

SFG Update

Smith Fertilizer & Grain

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Max Smith General Manager



Change has been constant about us, AGAIN! Seems like when we think we have seen it all we find out we haven't. The main difference this year is the drought is spread throughout many areas in the United States. Crop ratings have deteriorated in many areas. We are holding up OK considering how bad it is in some places. Time is running out to get relief. We obviously

need water and cooler temperatures. Record highs were seen July 7th in our trade areas. Albia temperature was around 106 degrees. That day was really tough on crops and livestock. We can only hope it won't last much longer.

On the positive side, July will be a good month to sell that last year's grain you have in storage. Prices are higher than last summer. I never dreamed we would see higher prices two years in a row. There are not a lot of bushels left in our storage but if the prices are not good enough today just remember they won't last very long at these levels. They never do. We have been cleaning out a lot of bins. This has not been much fun in the heat. It is taking its toll on our employees.

We are trying to finish up crop

spraying but the heat has interrupted how weeds die as they harden off in these desert like conditions. This is the worst we have ever seen. Weeds are becoming roundup resistant, making it very tough to keep beans clean this year. This is not a local problem, as this is going on in many areas across the Midwest. We will need to take a different approach next year with all the resistant weeds that are becoming dominant in our fields.

We continue to sell the most creep feed we have in recent years. The grass in pastures is poor at best in several areas depending on how intense you are using your pastures. We have a good supply of creep on hand so keep us in mind on how to best handle these issues this summer.

We are still in the fix and repair mode with fall equipment. We are replacing most of the excess flow valves in our Nh3 equipment to meet standards for safety that is being implemented state wide. This is a big project and it will protect everyone if there is a ruptured line for some unforeseen reason. Grain bin augers are being rebuilt and prepared for the coming year. There is still a lot of work to finish this summer.

Give us a call for fall grain pricing. We have had a lot of interest in how to capture these good prices. Thanks for your business this past spring. We are working hard to finish spring work and prepare for this fall's expectations for the coming year.

Max Smith
General Manager

Mark White Knoxville Location Manager



The current weather pattern has sent the grain markets soaring the past 2 weeks. The reports coming out of the states east of Iowa show that the damage is already done in many areas. Locally we still have the potential to raise a respectable crop if we can get

some much needed rain. We hear lots of comparisons to the conditions we experienced in 1988, which for many of us was a memorable crop year for the wrong reasons. The seed companies have been telling us how well the modern hybrids can handle stress and drought but we haven't tested them before this summer. We should have some good data on this after harvest.

The interest in pricing new crop grain has increased the past 2 weeks along with the prices. Several customers are looking to price the bushels that their crop insurance guarantees which might be a good strategy. At some point all the bad news will be factored into this market and it will become top heavy.

End users such as ethanol plants and foreign customers will begin to back away and I'm sure the planting intentions for South America will increase. The best case for us would be some timely rain and the prices level out in a profitable area that the market can sustain for the future. An old saying is "high prices will cure high prices" and this rings very true in agriculture.

I think we have worked most of the kinks out of the way we are pricing grain with the new electronic trade hours. The live board is now closing at 2:00 pm along with the electronic trade and that has helped solve most of the confusion. We are still having trouble with some of the terminals being slow

getting their bids to us after the close which is delaying us getting the bids to the locations. They tell me this will improve soon and we will be more on track to price your grain in the afternoon in a timely fashion. We will also live price your grain from 8 to 2 on market days.

We plan to rebuild the main pit conveyer at the Knoxville elevator the week of August 6th. We will not be able to unload any grain here that week. This is a very important project as every bushel we unload at this elevator goes through this conveyer. We have all the parts and plan to use our own people so we feel confident it will be finished that week.

