

Faulkner County Agriculture Update

April 24, 2020

General Conditions

Weather: The County received around 2 to 2.5 inches of rain this past week. This wasn't what we needed on top of the rain we received last week. Fields were just drying up from last week's rain and we even got some crops planted when more rain came in. Hopefully next week will be the dry week we have been looking for. Nighttime temperatures are slowing getting back up to the high 50's. Hopefully we can get into the 60's consistently in a couple of weeks.

Arkansas River: The river continued to fall earlier in the week and got down to around 258. It has been on a steady rise since then and sits at 263 today. It is predicted to crest at 267 by Sunday and then start falling again. Hopefully it will stay below 270.

Row Crop

Corn: A few acres of corn were planted last week. Every week I will include a chart that has weekly heat units. It takes approximately 150 heat units for corn to emerge. Last week we accumulated 78 heat units, so if we can keep the night time temperatures up we will see some emergence on corn planted last Saturday.

Total Heat Units Accumulated Since April 18	Heat Units Accumulated April 18 - April 24
78	78

Rice: We had some rice planted last week also. I know we could have some water-seeded if the weather would just cooperate. Check out Dr. Hardke's rice update for a good article by Dr. Tommy Butts on rice weed control.

Dr. Jarrod Hardke's 5th Arkansas Rice Update: <https://www.uaex.edu/farm-ranch/crops-commercial-horticulture/rice/Arkansas%20Rice%20Update%204-17-20.pdf>

2020 Managing Water-Seeded Rice for Arkansas: <https://www.uaex.edu/farm-ranch/crops-commercial-horticulture/rice/2020%20Managing%20Water-Seeded%20Rice%20in%20Arkansas.pdf>

Wheat: I really can't believe how well wheat is holding up with all of this rain. Fields range from flowering to soft dough. Disease continues to be minor. I really keep thinking septoria is going to blow up but it continues to be minor. I did see the first areas of barley yellow dwarf virus this week. I figured that was coming but there isn't much we can do about it. Armyworm damage has been very minor. I can still find a few in fields but they just aren't doing much damage. We need to continue to keep an eye on them though.

Enlist Training: <https://courses.uaex.edu/course/index.php?categoryid=79>

Paraquat Training: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/paraquat-dichloride-training-certified-applicators>

Beef & Forage

Brucellosis: I talked to our vaccinator from Livestock and Poultry this week and he said that we would not have a spring vaccination schedule. If you have heifers that you are planning on keeping, and you are in the process of weaning them, you can call him directly and he will arrange to come to your farm and give them brucellosis shots. Remember that heifers need to be between 4 and 12 months of age and are being weaned because he is using a modified live virus, so the vaccinated heifers don't need to be going back on bred mama cows.

If you have heifers that need brucellosis vaccinations call **Ebert McClure at 501-351-1000.**

Purple Bermudagrass: I scouted a couple of hay fields last week and again this week and really noticed some purpling. This was caused by the cooler nights we had right after Easter. The grass should grow out of it once we get some warmer temperatures. The following article is by Dr. John Jennings and gives an explanation of what is going on and also why we wait until night time temperatures are 60 degrees for a week before we fertilize.

Investigating purple Bermudagrass – it's a cold case

Producers have recently noticed bermudagrass turning purple and are trying to root out the cause. The evidence indicates that many cases involve well-managed hay fields. Many of these fields were treated for winter weeds and fertilized to support early bermudagrass growth. No obvious insect problems have been reported, soil fertility is variable among cases, so from there the evidence goes cold.

Let's examine the physiology of the victim – the bermudagrass itself. This is a warm-season grass. It grows best at temperatures above 85 degrees. Green leaf tips always show up in March especially when there is no overburden of winter weeds to block sunlight. But it takes a series of consecutive warm nights above 60 degrees to get the internal machinery of the grass working efficiently. Early on, the bermudagrass will start to grow on warm days, then gets shut

down when temperatures drop back. Night temps in the 40's shut down growth for several days. It's a bit like trying to start a cold engine - it hits, sputters, hits, then finally starts sluggishly. Now think back to a few weeks ago in late March and into early April. Temperatures hit 80+ degrees in late March. The warmup prompted a lot of producers to fertilize fields to push the bermudagrass out of dormancy for early growth. Then temperatures took a dive for several days and warmed back up just before Easter. It was as if Spring had finally sprung, then Blackberry Winter hit right about Easter. Temperatures dropped and frost even occurred in northern areas. Blackberry winter is an old-timer saying referring to the often-annual event when spring temperatures suddenly drop just about the time the blackberry briars start blooming. The tender growth of the bermudagrass, fueled by sunlight and fertilizer suddenly sputtered and stalled. Purpling is often due to accumulation of anthocyanin pigments due to stress. It is frequently associated with cold-weather induced phosphorus deficiency. Plants normally grow out of it when warmer weathers arrives.

Some key points here:

1. Controlling winter weeds is a good practice to allow more sunlight to reach the grass and to warm the soil;
2. Temperatures frequently turn cold sometime during late March and early April which can stress the plants being pushed out of dormancy early;
3. Don't apply N fertilizer too early in spring to warm-season grasses – wait for a week of night temperatures of 60 degrees.

Pesticide Applicator Training

Anyone that needs a private applicators license can use the online course as their required training to obtain a license. The online training is located at www.uaex.edu/pat. The Arkansas State Plant Board has made an exception and will allow producers that are certifying for the first time to be able to use the online training.

Upcoming Events

Pesticide Applicator Training: Cost is \$20 for the training.

Tuesday, May 19, 2020

6:00 p.m. at Workforce Training Center (Timberwolf Drive UACCM Campus, Morrilton, AR)

Extension Service Voluntary Tax

Residents of Faulkner County have a chance this year to help the Faulkner County Extension Service. There will be a chance for residents to give to an Extension Service Voluntary tax on their tax statements. The money will be used to support the Faulkner County Extension Service which includes not only agriculture, but also family and consumer science and 4-H. We really appreciate the support of Faulkner County residents.



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