DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

Fulton County
Cooperative Extension Service

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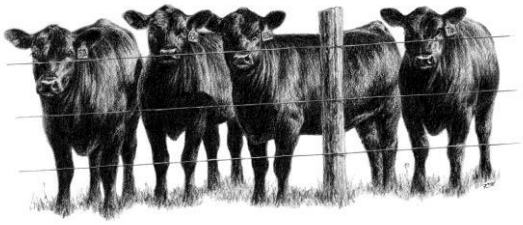
The Back Forty News



FULTON COUNTY U OF A COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE NEWSLETTER

In this Issue.....

From the County Agent's desk…

If I were to tell you back in January that the first five months of the year would bring us excessive amounts of rain and storms, a mild winter, a cool start to May, and a virus that would shut the world down, would you have believed me? Maybe the first two or three, but the last one? Probably not. It has been a wild ride the last month and a half but I am hopeful we can get back to a semi-normal routine soon.

Speaking of rain, one of the common themes I have noticed since I started this position last spring has been the continuous rainfall. So with that thought, let us look at some numbers and see what 2019 had to offer in Arkansas as far as precipitation amounts go. According to the National Weather Service out of Little Rock, 2019 was the 7th wettest year on record. Not hard to believe honestly. Hardest hit areas were those along the Arkansas River where there was significant loss in crops (hay included) due to river flooding. The statewide average precipitation for 2019 was 65.49 inches, which was 15.88 inches above average. So how does 2020 look so far? For this year, many areas have received four to eight inches above average precipitation. Surpluses of liquid were highest in the southern half of Arkansas. So the good news? We are not in drought conditions. The bad news? Summer is closing in and we know how the weather pattern can change for the worse.

I appreciate the rainfall and as producers, I believe you do too. But, when it doesn't stop, it can sure throw a kink in our plans. I think about the children's song "Rain Rain Go Away". We all know it, and if you have not

sang it in your head yet, you will now. It is not that we want it to "go away" we just want it to "come another day". Take the last two months for example. Fulton County producers have fought wet fields trying to get fertilizer out and herbicide applications applied on cool season grasses. While most of us were able to do so, it was a battle finding dry days and dry field conditions. Lately though, between rains there has been plenty of wind and sunshine which has helped in the drying process. Focus can now shift to those warmer season forages as they are beginning to wake up. Remember; on bermudagrass, wait for a good week of 60-degree night temperatures before applying fertilizer. I will discuss more details on that later on in this newsletter.

In the meantime, while our office remains closed to the public, we are still taking phone calls as usual. Please, do not hesitate to give us a call at 870-895-3301 if you have a question that needs answered. We are still at work and stand ready to help Fulton County producers at all times. Stay safe!

Private Applicator Training (PAT) for Restricted Use Pesticides

Local farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural producers who wish to renew an existing pesticide license or receive a first time private applicator license can now do so online. Last year, this option was only available to producers who currently held an existing license and not first timers. However, this spring, due to COVID-19, many PAT trainings were put on hold and producers who needed that first time license were not able to complete the training. To help with that issue, the training is now open to everyone. The cost for the course is $20 and the license fees will be $10 for a 1-year license or $45 for a 5-year license. This is a great opportunity for producers needing a license because now, you can get the training from the comfort of your own home without the worry of getting out and about due to concerns of COVID-19.

To access the online course, go to: https://courses.uaex.edu/ and follow the steps below:

1. At the top of the page, click on "Course Categories" and it will send you to the next page
2. Click "Online Courses" and select "Application Training" and it will send you to the next page
3. Click "Private Online Pesticide Online Certification" and it will send you to the next page
4. You will then need to create an account so that you can log into and register for the course
5. Once you have created your account, log in using the username and password you created
6. To gain access the course, $20 will need to be collected through a credit card payment or through PayPal. (Scroll down to the bottom of the page and select "PAY NOW")
7. Once you have paid, it will allow you to enroll and complete the course
8. Once the course is complete, be sure to fill out your PAT Application form and mail it along with your license fee to: Arkansas Department of Agriculture, Plant Industries Division, Pesticide Section, P.O. Box 1069, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203

As always, if you have any questions about this course or have trouble logging in, please feel free to contact our office at 870-895-3301.

Investigating Purple Bermudagrass – It's a Cold Case

Dr. John Jennings, Extension Forage Specialist

A couple of weeks ago, producers noticed bermudagrass turning purple and were trying to root out the cause. The evidence indicates that many cases involve well-managed hay fields, treated for winter weeds and fertilized to support early bermudagrass growth. No obvious insect problems have been reported, soil fertility is variable among cases, so from there the evidence goes cold. And that's the problem! This is a warm-season grass. It grows best at temperatures above 85 degrees. Green leaf tips always show up in March especially when there is no overburden of winter weeds to block sunlight. But it takes a series of consecutive nights above 60 degrees to get the internal machinery of the grass working efficiently. Early warmup prompted a lot of producers to fertilize fields, pushing the bermudagrass out of dormancy for early growth. Then temperatures took a dive for several days; frost even occurred in northern areas. The tender growth, fueled by sunlight and fertilizer, suddenly stalled. Purpling is associated with cold weather stress and plants normally grow out of it when warmer weather arrives.

