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).

The Lamberton location accumulated 299 Growing Degree Days (base 50°F) from May 1- May 29; slightly behind the historic average. For those of you that planted early 29 GDD were accumulated from April 15 to May 1.

We don't keep records on wind at the SWROC but this spring seems exceptionally breezy. While the wind has helped us get back into the fields quickly after rains it has not helped with herbicide applications. We have had 6.47 inches of precipitation since January 1. After a dry April, it looks like May is going to end up above average for rain; those of you trying to finish planting and apply post-emerge herbicides have probably already figured that out.

I made quick tour of SWROC research plots with student interns yesterday to refresh their memories on growth staging crops. Some crop stages for earliest planted/emerged crops were:

**Corn**

4 collars

Recovering well from wind and cold. Wind was tough and some very localized and minimal frost damage to leaf tips. Greening up well now. Weather delays could challenge weed control in some fields. As corn reaches 5 - 6 collars, compaction, root injury and related nutrient problems become more obvious.
**Soybean**  
*V2 stage*  
Most plants look excellent, some issues with residue slowing emergence. No significant insect or disease issues. This could change as wet soils could encourage some root rot pathogens.

**Winter wheat**  
*Joint - Early heading depending on maturity*  
The window for herbicide applications is closed. Not looking as well as it did earlier. While winter survival was good, wheat is short and some varieties will probably not yield well. Typical diseases are showing up. A single wheat leaf rust pustule was observed but heavy flecking indicate some varieties will show as rust, or other pathogens, next week. Cool weather in the forecast could promote rust development.

**Winter rye**  
*Headed*  
Rye looks excellent but usually does. We noted some minor thrips injury to rye leaves as well as winter wheat. Aster leafhopper numbers were very low where we looked in rye and other small grains.

**Spring wheat**  
*Jointing/stem elongation*  
Looks very good to this point but this could change from a disease perspective if wet weather continues. We are seeing some parasitized English grain aphids. Fusarium head blight (Scab) severity will be determined by rain during flowering. Some of you in SW Minnesota got caught by scabby wheat in 2014. The [Fusarium head blight prediction center](#) provides some predictive tools for scab risk.

**Oats**  
*Did not stage this crop but should be similar to wheat*  
And so far, they look good from the road and stem elongation has begun. The aecia stage on buckthorn leaves is much less severe than it was here in 2014.

**Alfalfa**  
*Bud*  
I did not see any blooms where I looked. Some research trial alfalfa is down and the rest will be cut as soon as the weather straightens out.

Potato leafhoppers, both green and pink color morphs of pea aphids and plant bugs were all at sub-economic levels.

Several beneficial insect species were active. Numerous seven-spotted lady beetle mating pairs were observed (they seemed to be doing it correctly) and the results should help keep aphids and other small, soft bodied insects under control. *Avoid insurance insecticide treatments to alfalfa as most insecticides will kill beneficial insects*
and populations can flare other problems - pea aphids, for example. Avoid spraying blooming alfalfa to protect bees. For many pest species, cutting can stop a problem or delay management to the next cutting.

I was hoping for a low alfalfa weevils population year but may have been too optimistic.

My observations may, or may not, reflect what is going on in your fields. Regardless of degree-day and other models and scouting reports each field is unique. If you farm, scout your fields or hire someone you trust to scout for you. May and June is a hectic time of year for agriculturalists but making decisions without looking at the field often ends badly.

**Alfalfa weevil**

Egg hatch (300 degree days base 48°F) should be underway in most of in Minnesota with some 3rd instar larvae (504 degree days base 48°F) in SW MN and near the Iowa border (alfalfa weevil thermal models).

In SWROC and a couple other SW MN alfalfa fields, weevils were present and in some cases numerous at up to 2 larvae/stem.

Adults along with 1st through late 2nd stage larvae and their feeding damage to upper foliage are present. It might be assumed that un-hatched are present and that there are eggs yet to be deposited in
alfalfa stems. There is a wide range in larval sizes because the adults move into alfalfa over a prolonged period in the spring and egg laying is extended as well. The larvae pupate in cocoons on the ground at 814 degree days (base 48°F).

Depending on the alfalfa growth stage, it may be better to cut rather than using an insecticide treatment for an AW infestation. Cutting and crimping and windrowing can kill the larvae by direct mechanical injury or by desiccation. Avoid, where possible, leaving windrows on fields for an extended period as the alfalfa weevil congregate there.

Re-scout stubble fields within 4-5 days of cutting. When scouting early second crop, pay close attention to fields with 1st cutting damage and higher alfalfa weevil populations. Treatment may be justified if larvae are present, crowns have weevil feeding, and re-growth (green up) is delayed.

I am seeing a low number of variegated cutworms in some fields. A combination of high alfalfa weevil and variegated cutworm larva populations can wreak havoc under a windrow.

Something has changed in alfalfa weevil ecology. This insect was believed controlled by several introduced parasitoids and rarely a problem; however, for the past several years, this insect has been a consistent pain in central, west central and southwestern MN alfalfa.
**Black cutworm**
The final report of the season is present at the [MN Cooperative black cutworm network](https://swroc.cfans.umn.edu/ResearchandOutreach/PestManagement/index.htm).
It is a low-risk year based on pheromone trap capture and timing of weather systems out of the wintering areas. Don't be surprised if you see more early season insect pressure where last year's weedy areas or cover crops were planted. Several cutworm species tend to lay eggs in these areas of the field. Weedy areas can attract other insect species as well.

Happy trails,

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