



The Ag Quarterly

News for Southern Illinois Farm Families

<http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/regions/ag>

Winter 2008

Beyond Description: The 2008 Season

Dennis Epplin, crop systems educator

Harvest is wrapped up at this point, so let's reflect back on the crop season. What a season it was! Would you have even believed that a season like this was possible a year ago?

March precipitation was 11 inches at Dixon Springs. Other locations will argue that they had that much in one rainfall event. The spring continued wet with delayed plantings and probably more replants than most can remember. By June, there were quite a few questions on "When does it become too late to plant corn?" Our early to mid-June answer was that good corn yields were still possible, but not probable.

Early to middle summer growing conditions remained wet with moderate temperatures. Late summer became drier, however the moderate temperatures persisted. Hurricane Ike stopped by in mid-September bringing wind to all and heavy rain to some. The question became will we have enough heat and time to mature the crop? Fortunately, frost did not come early, and crops matured timely, but later than normal. The next question was, "Will this corn crop ever dry down?" That also came about, even though it was early November.

Now, with this set of questions and concerns most would expect that 2008 was a disaster year. Quite to the contrary, 2008 delivered good to outstanding crop yields for many growers. The November crop report estimated 155 bu/ac corn and 42 bu/ac soybeans for the two southern Illinois crop reporting districts.

How could this happen? I would suggest that it was a rare event that I will call *LEGM*, just for fun. We definitely had some *Luck*. We also had an extremely good *Environment* following planting. A great deal of credit must go to the seed industry for continuing to bring forward outstanding *Genetics*. Finally, pat yourself on the back for supplying a high level of *Management*, as well as hard work.

It is doubtful that the 2008 season will repeat in the near future. But, congratulations go to all the corn, soybean, and grain sorghum growers who were able to take "lemons" and make "lemonade" in 2008.

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Bred Heifer Sale on December 13

Teresa Steckler, beef specialist

The Illinois Heifer Development Program (IHDP) spring-calving bred heifer sale is set for 5 p.m., Saturday, **December 13**, at Farmers Livestock Market in Greenville.

Twenty IHDP consignors from central and southern Illinois are offering 110 high-quality, spring-calving replacement heifers. All heifers are guaranteed bred to calving ease bulls and have met strict health and reproductive requirements. A commercial bred cow sale (500 head estimated) offered by Greenville Livestock Auction will follow the IHDP sale.

For more details, contact me by phone, 618-242-9310, or email, tsteckle@illinois.edu. Consignor information is available on the SI Ag website, <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/regions/ag>. A sale catalog and IHDP requirements are also available.



Grazing Seminar Set

Looking for ways to increase the economic return on your forage-livestock investment? Get sound advice you can trust at the annual *Grazing Seminar* set for Monday, **December 15**, at 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion in Campbell Hill.

Topics include *Benefits of Rotational Grazing; Legume Variety Selection; Update on EQUIP; and Fescue Management*.

Registration is \$5 per person, which must be paid in advance. To register, call U of I Extension in Jackson County, 618-687-1727.

Heart of America Grazing Conference

This five-state event is set for **January 21-22** in Columbus, Indiana. Topics range from *Alternative Grazing Forages to Using Sheep and Goats in a Grazing Environment to Marketing Farm-Raised Products to Grazing Stockers and Replacement Dairy Heifers*. The conference also includes a trade show and silent auction.

For complete details, see the SI Agriculture website, <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/regions/ag>. Register by **December 19** for the discount rate!

Dairy Days Announced

Dave Fischer, dairy educator

The 2009 *Illinois Dairy Days* are designed to help you make the most of your resources and remain a productive part of the dairy industry during these difficult economic times.

Dairy Days are conducted at nine locations throughout the state. The program runs from 9:45 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. In Southern Illinois, the program is offered twice:

January 14

Okawville, Community Club Bldg. For details, call U of I Extension, Washington County, 618-327-8881

January 15

Breese, American Legion For details, call U of I Extension, Clinton County, 618-526-4551

At each program, U of I dairy experts will discuss these topics:

- Feeding Challenges with Today's Milk Price
- Managing the Replacement Herd
- Economic Alternatives for Illinois Dairy Farms
- Economic Implications of Cull Dairy Cattle
- Impact of Technology on Carbon Footprint
- Economic Value of Dairy Cattle Manure
- Update on Herd Health

A registration fee covers lunch and materials. For more details, visit the SI Agriculture website, <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/regions/ag>.

