

Crops Day

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Roundup and non-Roundup treatments at Rockspring. The field has lambsquarters, ragweed, smartweed, foxtail, and nutsedge.

For the most part, preplant programs have done well to control a wide variety of weeds. But a strictly post application has run into problems, especially with control of nutsedge and wild buckwheat.

Also, the problems with triazine- and atrazine-resistant weeds are more prevalent on corn than soybeans, simply because the soybeans in the narrower rows (15 instead of 30 inches) are more competitive against weeds as they canopy.

One Penn State study looked at 59 farms and 179 fields, livestock farms that were feed sampled. Greater than 98 percent of the farms had triazine-resistant lambsquarters.

Curran said that lambsquarters should be the "state weed. It's the most prominent weed on crop farms in the state," he said.

Of 52 farms, 60 percent had triazine-resistant pigweed. When averaged, 29 percent had the triazine-resistant pigweed. A majority of the fields didn't have triazine-resistant pigweed.

The crops day also looked at marketing issues.

John Berry, multicounty marketing extension agent from Lehigh County, said that to determine price of crops, it's critical to look at the stocks-to-use ratio. That ratio looks at what feed is in bins compared to how much is being produced. It indicates how many days of supply of a particular commodity is available for use.

For corn growers, the stocks-to-use ratio is not expected to change much next year.

But one indicator of possible improvement in corn prices is the cost of nitrogen fertilizer because of the energy crunch. Because corn requires rather high rates of nitrogen, its lack of inexpensive availability may drive down the number of acres of corn planted, which could drive the price upward.

But to drastically affect corn price, the U.S. would have to lose 30 percent of corn production. "I don't expect any event to affect us at 30 percent of national production," Berry said.

If less corn is produced because of the lack of inexpensive nitrogen, beans would be grown instead. The increase in soybean

production, along with more acreage from Brazilian exports, could affect price.

Berry expects the price of beans to be less next year. "Beans are going to be cheap next year," he said.

But looking at the stocks-to-use ratio will be more critical to get an idea of price. And just the "scare," he said, of a potential Midwest drought can drive corn and other commodity prices up.

A big effect on corn prices could be the expanding China market. As the population's standard of living rises, so does their demand for meat, including those "pork tenderloins and chicken legs," where once the country depended a great deal on simple grains.

Berry expects that in this country, the "industrialization" of commodities has occurred, mostly in the poultry and now in the swine industry. He expects dairy not to be far behind, though he doesn't believe it's possible for cow/calf operations to be industrialized, simply because they rely heavily on grazing components, he said.

Several farmers spoke at the Crops Day on their experience with the 1999 drought and the importance of crop insurance.

Insurance and taking advantage of government aid could benefit growers, especially in times of "extreme adversity,"

said David Stutzman, Virginville. "The 1999 drought was one of them."

Stutzman emphasized the importance of running the farm as a business with a business plan that makes use of crop insurance.

Robert Seidel, dairy farmer from Lenhartsville, spoke about the frustrations of coping with the drought. He quoted his father, who used to say "it's not how much money you make, it's how much you can keep," Seidel said.

What concerned him is that of the entire net income on farms on the U.S., approaching \$28 billion, half of that — \$14 billion — is in the form of government payments.

Yet, to survive, it's important to use crop insurance and to take advantage of the government disaster payments. Some will not participate in those payments, said Seidel, because of religious reasons, moral reasons, and some who simply don't trust the government, he said.

But the money to help the farmers in the disaster, especially from the state, did come through, Seidel said.

Dwight Zook, Oley, farms 600 acres in Oley with his family and insures his crops. Crop insurance is simply another business tool to help improve the business stability of the farm.

Sjoerd W. Duiker, assistant professor of soil management at Penn State, said that in Berks County, according to USDA-NRCS records, 85 percent of the tillage is conventional.

"You are all conventional tillers," said Duiker, with only 10 percent using no-till.

Duiker looked at the top issues of no-till management.

