CROP MANAGEMENT REPORT

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

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IPM AUDIO UPDATES

To catch my IPM Audio Updates recorded weekly, you can sign up at: Rolling Plains/West Texas IPM Audio Updates and receive notifications by text when one has been recorded and then listen to it whenever you wish. This is a very brief update about what I am finding around St. Lawrence both pest and crop wise along with what I expect to see in the near future.

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What to do About Fertilizer

Fertilizer has obviously been a hot topic all spring and most all of last fall. To be honest I am having a hard time remembering when we where not talking about the high cost of fertilizer. Although there is nothing that we can do about the cost except to hopefully find the best deal available, there are a few things that can be done to make better or more efficient use of the fertilizer that you do apply.

The first thing I would suggest everyone do this year, especially if you are considering putting any fertilizer out is to take a soil sample. It is always a good idea to sample your ground at least every couple of years, but especially in times like this, and when sending samples in, use a realistic yield goal. The soil samples that I have taken throughout the three counties since 2015 show on average 49 ppm of nitrogen in the upper 6" of soil. The is the equivalent of 98 lbs. of nitrogen. The 6-12" zone averaged another 31 ppm which equals 62 lbs. of nitrogen per acre. Combined, under ideal conditions this is enough nitrogen to produce a 3.5 bale crop. This is not to say the plant is going to utilize all of this, but knowing that you all ready have a large amount of nitrogen in your soil may allow you to cut back on N and possibly spend those resources on phosphorus or potash instead. Applications should begin early and need to be finished up the first couple of weeks of bloom. We all know it is drier than we have seen in ages, you must consider what your irrigation capacity can realistically handle with minimal rainfall? Can it make this fertilizer available to the plant.

Phosphorus is another nutrient that has been found in many of the samples I have collected over the years, however it can be much more difficult to asses. Although we average about 46 ppm in the upper 6" and 31 ppm in the 6-12" zone, not all of this P is available to the

Fertility, Cont.

plant. Annually, only 5-30% of it will be available. With the high cost of phosphorus you really do not want to get behind on available soil phosphorus and have to try and play catch-up next season. It is a good idea to at least replace what is used each season if not try and build a little reserve when possible. Of course this season is not a year to spend additional expenses on fertilizer. Potassium will generally show high on our soil test results, but research has shown that yield benefits can be seen from the addition of up to an additional 120 lbs. of K per acre, but again, this probably is not the year to be shooting for those record yields, even with the price of cotton where it is at. Ideally phosphorus needs to be put out as early in the growing season as possible to aid in early season root growth and stand establishment.

Also keep in mind that nitrogen and phosphorus utilization are directly related. Available nitrogen will increase phosphorus uptake which increases root growth and increases the transfer of phosphorus to the xylem in the plant. Nitrogen deficient plants will have smaller root systems, smaller leaves and a smaller overall leaf canopy, and be more prone to water stress and use available moisture less efficiently.

In limited irrigation situations there are a couple of times in which water is absolutely critical for yield. If you are limited or stretching you water as far as possible this season then square initiation to first flower is the most critical period of yield determination. If additional water is available then first flower to pre-bloom is the second most important time frame. Any additional irrigation or rain is an added benefit.

Test Plots

At this point I still have a few test plots available that I am looking for growers to work with. The crop tour this fall will be in Midkiff so I am looking for more locations out that direction. I would also like to look at some sorghum this year whether it is early or late season later on this summer. If anyone is interested give me a call.

2022 Scouting Program

Our Scouting Program is looking for two new scouts for this season. If you know of anyone who would be interested in scouting cotton for us and who you feel would make a good scout please send them my way. I am needing to finalize the Scouting Program here shortly.

Auxin Training

There will be another Auxin Training at the Glasscock County Co-op on Friday, March 25th at 8:00 am in the meeting. The cost is $15.00.

Upcoming Auxin Trainings

March 17

8:00am

Midkiff Co-op

March 25

8:00am

Glasscock Co. Co-op

Checks Only

$15 Per Person

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