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Natasha Sadofsky
Albia Location Manager



As most of you know, Gary Sterling is retiring from his position as the Albia location manager and I will be stepping into this role. I'm originally from Papillion, Nebraska. I have received two bachelor's degrees in Agricultural Business and Agricultural and Resource Economics from South Dakota State University. Upon graduation I worked for a large flour mill-

ing company starting out as a feed salesperson and worked my way up to the assistant business manager position of two flour mills in southern Kansas. I'm now in the process of completing my master's in Agribusiness through Kansas State University. I look forward to meeting everyone and helping to add value to your op-

Gary Sterling
Albia Location Manager



Time seems to be flying by. Nice weather has caused pastures to green up earlier than normal, corn was planted ahead of schedule, than it quit raining and heated up. Tasseling also occurred much earlier this year. Since pollination is happening earlier than normal I believe we will have an early harvest. I heard corn would be ready to harvest 75 days after tasseling (I could be wrong). Information I found is that corn should be 30-35% 55 days after silk. It should dry ¾ % per day until it

reaches 25 % then it dries ¼ % a day. Driving around our corn crop looks alright. The key is moisture and cooler temps.

With temperatures going up and no rain the markets have the chance to move higher. How much is to be seen. With the ethanol plants slowing down it is going to put a lot of pressure on DDGs, Wet Gluten and Bean Meal. We have noticed prices going up and availability going down. That being said I would keep an eye on all prices.

Ashley Knust
Feed Sales



increase feed efficiency of forages by 10-15%. You can also use Crystalyx as a grazing management tool. If you have any underutilized areas in your pasture, set out some tubs to attract cattle to that area.

cial creep! Call for prices.

Producers should watch for signs of pink-eye when checking cows. It has been hot, dry, and dusty, which can contribute to eye irritation. Make sure you are getting adequate levels of CTC and mineral to your cattle. During hot weather, it can be advantageous to move mineral feeders to the loafing areas to ensure they consume mineral. Fly control is also important, often takes various modes of control to get satisfactory results. Spray, mist, fog, and dust are mechanical measures that can take fly pressure off your herd. We also have some feed-through options in loose mineral and Crystalyx tubs. A combination of these fly control measures can decrease stress from flies and keep the cattle grazing!

For those who haven't booked creep yet, this option is still available! You can lock in your creep prices with just 15% down, and have until October 31st to feed it out. Getting creep feed out there for the calves will take the stress off the cows. We are at the time of year when the cow's milk production is starting to decline, and the calf's nutritional requirements are increasing. If your forages can't meet these nutritional demands, it would be wise to use creep feed to fill in the gap. We offer a 16% complete pelleted creep. With a feed conversion of 4:1, it pays to run the numbers on commer-

The heat is on full-force this summer! As I've met with customers in various areas of our territory, I have been seeing pasture conditions start to deteriorate. With little to no rain in the forecast, it is time to take action! I suggest rolling out those trusty Crystalyx barrels. With proper supplementation, you can extend your pasture and

Mark Young
Agronomy Manager



an exact science. However, in combination with a soil test, it is one extra tool for identifying crop nutrient needs. A plant analysis is especially useful in identifying micro-nutrient needs.

plants are sampled is not critical. Quite often a plant analysis is taken to identify a problem which exists in a field. Most of the time the crop is at a stage of growth where there is limited available data to use in determining what levels of nutrients are sufficient. In these cases, it is important to obtain a soil and a plant sample from both the problem area and a normal area of the field. This way you have numbers to use for comparison.

A plant analysis is a very useful tool whether it be used to aid in the identification of a nutrient problem or just to verify the validity of a sound fertilizer program. By no means is the use of a plant analysis

In general, most plant analysis results are what I call a "standard" plant analysis. They look at individual nutrients and rank them in ranges of low, sufficient, or high for a crops actual needs. There is however, an approach called "DRIS" which looks at the relationship of a particular nutrient with all the other nutrients. From these involved ratios a suggestion is made as to a particular nutrients sufficiency. The advantage of utilizing the DRIS over the standard approach is that the stage of growth at which

SFG agronomists are always available to assist you in addressing a concern in your field. Waiting for a "better day" to walk the field may not allow for a good representative sample. Don't put this off when your crop is at stake.

Jerry Don Johnson Agronomy Sales



While scouting fields I have found the corn tasseling and some exposed silks. The pollination period for corn is a critical time of the growing season. It has been dry and

we are now experiencing extreme high temperatures. Below are some affects these conditions may cause.

