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Cornbelt Update

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- **At the outset of the week**, 43 million acres of soybeans remained in the field and 63.5 million acres of corn were still standing. KS State marketing specialist Mike Woolverton says that is causing the market to talk about yield losses and quality problems. But he says there is no way to judge the impact until enough is harvested to give a good picture.
- **Despite the delayed harvest** and its related problems, Woolverton says prices fell as farmers sold to capture the previously high prices, overseas buyers pulled back because of high prices, and "the anemic dollar gained in value." But he says the market really turned down because of the longterm weather forecast for better harvest weather ahead. Woolverton says the dollar has been on a downward trajectory, and when that happens oil prices move back toward the \$80 range and grain and oilseed prices follow the oil lead.
- **Woolverton says** crop analysts have lowered private yield projections for corn and beans. He says if the national average corn yield is 160 bu., ending stocks will be 10% of usage, but he says if ending stocks drop below 10% of use, the supply tightens and prices rise. More: <http://www.agmanager.info/marketing/outlook/newletters/default.asp>
- **Think about these issues**, which Woolverton discusses in his newsletter:
 - 1) 10-12 days of good weather will be needed for crops and fields to dry out, then soybean harvest will move faster than corn, which will slow from a drying bottleneck.
 - 2) Market analysts say harvest lows are in when at least half the crop is harvested, which will be soon for soybeans but will take another week and a half for corn.
- **Don't wait for "Indian summer,"** says Purdue agronomist Bob Nielsen, if your standing corn is too wet to harvest. He says stalk health and grain quality continue to deteriorate due to the processes of weathering and disease. Nielsen says grain moisture typically decreases not much more than ¼ to ½ a percentage point per day at normal temperatures.
- **Nielsen cites** the average daily temperature in IN as 53° for October, but that drops to 42° for November. He says that explains why the rate of grain moisture loss in the field drops quickly in October and "flat lines" through November. He says if you factor in the cooler than normal October temperatures this year it is no surprise why grain moisture has not changed very significantly in recent weeks. He says don't expect much more. More: <http://www.agry.purdue.edu/ext/corn/news/articles.09/CropProgress-1027.html>

- **You may have moldy corn**, but is it a real problem? OH State specialists say before abandoning a cornfield, make several determinations. They say ear mold may not be widespread within a field, and it may not be the variety that causes mycotoxins. Read: more about ear rots at: <http://corn.osu.edu/story.php?setissueID=326&storyID=1941> .
 - 1) Walk you fields, and examine multiple ears for signs of ear rot.
 - 2) If you have an ear rot, determine its variety and whether it produces mycotoxins.
 - 3) If the mold is a hazard, determine how widespread it is throughout the field.
 - 4) Examine 50 to 100 ears at multiple locations spread out throughout the field.
 - 5) In the case of aflatoxin, a black light test should be checked if it fluoresces.
 - 6) A positive black light test does not prove the toxins are present with the aflatoxin.
- **Moldy corn is being reported** in MN, but plant pathologist Dean Malvick says identify it before taking action. He says most of the problem is superficial growth on kernels, and it may stop growing once the corn is harvested and dried. He says the more severe molds inside the kernel may produce mycotoxins and that restricts the potential use of the corn. Read more at: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/cropnews/2007/07MNCN42.html> .
- **Gibberella ear rot** has reached levels not seen in IN for decades, say Purdue plant pathologists. And the presence of gibberella has led to reports of high levels of the mycotoxin DON, or vomitoxin. That poses a concern if the grain becomes livestock feed. Gibberella also produces zearalenone which can lead to livestock infertility.
- **The Purdue specialists say** corn growers should scout remaining fields of corn and take note of areas and hybrids with ear rot problems. If gibberella is present with its pinkish discoloration of kernels, contact your crop insurance agent before harvest for instructions on whether to harvest the field, or leave a strip of corn for adjusters to examine.
- **Test your corn** before feeding it to livestock, or even putting it in livestock feeders, say Purdue livestock specialists, who are concerned about the presence of mold and toxins:
 - 1) Pigs will reduce feed intake if DON levels are above 2 parts per million.
 - 2) Pigs will have complete feed refusal if DON levels exceed 10 parts per million.
 - 3) Poultry is not as sensitive as hogs to the toxins produced by gibberella molds.
 - 4) DON or vomitoxin under 7.5 parts per mil. will suppress the immune system in poultry
 - 5) Lower test weights from diplodia changes the germ and endosperm proportions in a kernel of corn, shifting amino acid and energy balances of the livestock ration.
- **Wet corn?** Depending on moisture above 15%, drying time with natural air could take up to 27 days at 60°F, 36 days at 50°F, or 40 days at 40°F, if the starting moisture was 21%. Consult: <http://cropwatch.unl.edu/web/cropwatch/archive?articleID=1990301>
- **Wet beans?** Depending on moisture above 13%, drying time with natural air could take up to 29 days at 60°F, 38 days at 50°F, or 42 days at 40°F, if the starting moisture was 19%. Consult: <http://cropwatch.unl.edu/web/cropwatch/archive?articleID=1971361>
- **Dry soybeans with caution**, says Purdue grain quality specialist Matt Roberts, since high temperature drying of 160-180° can lead to excessive cracking of the seed coat. He says there will be less cracking and fewer splits if the humidity is above 40%. He says, “For example, if outside air is 60°F with a relative humidity of 80%, it should not be heated above 80°F because when heated to that temperature air relative humidity will be 40%.” Read more: <http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/pestcrop/2009/issue26/index.html> .

