

# SFG Update

Smith Fertilizer & Grain

August 13, 2013

## Mark White Knoxville Location Manager



3 weeks ago I was watching Market to Market on a Friday night and the guest grain broker who was on cautioned anyone who was holding old crop that they were sitting on the edge of a big cliff and once they fell over it would be a long fall. I couldn't argue with what he was saying but I thought it would take 3 or 4 weeks for it to happen. All summer long we kept hearing how tight old stocks were and many wondered how the pipeline was going to maintain its prime thru August. However the fall started the following Monday morning as the perfect storm developed. The funds began to liquidate and the processors

crashed their short supply from Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, and Iowa. I would like to share a few thoughts from this conference. With the exception of north central Iowa, most areas are looking at a late but very large crop. Farmer selling of the 2013 crop is record low as most attendees reported less than 10% of the anticipated grain has been sold. Normally this number is 30 to 35% at this time of the year. Corn harvest has begun in Alabama and Arkansas and early reports show a very good crop. There are 5500 barges that have been tied up down south due to the lack of grain movement this past year and many of these will be loaded with corn to come north as far as Iowa to help ease the short nearby supplies. Most of the people there felt we will see corn priced in the 4 to low 5 range and beans around 11.00. They also expect basis levels to go back to more normal levels this fall and for carries to develop as we move thru harvest and storage becomes an issue. They expect exports to increase for corn as we have seen

I spent 2 days at a grain marketing conference this week that included people

that cut in half this past year due to the drought of 2012. The speakers all agreed that the world's appetite will continue to increase as the populations of China and India grow and their standard of living improves.

At SFG we are continuing to haul grain as we plan to empty out the elevators as much as we can so we can hold what we feel will be an above average harvest in much of our area. We are also busy making repairs and getting all of our grain equipment up to 100%. Our goal is to get everyone unloaded as fast as possible and back to the field. If we can help you get 1 or 2 extra loads in each day we will both see the end of harvest quicker. We plan to work very hard to provide everyone ample storage space which will be a much larger challenge than last year. We plan to have our 2013 grain policies in place in time for the September newsletter. If you want to talk about storage or some of the other services we provide please call me at the Knoxville office.

## 20 YEAR CELEBRATION AT PLEASANTVILLE

SERVING PLEASANTVILLE SINCE 1993

August 24th 5-9 p.m.



Meal Provided— plus....

Cake— of course!

Inflatable— big slide and obstacle course!

Hot dogs for the kids

DJ— so we can kick up our heels!

Door prize drawings every 20 minutes  
(must be present to win)

**BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY & JOIN THE FUN!!**

## Greg Willer Knoxville Agronomy Manager



Even with last night's rain, there are a lot of places that are still pretty dry across our growing area. When we have dry weather like we are having it is important to keep an eye on your fields for spider mites. Spider mites

will aggregate along the edge of fields, especially when the field is bordered by a buffer strip. Winds will eventually move the spider mites across the field if they are not caught in time.

The prime time for spider mites is late July or early August when the conditions are ideal for the growth of the pest. The best way to scout for these spider mites is to start at the edge of the field with a piece of white paper. Shake the bean plant over the piece of paper and use a magnifying glass to see if there are any spider mites on the paper. Spider mites are very minute (<1/60 inch long) and can be hard to see with the naked eye.

Spider mites will begin feeding at the bottom of the plant and work their way up. Early symptoms of spider mite damage will appear as small yellow dots on the lower leaves of the plants. Prolonged feeding will cause the leaf to turn completely yellow. Eventually the leaf will turn brown and fall off. Insecticides will not always kill spider mite eggs so it is important to scout the field 7-10 days after any treatment. If you see any signs of pests in your fields, please give your SFG agronomist a call. We will be happy to come out and take a look.

**For more articles and market information please visit our website at [www.sfgiowa.com](http://www.sfgiowa.com).**

## Brad Kaufman Agronomy Sales



Now is the time to make plans to soil sample when the crops are combined. Soil sampling is the base foundation of raising a good crop. If just one nutrient is lacking in the field it is cutting

yield already. I recommend grid sampling.

Grid sampling is done every 4 years. Each field is broken into 2.5 acre grids and sample points in the grids. This is useful because there is so much variability in each field. Most generally you can pay for the grid sampling with the money you save in spreading lime. PH is very important, if it is too low or too high not all of the nutrients are available for the crop. I like to run the pH around 6.7. A lot of the soil test results come back showing that most of the ground is very low in P and K and a lot of that ground is still producing 175-200

bushel corn, it would be interesting to see what yields would be with the P and K levels in the medium to high range.

Composite sampling is probably the most common. This involves random sample sites in the field. Samples are taken from a big piece of land and results are not very reliable. If you choose to composite sample, I recommend doing it every year. That way you can see just how much variability is in the field.

Now is a good time to visit with your SFG agronomist to make sure your soil samples are up to date.