Some key points here:

1. Controlling winter weeds is a good practice to allow more sunlight to reach the grass and to warm the soil.
2. Temperatures frequently turn cold sometime during late March and early April which can stress the plants being pushed out of dormancy early.
3. Don't apply N fertilizer too early in spring to warm-season grasses – wait for a week of night temperatures of 60 degrees.

"True" Armyworms in Pastures

Cory Tyler, Fulton County Extension Agent

"True Armyworm" reports are coming in from area counties, so start paying close attention to your fescue pastures. As forage producers, it is easy to get a little antsy when you hear someone mention "armyworms" and that's for good reason! But, did you know there are two types of armyworms? Sure, we have the ones that occur in July, August, or September, but what about the ones that are here in early spring? The true armyworm can be a serious pest of cool season pastures, hayfields and seed production fields during April and into May. The reason for that is due to their ability of reducing forage availability in a short time frame. In most cases, producers overlook scouting procedures, which results in significant loss and damage to pastures. True Armyworms can appear almost overnight and infestations can easily be overlooked when the caterpillars are small and eating very little. Producers are encouraged to scout pastures diligently for armyworms at all times throughout the spring, summer, and fall growing seasons.

When scouting, examine at least 10 one sq. ft. samples at random across the field. Female armyworm moths prefer to lay eggs in areas of abundant growth, so be sure to include a few of these areas in your 10 samples. Armyworms often feed at night and remain hidden in ground litter by day so when scouting, try to do it early in the morning or later in the afternoon. Also, make sure to not just scan the top of the forage canopy, but open it up and look closer to the ground. If 3 or more worms per square foot are found, chemical control will be needed. Common insecticides used for control of armyworms include, Mustang Max, Sevin XLR Plus, Warrior or Karate, Intrepid, Tracer 4E, and Entrust. Generic lambda-cyhalothrin will likely be the cheapest option at less the $5/acre. As always, with any type of chemical application, there will likely be some restrictions to haying and grazing, so be sure to read the label and follow it accordingly. Insecticides are restricted use and will require a license for purchase. If you suspect you might have armyworms, please give us a call and I will be glad to come take a look.

Introducing DuraCor™ Herbicide

Cory Tyler, Fulton County Extension Agent

Corteva has now added DuraCor to their forage herbicide arsenal and it is now available for producers to use in controlling weeds in pasture and hay fields. DuraCor is a non-restricted use pesticide so a private applicator license is not required to purchase and apply this product in Arkansas. Something else producers might like about DuraCor is that it is labeled for use in fertilizer (impregnated) just like the ever popular GrazonNext.

DuraCor contains active ingredients of aminopyralid, which is currently one of the ingredients in GrazonNext HL. It also contains a newly created chemistry ingredient called Rinskor (florpyrauxifen-benzyl). Since this product shares the same active ingredient as what is in GrazonNext, there are some restrictions on hay and manure uses which are listed below. The entire label for DuraCor can be viewed online as well. As is the case with all pesticides, make sure to read the **entire label** of each product before application.

Restrictions in Hay and Manure Use - DuraCor (Specimen Label Revised 11-29-19):

- *Do not use aminopyralid-treated or florpyrauxifen-benzyl-treatedvplant residues, including hay or straw from areas treated within thevpreceding 18 months, in compost, mulch, or mushroom spawn.*
- *Do not use manure from animals that have grazed forage or eaten hay harvested from treated areas within the previous 3 days, in compost, mulch, or mushroom spawn.*
- *Do not spread manure from animals that have grazed or consumed forage or hay from treated areas within the previous 3 days on land used for growing broadleaf crops.*
- *Manure from animals that have grazed forage or eaten hay harvested from treated areas within the previous 3 days may only be used on pasture grasses, grass grown for seed, wheat, and corn.*