- **Medium temperature soybean drying** can be accomplished if beans have high levels of moisture and the drying occurs in a continuous flow dryer or a drying bin. Roberts says if seed quality is not a concern, beans may be dried at 120-140°, but limit exposure to not more than a half hour depending on how high the original moisture level was. He says when heat is added to the bin, make it intermittent, to avoid extended exposure.
- **Low temperature soybean drying** can be done with natural air drying, and Roberts says that will allow 2-3 points of moisture to be removed if ambient air temperatures are adequate and humidity is low. But he says this process may take several weeks. He says the process can be speeded up if one layer is dried before more beans are added to the bin, or if the bin is equipped with stirrers that thoroughly mix the beans during drying.
- **If your combine is creating ruts** in wet soils, that is no surprise, say IA State specialists who estimate a loaded grain tank and a 12-row header put 18-20 tons of pressure on the front axle of a combine. But they say those ruts will interfere with your 2010 crop, particularly in getting proper seed depth, as well as crop rooting and development.
- **Ruts from heavy equipment** on wet soil will not be erased with deep tillage, if the soil is still wet, since it will not properly shatter. They say it will take freezing and thawing action to loosen the soil. They recommend waiting until spring to make a light tillage pass, and then only work those areas of the field where ruts remain. If the 2010 growing season shows the impact of ruts, consider deep tillage after next year's harvest.
- **New IRS regulations** have lengthened the time for farmland estates to be settled. IA State ag law specialist Roger McEowen says in cases where environmental questions are unresolved, estates must remain open and assets cannot be distributed. He says those are new challenges for executors: <http://www.calt.iastate.edu/postdeathguidance.html> .
- **Hog prices are higher**, but MO economists Glenn Grimes and Ron Plain wonder why. They report, "Slaughter in recent weeks has run 5-7% above mid-Aug. Therefore, these higher prices are not supply driven. The best guess is there is some improvement in exports since August and the increased spending on pork for October Pork month. Whatever the reason, it is appreciated." But they warn, "The \$70-plus summer 2010 futures for lean hogs may be influencing producers to slow or stop the decline in the breeding herd. The latest data show both sow and gilt slaughter below a year earlier."
- **Improve your pasture productivity** by increasing the livestock species that are grazing, says IL animal systems specialist Dean Oswald. Horses, cattle, goats, and sheep all graze at different heights and eat different plants. Therefore, rotating them all in the same pasture will allow better management of your forage, including weed control. Read more: <http://www.livestocktrail.uiuc.edu/pasturenet/paperDisplay.cfm?ContentID=10149>
- **Managed grazing**, says Oswald, allows several positive impacts for your forage:
 - 1) Balance pressure on vegetation, protect natural resources, and reduce erosion.
 - 2) Improve feed quality and quantity through proper forage management techniques.
 - 3) Produce more pounds of livestock per acre, and diversify livestock sales.

Cornbelt Update (formerly *Extension Update*) is e-mailed on Friday to selected subscribers and is also on the Internet at www.farmgate.uiuc.edu . E-mail comments to: Stu Ellis at shellis@illinois.edu .