

AG LIFE

Extension Ag Connection

Heat, rain show their affects now

Heat and Pollination: With last week's heat and anticipated heat later this week, we were receiving questions regarding the impacts of heat and humidity on pollination. You can view the entire article in this week's CropWatch at <https://cropwatch.unl.edu>. Key points include:



Jenny Rees
York County
Extension Educator

Heat over 95°F depresses pollen production and prolonged periods of heat can reduce pollen production and viability. When soil moisture is sufficient, one day of 95-98°F has little or no impact on yields. After four consecutive days, there can be a 1% loss in yield for each day above that temperature. Greater yield loss potential occurs after the fifth or sixth day. High humidity, without a drop in humidity during the day, can delay pollination or prevent pollen from leaving anther sacs. We've been blessed we only had days of extended high heat around pollination, received a break in the heat in addition to weekend moisture.

Insect Pests: From light trap reports, peak western bean cutworm (WBC) flight appears to have occurred last week, so scout for egg masses and live larvae with a 5-8% treatment threshold. Thistle caterpillars grew rapidly last week. Others are with me in considering spraying closer to 15% (instead of 20% threshold) with stressed fields from flash drought and/or off-target dicamba injury that don't have canopy cover yet. In CropWatch, check out the articles regarding scouting for grasshoppers in field borders and what to expect for insects depending on crop growth stages yet this year.

Cattle Losses from High Heat: If the recent

(See EXTENSION, C7)

MARKET PRICES

Prices as of Friday are based on Aurora Cooperative's south elevator location.

- Corn July 19
Cash price: \$4.12
Basis: -0.20
Futures price: 432.0
- Soybeans July 19
Cash price: \$7.99
Basis: -1.05
Futures price: 903.4
- Milo July 19
Cash price: \$3.82
Basis: -0.50
Futures price: 432.0
- Wheat July 19
Cash price: \$4.23
Basis: -0.25
Futures price: 448.2

Q&A focuses on organic struggles, opportunities

■ Vetter, panel cover wide range of topics at The Ivy in Aurora

by Kurt Johnson

The going was tough in the early years of organic farming, when growing crops with unconventional methods drew odd looks from the neighbors and raised questions with no known answers.

A panel of farmers who weathered that storm and stayed true to their convictions say awareness of the benefits associated with organic farming has grown significantly in recent years, though in their eyes so much more could and should be done to shift food production from a modern-day chemical approach to a healthier, more sustainable model.

"I've probably received more calls in the last two years than I've received in the 20 years previous," said Bob Quinn, an organic farmer from Montana and one of four panel members featured in a question-and-answer session July 14 at The Ivy. "Particularly with the downturn in prices the last couple years, many more farmers are looking hard at what they are doing and thinking about some changes."

David Vetter echoed that sentiment, repeating a theme he shared in the documentary shown earlier that day called "Dreaming of a Vetter World."

"I certainly get more calls now, but very few of them are local or regional," Vetter said. "There are more from Iowa, Kansas, Ohio, Minnesota and Colorado, maybe only one or two from Nebraska."

Paul Huenefeld recalled listening to what Vetter had to say years ago and venturing out on that unknown trail as the second organic farmer in Hamilton County. He said Vetter and The Grain Place offered encouragement in those early years, though admitting that there wasn't much support beyond that.

"There were struggles because there were years where specific fields were visually failures, but financially it was better than anything conventional we had," Huenefeld said.



David Vetter, second from right, speaks during a Q&A session in Aurora July 14, which followed the first local viewing of a documentary on the Vetter family's organic vision. Other panelists, from left, included Paul Huenefeld, the second organic farmer in Hamilton County; Liz Carlisle, a California professor and author; and Bob Quinn, an organic farmer from Montana.

"We just keep driving. You have to have tough skin and a teachable spirit and be willing to change."

"I'd have to say it's paid off very well," Huenefeld continued. "We're 30-plus years down the road and I've never looked back."

In regard to fields that were filled with weeds and initial reactions from area farmers who didn't understand or care to learn about The Grain Place vision at the time, Vetter said he tried to keep it in perspective.

"In those early years we did a lot of things wrong and messed a lot of things up, but given that I had a spy at the coffee shop I was aware of a lot of things that were being said," he jokingly recalled, drawing laughs from the audience. "Probably the single biggest failure was not coming up with a way to invoice our entertainment value."

The number of organic farmers in Hamilton County

has grown to 10 to 12 now, though Huenefeld reported that the base of interest is spreading as the demand for organic products grows and the concepts become more mainstream.

"There is a group of organic farmers and wanna-be organics who get together once or twice a year now," he said, noting that some come to Aurora from 100 miles or more away. "We call ourselves the unfunded or unbiased, since no commercial interests are involved with these meetings. There were probably 50 guys there last time and we're seeing some guys involved in the group now that 10 years ago I would have never guessed. They were not interested in the word organic. They stood against it, but they are trying it

out now."

Health concerns

The four-person panel, which also included California professor and author Liz Carlisle, addressed a number of topics during an hour-long Q&A session, ranging from health issues to educating a new generation of farmers to lobbying efforts in Washington D.C.

"We need to get to the root cause rather than just manage the symptoms," Quinn said when asked about the impact on human health of chemicals like glyphosate, which he said is literally raining from the sky in detectable amounts in his home state of Montana. "It affects the bacteria in the soil, but it also affects the bacteria here in our gut ... so it is caus-

ing secondary effects in many, many forms.

"If we would focus on the causes rather than treating the symptoms we would get to solutions," he continued. "The final solution for the chemical experiment, in my mind, is to move on to something sustainable, something much more healthy, not only for farms but also for everybody who eats those products."

One thing Quinn said he likes to do when he goes to DC is suggest to congressional leaders that they aren't asking the right questions.

"Rather than asking what is the best health care system, the question you should really be asking is why are so many people sick?" he said. "It doesn't matter what kind of health care system you have if a significant portion of the population is chronically ill because you're going to break the country. Once you understand

(See ORGANIC, C7)

Ricketts encourages participation in trade mission to Germany

Gov. Pete Ricketts encourages ag producers and businesses across Nebraska to consider joining the Nov. 9-16, 2019, International Trade Mission to Germany. Officials from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) will accompany Gov. Ricketts and Nebraska businesses on the trade mission. The delegation will visit Berlin, Lower Saxony and North-Rhine Westphalia.

"Germany has the European Union's largest economy and is a valued trade partner for Nebraska," said Gov. Ricketts. "Since 2010, Nebraska companies have exported over \$350 million in goods to the country. Additionally, German-owned companies in our state employ 1,000 Nebraskans. This trade mission will deepen our relationship with Germany, and open the door to new partnerships."

Nebraska trade mission participants will meet with public officials, community leaders, and private companies in a country that is one of Nebraska's most important international business partners.

The itinerary and agenda for this year's trade mission has been developed by DED. The first stop for the trade mission is in Berlin, where delegates will participate in business tours and government meetings. The delegation will then visit the Agritechnica Agricultural Trade Show

in Lower Saxony. Agritechnica is the world's leading trade fair for agricultural machinery, with over 2,800 exhibitors from 52 countries. In addition to the trade show, other promotional events and business meetings will occur in Lower Saxony and in North-

Rhine Westphalia, the final stops for the trade mission.

Because space is limited, anyone who is considering taking part in the trade mission should contact Lori Shaal (lori.shaal@nebraska.gov) immediately to express their interest.

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