

Crop Tech Update

High wheat prices mean a fungicide on your crop could boost your profit

FUNGICIDE costs, crop value and yield savings all factor into whether wheat fungicides are cost-effective. "But controlling leaf diseases at today's wheat prices — \$9 to \$10 a bushel — could be very profitable," says John Rowehl, Penn State Extension agronomist in York County.

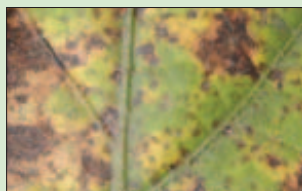
Another wild-card factor is the value of improved straw quality, he adds. Wheat that has been treated with fungicides can be brighter and potentially worth more, depending on the end use.

With current prices for summer delivery, it'll definitely pay to scout for fungal diseases, he adds. It starts by knowing what varieties and fields are disease susceptible or resistant.

Next, determine at what leaf stage you're starting to see diseases, such as powdery mildew, during head emergence. On moderately resistant varieties, yield losses range from 2% if mildew is spotted on third leaves

to 8% on flag leaves. But on susceptible varieties, losses quickly climb from 6% if mildew pustules are spotted on the third leaf to 25% if on the flag leaf.

An 8% yield savings on a 70-bushel yield goal for \$9 wheat boosts the gross margin by \$50.40. If your fungicide application costs \$23.90 an acre, you net \$26.50 more an acre.



Rust likely to be a threat in 2008

ASIAN soybean rust moved north and west during the 2007 growing season, reports Tom Doerge, Pioneer research agronomist. While the soybean disease made major inroads into the Midwest, it remains a potent threat to the Mid-Atlantic in 2008.

Dry weather slowed exponential spore growth and infection rates in the Carolinas and Virginia last summer. But Doerge predicts more widespread incidence of Asian rust is likely in 2008. Overwintering refuges for the disease have remained stable, and spore loads have remained at nonlimiting levels since 2004.

The best strategy is to stay tuned to rust-predicting computer models. They'll give you a three- to five-week lead time to develop scouting and treatment plans. Two sites provide useful updates: www.sbrusa.net/cgi-bin/sbr/public.cgi and www.stopsoybeanrust.com.

Begin scouting at the R1 or early-flowering stage for small lesions or pustules on leaf undersides in the lower canopy, adds Doerge. But don't panic. Many foliar diseases express symptoms that mimic rust.

Stay abreast of what fungicides can be used if needed. Some 16 products are now labeled for rust control. Several new fungicides are being considered for emergency Section 18 exemption. You'll find descriptions of the labeled products on the Stopsoybeanrust.com Web site.

— John Vogel



¹Some states require an individual be licensed if involved in the recommendation, handling or application of any pesticide. Consult your local Extension office for information regarding licensing requirements.

²Restrictions do apply to the transfer of grazing animals to sites intended to grow sensitive crops. Refer to the label for a complete list of transfer restrictions.

³Trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC. Always read and follow label directions. R38-881-011 (01/08) BR 010-57408 536-M2-11-07

Learning horse sense makes sense

By KARA LYNN DUNN

CORNELL Cooperative Extension's Equine Project was a perfectly timed gift horse for Sue Knight. Her Round Table Training at Paladine Ridge Farm in Ballston Spa, N.Y., had just started up. And today, Knight's 32-acre farm business has a waiting list of enthusiastic customers.

CCE Equine took off at a gallop where horses are "king." Saratoga County is the home of New York state's highest equine numbers — 11,000, valued at \$250.5 million. "The project helped focus my ideas for growing the business into what horse people are interested in, and into the horse training services that I most want to provide," Knight says.

"Now, instead of wondering how much work I'll have, I have assurance of future business and a timeline for growth. Now, I spend cost-effective time working with horses."

Running with the horses

Knight's first love is working with horses. She and husband Tom keep seven polo ponies in a 10-stall barn. Gently rolling fields and a round pen are used for year-round riding lessons and training.

In September 2006, Knight learned of CCE Equine, launched by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Saratoga County. Program objectives are to provide business planning workshops, educational symposiums, business skills and risk management training, production courses, mentoring, and networking for equine farms.

At a January 2007 workshop, Knight picked up tips for building relationships with clients, attracting new business through developing and distributing a brochure, and better utilizing existing networks.

"The exercises encouraged us to talk about our strengths. Even my veterinarian didn't know the breadth of my skills," she notes.

Her assets include a Cornell Animal Science degree and 30 years of equestrian experience. She worked for Argentine polo players, from whom she learned horse conditioning and quieting a horse through exercise disciplines. She learned from Texans how to have a

Key Points

- Fortifying horse sense with business sense was a good move.
- The CCE Equine Project spurs business strategies and networking.
- Program is funded to grow statewide in 2008.

strong will, but an easy manner with a horse.

Knight specializes in quality foundation training for young horses and in rehabilitating problem horses. "Having discovered Pat Parelli's system of natural horsemanship, I enjoy using gentle relationship-building training techniques," she explains.

Knight asked area veterinarians, farriers and current customers to distribute informative, photo-filled brochures about Round Table Training. One recipient brought six new referrals, resulting in a 7% revenue gain in fourth quarter 2007.

Knight's future plans include building a covered riding structure. In 2008, Knight was a popular returning presenter at the annual Horse Symposium organized by CCE Equine.

CCE Equine update

To date, CCE Equine has worked closely with 40 horse business owners, helping them save more than \$139,000 through pasture management, participation in agricultural tax assessments and more. Owners increased sales by \$108,000 through riding programs, boarding and other strategies. They plan capital investments exceeding \$2.4 million to expand their businesses.

The project received start-up grants in 2005 and 2006, totaling \$200,000, from the New York Farm Viability Institute. It was NYFVI's first grant foray into equine, one of the fastest growing segments of New York agriculture.

The program is now working in seven counties. In late 2007, it received a \$100,000 grant to take the project statewide. For more information, contact CCE Equine Project leaders Fiona Farrell or Jennifer Conte, 518-885-8995. Or visit www.cceequine.org.

Dunn writes from her farm in Mannsville, N.Y.



PHOTO BY JENNIFER CONTE

FOR-PROFIT HORISING: Sue Knight exercises a strong will, but an easy manner in horse training.

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Wheat prices rewrite fungicide rules

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Sprinkler tune-up can boost profits

BEFORE irrigation season begins, take a hard look at whether your watering system can operate at maximum performance. With today's rising fuel and energy costs, that's especially wise advice, says Jerry Gerdes, Valley product manager for water application.

Worn sprinklers and pressure regulators could cost you money. At a minimum, check the pivot point pressure to verify it matches the design pressure.

An accurate pressure gauge at the end of the machine is ideal, especially if the sprinkler package uses pressure regulators, notes Gerdes. "Monitoring pressure is important because fluctuating water tables or worn pressure regulators and sprinklers will affect the pressure the machine sees. And that can hamper system performance. Be sure to check pivot pressure in the spring and monitor it throughout the year," he notes.



Record-high energy costs and crop prices make it more important than ever that all irrigation equipment have an efficient and uniform sprinkler package.