According to Bob Nielsen of Purdue, temperatures in excess of 95 degrees can wilt exposed silks but affect silk elongation very little. Pollen can be killed or damaged by temperatures in this range. The damage can be more severe when accompanied by low relative humidity.

Since pollen shed usually occurs during early to mid-morning before temperatures have reached these damaging levels and pollen maturation for a given tassel occurs over time adequate pollen should be avail-

able until pollen shed is complete. Drought stress affects pollination by slowing down silk elongation resulting in delay or failure of the silks to emerge from the ear shoot. Silks that do emerge may wilt rapidly under severe moisture deficits and become useless. Drought stress tends to accelerate pollen shed, often resulting in poor timing between pollen shed and silk emergence.

Fields most susceptible to heat and drought stress during pollination will be those where severe soil compaction or extended periods of soil saturation earlier in the season have restricted the corn's root system from penetrating deeply. **We need rain!**

Corey Garrington Agronomy Sales



As we are seeing today, dry conditions complicate weed control problems. Often times there is no great solution available for weed problems. Sometimes an effective post emergence treatment may not be available due to extenuating circumstances

such as extreme heat. As agriculturalists we always need to evaluate the alternatives before deciding which herbicide to use. The best herbicide choice varies depending on the crop, weed problems, environmental conditions, and treatment costs.

Most herbicides tend to become less effective when a plant is under stress. Like crops, most weeds are also experiencing water stress under today's conditions. Weeds respond to moisture stress by thickening their cuticle and reducing their vegetative growth. These drought-stressed weeds are more difficult to control with post emergence herbicides due to reduced herbicide absorption and low physiological activity. As stated earlier, most herbicides become less effective when the plant is

under stress. Therefore you may have to wait until the soil is fairly moist before applying any systemic herbicides (Roundup) to manage weeds. Most systemic herbicides perform better under conditions that are ideal for weed growth. As the post emergence application is delayed, the weeds may become more drought-stressed. Waiting too long will only allow weeds to grow bigger, making them more difficult to manage. This is a double whammy.

There are other chemicals that can be used to obtain better weed control. We need to be aware of rotation intervals during our selection process and remember to ALWAYS read the label.

Brad Kaufman Agronomy Sales



This year has provided us with many challenges. Battling cutworms, uneven emergence in corn and beans, corn yellowing due to potash deficiency, pre-emergent chemicals not working as well as we would have liked, and the dry weather. However, the most concerning challenge for me is that Roundup alone isn't cleaning fields like it has in the past.

As I drive by many of these fields one thing is clear, we should have sprayed two

or three weeks ago. Would we have killed the weeds then? I don't know, but I have talked to many people who sprayed during dry weather and are respraying now because it didn't die. It will be near impossible to kill the weeds now after they were burnt off. Just like the corn and beans, the weeds were just sitting there waiting for a rain to take off. Now many of us are use to dealing with jungles in most of our beans. So what do we do now and in the future?

Today there is not much we can do if we didn't kill the weeds with chemical the first time. Going out to your fields with more chemical will just promote resistance to chemical and won't clean up any of the weed issues we are dealing with. I have had pretty good results running a full rate of Roundup Powermax, and either Synchrony or Cadet on some of the weed jungles we are dealing with.

I recently was in a customers' field that the pre-emergent chemical did not hold very well due to the dry May we had. He had sprayed it once already for waterhemp and

with the few rains we had, another flush came back. He sprayed some of the beans and wanted us to spray the other half of the field. When we walked out through the beans he had sprayed five days previous with Roundup one thing stood out. About 25% of the waterhemp was showing no signs of even being phased by the Roundup, and the waterhemp was 3-4 inches tall. We never let this field get out of hand either time. So we decided to put Roundup and Cadet on this farm to try and get the waterhemp that escaped the straight Roundup application.

Lets avoid this train wreck. I will be stopping to see you to go over your year end agronomy review. At this time we can discuss plans to improve the pesticide program for your fields. We have relied on Roundup alone for too long. A good burn down with a pre emergence is a must, followed by a post applied product, following the label for weed size. Keeping the train on the track can be a challenge but lets start now.