## Taylor Banks Agronomy Sales



In the past couple weeks I have received calls from farmers asking what products are available to control brush, thistles, and unwanted broadleaf weeds in their hayfields and pas-

tures. Dow AgroSciences produces a very good line of products with flexible application rates and timing. Most of their products have no grazing restrictions after application with the exception of lactating dairy cows. For control of multiflora rose, honey locust, blackberries, and buck brush I recommend Crossbow This chemical can be broadcast with a boom sprayer or spot applied with any kind of sprayer, it is rain fast in two hours, and has no effect on grasses. If a grower has just thistle or broadleaf weed issues I recommend either ForeFront R&P for late summer application or Milestone for fall application. Both of these products can be ei-

ther broadcast with a boom sprayer or spot applied, control the same broadleaf weeds and thistle species, but Milestone does not contain 2-4-D where as ForeFront R&P does. All of these products have little to no effect on grasses, I do warn growers if they have a pasture of hayfield with legumes, these products will harm them and it would be best to spot apply the problem weeds and brush rather than using a broadcast method of application. Dow AgroSciences offers a full line of range and pasture products. If you have any questions or would like more information to contact me or your local SFG agronomist.

## Kyle Smith Albia Location Manager



Now that we're getting toward the end of our summer I wanted to take some time and explain what and why beef producers should consider creep feeding.

### First off, what is creep-feeding?

Every year, beef producers have the same question for us – “will creep feeding pay for itself?” Some producers have had the experience where the creep feed bill seems to be too high and they feel they have lost value on their calves due to excess flesh. If used improperly, creep feed can result in these problems, but used properly creep feeding can add significant revenue to the cow/calf operation.

Next to calving percentage, weaning weight has the greatest economic impact in a cow-calf operation. As genetics have changed, the impact of creep

feeding has improved dramatically. Calves today not only have the genetic ability to gain more on creep feed, but they can also convert creep feed more efficiently which lowers the cost of gain on these calves.

### When is creep-feeding effective?

Creep-feeding is most effective during drought or late summer when quantity or quality of the pasture does not meet the calf's nutritional requirements for growth.

### What are some benefits of Creep Feeding?

- Calves are more uniform in size.
- Calves are better able to handle weaning stress, giving a quicker, healthier start in the feedlot.
- Increased cow weights (on average 20-30 pounds heavier at weaning).

### Creep Feeder Management Tips.

- For the first few weeks, use a sweet feed such as Calf Manna to entice calves into the creep feeder.
- Place creep feeders in an area where cows frequent, such as near loafing areas, water, shade or mineral feeders.
- Keep feed fresh. Partially fill feeders at the beginning when intakes are

low.

- Routinely clean out feeders. Any moisture or fines should be cleaned out of trough.
- Adjust feeders so excessive feed does not build up in the trough. Adjust the opening to ¾ to 1 inch to eliminate feed buildup. This will help reduce fines and waste.
- Do not let feeders go empty. Once calves have started on creep it is best to keep creep available at all times. If available off and on calves tend to over eat.
- Allow adequate bunk space per calf. A good rule of thumb is 3 calves per foot of bunk space.
- Make sure creep feed area can securely keep the cows out, but allow easy access for calves.

We still have some Hubbard creep available to contract out for those who are interested in getting 10 or more tons booked.

If you have any questions or are interested in getting your calves started on creep please call or stop in!

## Mark Young Senior Agronomy Manager



What about Sulfur, should we be using more? Sulfur is important for the production of amino acids, proteins, and vitamins. Sulfur is essential in the production of chlorophyll. Keeping good levels of sulfur in your soil ensures greater N uptake and nitrogen efficiency. Sulfur keeps sodium and magnesium in check, builds organic matter, and helps produce higher protein crops.

There is less brimstone dropping from

the skies. Sulfur dioxide emissions – think acid rain- have declined sharply in the last three decades, so less sulfur is falling on cropland. Does this mean you need to add Sulfur fertilizer for maximum corn yields? That question is prompting Corn Belt researchers to pinpoint exactly where Sulfur pays.

Research from the 1970's found that Sulfur rarely increased corn yields. Since then, there have been important changes in Iowa corn production. Progressively higher yields have increased Sulfur removal. One is the shift to conservation tillage, which slows decomposition of organic matter, the main source of soil sulfate. And livestock production has consolidated, so many farm no longer receive manure, another prime Sulfur source. Of course that is changing again with changing fertilizer economics. More corn production on eroded soils. Most important, America is cleaning up its industrial smoke-

stacks. Across the Corn Belt, the amount of Sulfur reaching the soil in rain has dropped 30-60% since the 1980's according to the National Atmospheric Deposition program.

All of these changes suggest that crop responses to Sulfur could become more common. In the publication, Evaluation of Corn Response to Sulfur Fertilizer in Northeast Iowa, by John Sawyer, he writes that corn grain yield increase to Sulfur fertilization has been often and large. Across the two years and three studies, 82% of the sites had a statistically significant yield increase to applied Sulfur fertilizer.

Now is the time to prepare for next year, be sure to talk to your SFG agronomist. Let us help you improve your soils structure, quality and yields.