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.

It has been a rainy week and the rain has been welcome.

Scouting stands for emergence and weed issues should be in full swing now. Most fields with appropriate PRE or PPI herbicides in SW MN are fairly clean. I did receive a report where there may have been some nitrogen burn on corn from manure applied this spring and dry soil conditions but do not think this is typical.

Early corn stands look very good. Thanks to GPS and wide planters, the roadside viewings show incredibly straight rows; the only obvious variations are probably just optical illusions caused by changes in field topography. I hope this precision works out okay because I was often told as a youth that you got more plants/acre and yield/acre with crooked rows. Come to think of it, this was always by folks that didn't plant straight.

Corn is yellow but growing, some working on the third leaf. It will green up fine with some heat and sunshine.

Soybeans have been emerging and look good. I have soybeans in an experiment that are struggling with heavy residue and poorly adjusted row cleaners. The May 1 planted beans look healthy as they emerge but are struggling with the residue and associated cool soils underneath. Yellow tips on the unopened cotyledons show where cool weather stalled their emergence for a while.
**Black cutworm**
Moth captures continued to be low. This has been the lowest rate of moth captures for the last three years by far [MN Cooperative black cutworm network](#). It is a low-risk year based on pheromone trap capture and timing of weather systems out of the wintering areas.

**Corn rootworms**
The winter soil temperatures and their effect on rootworm egg survival will be similar to those in 2013-14. Bad for rootworm researchers but hopefully will be good for everyone else.

**Small grain crops**
Spring wheat and oats are tillering well and still look excellent. Winter wheat and rye are jointing.

Weather systems brought a few aster leafhoppers to SWROC spring wheat and oats, probably over the 7th and 8th.

The numbers I am finding are very low (1/10 sweeps) but it has been too wet to be in the field most of the week. I am less concerned about aster leafhoppers and the potential transmission of aster yellows virus on wheat, oats and barley than I am on other crops. Aphids and barley yellow dwarf make me more nervous but so far, I have not observed any aphids in grains. Barley yellow dwarf risks of yield loss decline with later infections.

I'll do a more thorough assessment of small grain insects and diseases early next week - if the weather permits.
Alfalfa
Area alfalfa looks good and will soon be ready to cut.

Alfalfa weevil larvae have started to hatch. I found a few 1st instar larvae early this week. Since I have not found any adults in alfalfa yet this spring, I suspect that these larvae may have been from eggs laid last fall.

The first potato leafhopper migrants were detected in SWROC alfalfa on May 12. Initial numbers were very low about 1/100 sweeps.

As always your mileage may vary. Base your pest management decisions on the insect pests and beneficials, weeds, and diseases in your fields. Insecticide decisions that are based on field researched, experimental data usually produce the greatest Return On Investment and create the fewest problems later in the season.

The insects in your fields are boringly consistent. For a particular susceptible crop and crop stage, they always eat the approximately the same amount as they develop and they begin to hurt yield at approximately the same populations - regardless of crop or insecticide price. Most research-based thresholds factor these and other variables into account. The possible exception to this rule is those few insects that can read, watch television and listen to the radio...they seemed to get more worked up than the others.

Happy trails,

Bruce Potter

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