This newsletter and the advice herein are free. You usually get what you pay for.

Crop weather
Rainfall, air and soil temperatures, degree-days, soil moistures, and other current and historical weather data for a little spot about two miles west of Lamberton, MN can be found at the University of Minnesota Southwest Research and Outreach Center (SWROC) website:  [http://swroc.cfans.umn.edu/WeatherInformation/index.htm](http://swroc.cfans.umn.edu/WeatherInformation/index.htm).

At the SWROC, soil moistures are slightly less than average. Concerning is the lower than average moistures at 48-60". Area steams are quite low. The crop should get a start but a prolonged dry spell could make things more tense than usual.

Most of the spring wheat and oats trials at the SWROC and SW MN area went in around Easter weekend.

Winter wheat and alfalfa made it through the winter well here at the SWROC but there are reports of some poor winter survival issues in some SW MN alfalfa fields. The  U of M Extension Forage Quarterly Spring -2015 issue has information on stand evaluation and many other topics.

Depending on your location in SW MN, some corn has gone in since April 13th. It's early yet, but some may have pushed field conditions, working things a bit on the wet side; some could have gone earlier, and some, I suspect, planted when it was just right.
Corn planted April 3 at the SWROC is now germinated with a 1/4 inch or so radicle (root). We are not trying to make a profit on this planting. It is a demonstration plot for a SWROC educational field day geared toward growers on August 13.

Some are planning to take a break in corn planting before the forecast cold rain on Sunday. Emergence can sometimes be affected if the initial water uptake (imbibition) by the seed is of very cold water. On the other hand, corn mesocotyl (shoot) development can be injured by large soil temperature swings during emergence. The good news is there should not yet be any mesocotyls developed in SW MN...unless April 11 came awfully early to the field.

_Do not plant early corn shallow_ in an attempt to get it out of the ground quicker! Temperature and moisture are both more erratic near the soil surface and shallow rooted corn often becomes vertically challenged later in the season.

To the north, and on coarse textured soils elsewhere, growers are facing very dry topsoil conditions. The last two Minnesota springs set a high bar for PRE herbicides that can sometimes struggle without rainfall. They are needed, especially in fields with heavy weed pressure.

The high winds this spring should remind us of rootworm insecticide placement issues. In-furrow placement and incorporating can help if windy. Read the label for the product you use.

Southern Minnesota buckthorn broke bud on April 10th. Soybean aphid eggs should be hatching now.

**Using a sweep net**
Contrary to popular perception, using an insect net is the delicate a process as often illustrated in the old Saturday morning cartoons. While there are delicate aerial butterfly nets designed for capturing delicate species for collection purposes, sweep net sampling is a vigorous and highly technical affair... well, OK, it involves walking and moving your arms, and there are a few simple rules. We just shot a video on [use of a sweep net in alfalfa](#). Sure wish the budget had allowed for a body double and voice over.

**Black cutworms**
We have a good crew of cooperators monitoring the migration of black cutworm moths into Minnesota. Last week found a few cutworms making their way to Minnesota, but, to this point, flights aren't large enough to cause concern for 2015 damage. Traps are checked daily and results posted each Thursday. Damage from black cutworm infestations can partially be predicted from sex pheromone trap captures and degree days. Data and black cutworm information can be found at [U of M IPM Black cutworm network](#).
Twitter
I have been using Twitter https://twitter.com/SWMNpest a bit more for quick updates this spring. The 140 character limit makes one focus if, like me, one likes to drone on and on and on and on and... Several of this spring’s tweets were incorporated into this newsletter.

Another bad pest control decision. This is an urban example, but let’s be careful out there!

Other newsletters - I don't often repost articles from newsletters that you should already be subscribed to. If you are involved in MN agriculture, you might want to be subscribed to the University of Minnesota Extension crop news blog. Unfortunately, the subscribe button is temporarily inactive but in process of being fixed. In the meantime, if you would like to subscribe to MN crop news send an email to bonga028@umn.edu. Put subscribe in the subject line.

Other U of M Extension crops information can be found at University of Minnesota Extension crops.

Happy trails,

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