Check Out New Ryegrass Studies

Mike Plumer, natural resources educator

Annual ryegrass was the focus of three recent studies conducted on Southern Illinois farms that represent common soil types in the region.

One study includes three years of data on how common herbicides controlled 16 different annual ryegrass varieties. A second study explored the effect of tillage and annual ryegrass cover crop on corn yield. The focus of the third study was to look at how different annual ryegrass varieties reacted to the Midwest winter climate and to determine optimal methods to eliminate the cover crop in the spring.

The study results are available on the SI Agriculture website, <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/regions/ag>, in the *Field Crops* section. If you don't have internet access, you can obtain copies at your county U of I Extension office.

Corn and Soybean Classic Set

Dates for the University of Illinois *Corn & Soybean Classic* have been announced. Most southern Illinois producers will want to attend the **January 6** conference scheduled at the Holiday Inn in Mt. Vernon.

The 2009 program will emphasize crop production, pest management and economics, as well as the interactions among them. On-site registration starts at 8:30 A.M. followed by the first presentation at 9 A.M. Market updates will be provided throughout the day, and the program will adjourn by 3:30 P.M. A question-and-answer session is scheduled for both morning and afternoon sessions.

For more details, log on to the SI Agriculture website, <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/regions/ag>.

Register by December 20 for the discount rate!

Renewing Your Pesticide Applicator License?

University of Illinois Extension will again be offering Private Pesticide Applicator Certification Training for those who need to be licensed to purchase and apply restricted-use pesticides. Cost for the training session is \$30. This fee is in addition to the \$20 licensing fee required by the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA). At the request of IDOA, no evening trainings are scheduled. A list of area training sessions is available at your local Extension office or log on to the SI Agriculture website, <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/regions/ag>.

Computer Training For Farmers

Half of Illinois farm households have a computer, but the majority of farmers still do not use this technology to help make management decisions. Many farmers are like Andy, a middle-aged farmer who was out of school before computers became popular. He knows there is a lot the computer can do for him, but he feels left out and unsure of where to start. *Andy's Project* is a computer education workshop especially designed for farmers.

Participants work on spreadsheets such as Farm Rent Evaluator, Farmland Lease Analysis, Soil Productivity Index, Illinois Crop Yield, and Machinery Economics.

The computer work is agriculturally oriented, stressing good farm management practices and tools to improve decision making. All instruction is at a basic level, and minimal keyboard skills are needed. *Andy's Project* is offered at two locations:

Southwestern Illinois College

December 19, 9 A.M. – Noon
Red Bud, Illinois
618-939-3434 or 618-443-4364

John A. Logan College

January 6, 4 – 6 P.M.
Carterville, Illinois
618-993-3304

Advance registration is needed for both workshops. Call the numbers above for details or to register.



Crop Management Conference for Southern Illinois Growers

Robert Bellm, crop systems educator

The latest perspectives on critical crop production issues will be discussed at the *Southern Illinois Crop Management Conference* on **January 28–29** at the Rend Lake Resort and Conference Center in Whittington.

This two-day conference will address a wide array of hot topics pertinent to crop production, pest management, natural resources, and economic issues. The program will consist of a mixture of general sessions and breakout sessions that focus on current research affecting crop production and marketing. Certified Crop Advisers can earn up to 13 hours of CEU credit.

Advance registration by **January 21** is \$130 per person. Late and on-site registration is \$150. The fee includes lunch, refreshments, and handouts for both days. There is no one-day registration option.

Program details will be available soon on the SI Agriculture website, <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/regions/ag>.



Other Locations for this Crop Management Conference

January 27–28
Jacksonville, Illinois

February 3–4
Champaign, Illinois

February 4–5
Malta, Illinois

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University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

If you need special dietary or disability accommodations to participate in any programs listed in this newsletter, please contact your local U of I Extension office.