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.

Many areas got a small shot of much needed rain overnight and this morning. As I write this, we are at about 0.3 inches at the SWROC and we could use more. Hopefully, now that the pump is primed, rain will continue in moderation. The rain should help produce a more uniform soybean emergence and increase pre-emerge herbicide performance. With continued good weather, we have a chance at a very good crop.

Scouting stands for emergence and weed issues should be in full swing now.

Early corn stands look very good for the most part. The few reports of problems I have heard so far are where corn was planted shallow or folks worked fields a wee bit early.

Seems that many corn emergence problems are first detected by the neighbors checking out the crops next door.

We are studying the effects of volunteer soybeans on soybean aphid and soybean
cyst nematode populations. Untreated soybeans broadcast April 14 and incorporated with a drag before corn planting are up and doing fine. Note: Using a drag for soybean seed depth control is not a recommended soybean planting practice. There should be large number of soybean fields emerged by next week.

In dry western Minnesota, some planted fields show giant ragweed and common lambsquarters. These fields need early attention with an early post-emerge herbicide application tailored to broad leaves. A rotary hoe can work on small weeds in corn too.

**Black cutworm**
Moth captures continue to be low. Most fields have been worked and planted and should be a low risk for black cutworms. However, planted fields with a heavy broadleaf emergence could be attractive to late flights. The growing corn crop might be able to escape injury from any late eggs but could be a tight race. We will monitor flight activity and degree-days for another week.

**Small grain crops**
You might want to consider getting an herbicide on your southern MN wheat crop sooner, rather than later. Check the label for your chosen herbicide for crop and weed height restrictions.

At this point, winter and spring grains on the SWROC are looking excellent and remarkably free of significant disease symptoms. I have been looking for rust and barley yellow dwarf symptoms on winter wheat varieties and been pleasantly disappointed so far.

I had a chance stop at the USDA-ARS Cereal Disease Lab on my last trip to campus. I had a brief visit with Jim Kolmer and an old friend, Mark Hughes. They mentioned that wheat stripe rust is common in the southern plains but leaf rust is less so. Cool, wet weather in the southern plains had favored disease development.

Rust spores and subsequent rust infections move from south to north across the plains each spring. Northward movement of the rusts north can occur long-distance or in shorter distance spurts. It all depends on the geography where the disease is present and producing spores and the availability of weather systems to move spores about.

The pathway is similar to the migration systems of black cutworm and other insects. Both rust spores and insects and use weather systems to help with transport with the difference being rust dispersal is more or less passive while insect behavior helps them with active migration.
Alfalfa

Area alfalfa is now 16 inches or so tall and looks good. The dry spring has minimized leaf diseases in the fields I have checked.

Earlier this spring, Matt Bruyette sent a picture of an alfalfa caterpillar larva. My understanding is that most alfalfa caterpillars overwinter as a pupa and the yellow alfalfa caterpillar butterflies emerge in the spring. Obviously, the individual pictured did not get the memo. It doesn't always pay to be different.

This procrastinating caterpillar didn’t get around to pupating as Matt’s preemptive strike took it out of the gene pool.

Degree-day models indicate that spring laid alfalfa weevil eggs should soon be hatching in SW MN at 300 Degree-Days (base 48°F) accumulated from January 1st.

![Alfalfa Weevil D.D. from 1 Jan to 5 May 2015](image)

It is too early to evaluate or treat alfalfa weevil. I have not yet seen any alfalfa weevil adults move into SWROC alfalfa and found very few early first instar (stage) clover leaf weevil larvae. The eggs of the latter were laid last fall.

Pest insects have been largely absent from the alfalfa I have looked at this spring. This could change quickly with the arrival of migrant potato leafhoppers or other pest insects.

Particularly with migratory species, insect populations can be vastly different from field to field and between geographic areas.

Sweep net sampling is not a reliable estimator of pest populations when windy conditions occur - pretty much most days in western Minnesota. Yesterday, I found some calm in the leeward side of an SWROC grove, and I took a few quick sweeps of

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Source: University of Wisconsin Ag Weather.
some alfalfa. I found a few pea aphids and tarnished plant bugs (Lygus). Populations of lady beetles, parasitic wasps and other beneficial species were found as well. Recently arrived red admiral butterflies were using the same grove for shelter from the high winds. The first few admirals arrived in early April but a larger group showed up this week. I know others have observed the butterflies too. The grove is full of nettle, the food plant for larvae, and the female butterflies will probably lay their eggs there. I took a few minutes to watch the red-banded black butterflies feeding on dandelion flowers and males fighting over territory. Seems like some don't like their neighbors too close.

Happy trails,

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