No-till does less damage to the soil, promotes improved soil tilth, keeps residue feed for soil-improving earthworms, and helps the soil retain water and the plants to use it. He pointed out the direct yield benefits of no-till over conventional tillage.

No-till is good on well-drained soils, common in Berks County. "Berks County should be suitable for no-till," he said. "It's the best soil conservation practice, with good residue cover."

Soil loss in tonnage per acre is decreased with no-till. However, growers need to manage traffic over the fields and be careful in manure management.

To avoid disease challenges, growers should observe proper crop rotation.

For growers unwilling to adopt no-till, the issues have been proper seed maggot and slug management. Growers need to find ways to improve their management of manure if using no-till.

Top Crawford DHIA Cows By Protein For December

HIGH PROTEIN COWS - CRAWFORD COUNTY


OWNER - COW'S NAME	MILK	FAT	PROTEIN
CRAWFORD COUNTY			
JAMES + JANET HUNTER			
HAYDEN	37,705	1213	1112
KARI	29,004	1267	981
CALICO	30,915	977	832
CUSTEAD VALLEY FARMS			
BARON	32,323	1139	1022
WHAM	30,017	791	943
JESICA	29,397	1138	920
JOAN	25,408	889	866
TINA	29,449	916	865
BABBIE	29,486	1055	861
SOPHIE	29,208	848	842
RYND HOME FARMS			
LINCON	28,690	1157	993
RICHARD & SANDY BYHAM			
ERIS	34,710	897	981
STACEY	30,259	1329	954
ROXY	29,677	704	948
AMANDA	28,883	1184	934
SHELLY	27,574	1040	828
VEL+RUS HOLSTEINS			
BELL	35,472	1313	980
NAOMI	29,481	1098	849
BETHAN	29,375	1177	823
ALRIGHT FARMS			
ELSIE	33,545	1037	973
TIA	35,766	1087	968
CINDY	32,633	1238	967
LARRY E CHARLES			
NANCY	31,870	1336	964
216	30,729	1306	922
DON CALDWELL			
MANDEL	30,053	936	912
RICHARD A KEMERER			
71	27,414	962	887
WIL-AIRE FARM			
BERNIE	27,101	1058	880
MARK + CHRIS CORNELL			
INGRID	31,507	1091	878
BLACK POND FARMS			
AMARA	29,143	1015	860
CLAIRE	29,069	1210	836
SHEIK	26,676	743	818
DOUG & DEBRA FIELY			
SABRIN	27,622	1055	859
GERALD R DONOVAN			
BELLA	27,318	911	848
CURT+BARB GREENAWALT			
EIGHT	30,390	938	846
GALEN GARBER			
MUDDY	28,263	790	844
JAMIE	26,641	891	821
INFIELD BROTHERS			
DEVLON	29,359	1125	840
GREENE ACRES			
TORI	28,232	1080	839
MAE	26,239	980	822
TOM & LINDA SMITH			
CHERYL	23,752	863	829
COON'S FARM			
150	26,272	928	818
AGNEW FARMS			
TESS	27,767	859	815
RAY & HELEN ANTHONY			
401	25,039	885	809
STANHOPE FARMS			
414	28,738	1073	807

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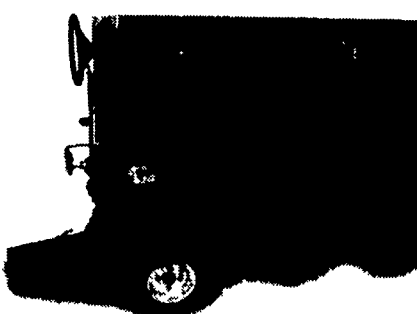
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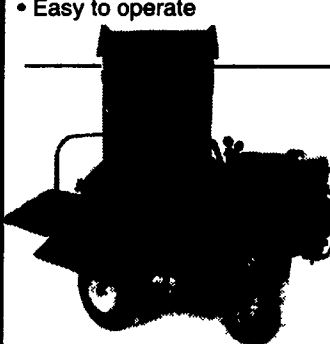
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