean root samples along with the soil sample when possible.
- If the field is being tested for SCN for the first time, sample areas where SCN is most likely to establish. These include areas where equipment enters the field, coarse-textured soils, areas having soil pH levels greater than 7 and areas where yields have been lower than expected.
- Place all the samples in a bucket and mix them together thoroughly. Place about 1 quart of soil in the plastic bag provided in the SCN sampling packet.
- Keep the samples out of the sun and cool until you can send them to Diagnostic Services or deliver them to your local MSU Extension office.
- Complete the "Grower Information" section of the SCN submittal form and include this with your soil sample.
- The results of the SCN analysis and management recommendations will be sent directly to you. ([Soybean 2010 Fact Sheet](#))

Management of SCN is dependent upon having the appropriate crop rotation. Rotate with non host crops to reduce SCN number. Rotate with resistant soybean varieties to reduce yield loss due to SCN. Rotate the resistant varieties you use: do not use the same resistant variety twice in a row! And finally, rotate with tolerant or susceptible soybean varieties only if SCN numbers are low. (SCN Management Guide, 5th edition).

For assistance in interpreting results and developing rotations for SCN-infested fields, contact the MSU Extension office.

NCR-SARE Announces 2009 Farmer Rancher Grant Call for Proposals

The 2009 North Central Region - Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (NCR-SARE) Farmer Rancher Grant Call for Proposals is now available online at <http://sare.org/ncrsare/cfp.htm>.

Farmers and ranchers in the North Central Region are invited to submit grant proposals for projects to explore sustainable agriculture solutions to problems on the farm or ranch. Proposals should show how farmers and ranchers plan to use their own innovative ideas to explore sustainable agriculture options and how they will share project results.

Sustainable agriculture is good for the environment, profitable, and socially responsible.

Projects should emphasize research or education/demonstration. Grants can range from \$6,000 for individual farmers up to \$18,000 for groups of 3 or more farmers.

NCR-SARE expects to fund about 50 projects in the twelve-state North Central Region with this call.

The deadline for proposals is Thursday, December 3, 2009 at 4:30 p.m.

Each state in SARE's North Central Region has one or more State Sustainable Agriculture Coordinators who can provide information and assistance to potential grant applicants. Michigan's coordinator is Dale Mutch, he can be reached at 269-671-2412 or mutch@msu.edu. Details on Michigan's program are available at the [Michigan SARE website](#).

VALUE ADDED PRODUCER GRANTS

USDA will soon be accepting applications for grants to assist agricultural producers seeking to add value to the commodities they produce. Approximately \$18 million will be awarded nationwide.

USDA plans to award planning grants of up to \$100,000 and working capital grants of up to \$300,000 to successful applicants. Applicants are encouraged to propose projects that use existing agricultural products in non-traditional ways or merge agricultural products with technology in creative ways. Businesses of all sizes may apply, but priority will be given to operators of small and medium-sized family farms - those with average, annual gross sales of less than \$700,000.

Applicants must provide matching funds equal to the amount of the grant requested. Ten percent of the funding being made available is reserved for beginning farmers or ranchers and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers. An additional 10 percent is reserved for projects involving local and regional supply networks that link independent producers with businesses and cooperatives that market value-added products.

Paper and electronic applications must be submitted to the Rural Development state office in the state where the project will be located. The Michigan State Office is located at 3001 Coolidge Rd., Suite 200 East Lansing, MI 48823, (517) 324-5190. For more details, contact this office or visit the [Michigan Rural Development](#) website.

Planning for Progressive Farmer Meetings

Marilyn L. Thelen, MSU Extension

Planning for the Progressive Farmer winter meetings begins now!

We are looking for topics that are of interest to you. Please e-mail your ideas to thelen22@msu.edu or call 989-224-5240 by the end of September.

We are also looking for Progressive Farmer Board members. If you have an interest in working with us to plan the winter meetings and/or have great ideas for other activities, send your name, e-mail address and phone number to the e-mail address above.

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Send the following one line e-mail message to listserv@list.msu.edu:

subscribe fieldcat (your first and last name)

For example, if your name was Jane Smith, you would type: subscribe fieldcat (Jane Smith)

You will receive a confirmation e-mail asking you to click on an Internet link in order to complete your subscription. This ensures that the address came with your permission.

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