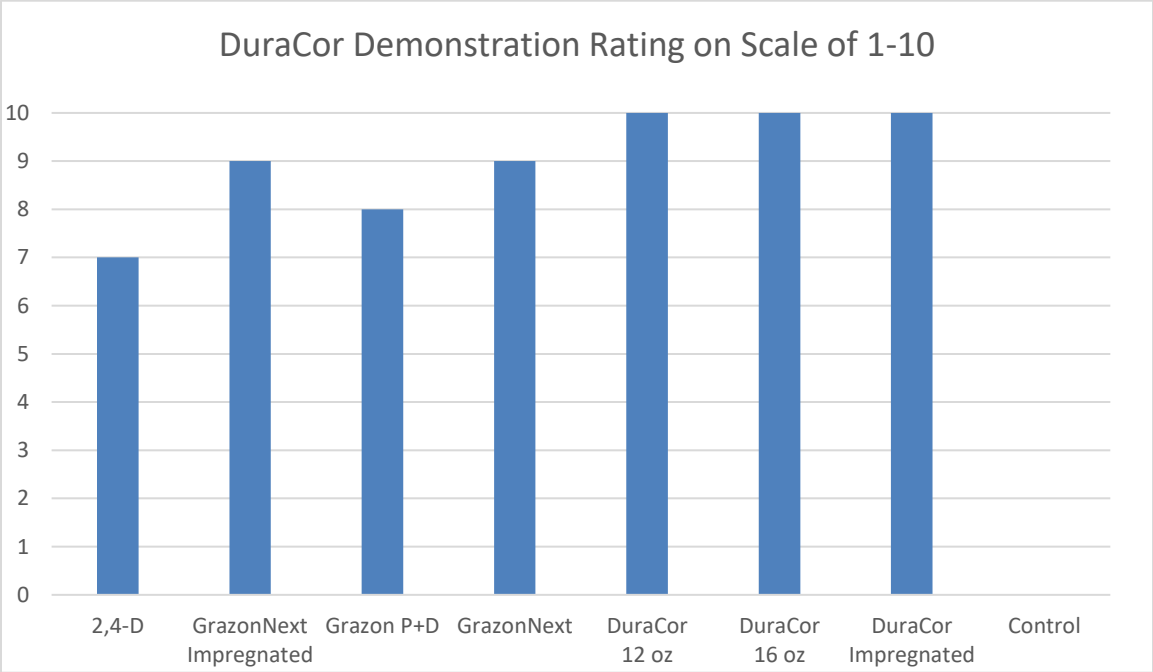
Recently, county agents from Fulton, Sharp, Izard, Stone, Baxter, and Marion counties set up demonstration plots. The plots were sprayed with commonly used herbicides with the addition of the new product DuraCor. Brad Runsick, Agriculture Agent in Baxter County is spearheading the project and will compile results from all counties and have a report to share with producers later on this summer. The plots in each county included treatments of the following:

Treatment #1	2,4-D (Foliar)	1 qt/acre	Cost: $3-4/acre
Treatment #2	GrazonNext Impregnated with Ammonium Sulfate	1 qt + 200 lbs/acre	Cost: $10-12/acre
Treatment #3	Grazon P+D (Foliar)	1 qt/acre	Cost: $7-8/acre
Treatment #4	GrazonNext (Foliar)	1 qt/acre	Cost: $10-12/acre
Treatment #5	DuraCor (Foliar)	12 oz/acre	Cost: $9-10
Treatment #6	DuraCor (Foliar)	16 oz/acre	Cost: $12-13 (Herbicide)
Treatment #7	DuraCor Impregnanted with Ammonium Sulfate	16 oz + 200 lbs/acre	Cost: $12-13 (Herbicide)
Treatment #8	Control	……	…..

Plots were sprayed in Fulton County around 8:30 a.m. on March 9th, and non-desired weeds within the plots were identified. Non-desirables identified included Little Hop and White Clover, Carolina Geranium, Chickweed, Red Sorrel, and Plantain.

Visual results were taken on April 21st. The first thing that stood out were plots treated with impregnated fertilizer (GrazonNext and DuraCor) versus the plots that had only foliar applications. This alone clearly showed that if you expect increases in forage yields, fertilizing is an important step in achieving that goal. When it came to weed control, DuraCor showed it is right in line with other products such as Grazon P+D and GrazonNext. While these products are a little higher when it comes to cost, they allow for a more broad spectrum of weed control versus a product like 2,4-D Amine. Now, don't get me wrong, 2,4-D Amine is still an excellent option for early weed control, especially when it comes to manageable cost of $3-4/acre. But, as you go a little later into the springtime and other weeds with different control measures emerge, other herbicides will need to be considered.

Below is a chart representing the results from the demonstration. Each product was graded on control by using a scale of 1-10, 1 being no control and 10 being excellent control.



In the Garden – May

There is still plenty of time to start planting warm season vegetables and flowers. Garden centers are abounding in options for both edibles and ornamentals. Like flower gardens, vegetable gardens can be a bit slow after colder than-normal-temperatures, since they cause many gardeners to plant later than normal.

Some gardeners can get an early harvest of lettuce, broccoli, peas, green onions, radishes, kale and Swiss chard, but others may have to wait a little longer. As you harvest and create space in the garden, replant with warm season vegetables. There is still plenty of time to plant tomatoes, peppers, eggplant and squash—which, for some, is their second planting! Watermelon and cantaloupe plants take up a lot of space, so consider trellising them to control the spread. Wait for the soil to warm up a bit before planting Southern peas and okra. Mulch and control weeds, fertilize and water your plants, and monitor for pests. If your plants froze back to the ground

during the colder months, new growth should be sprouting. However, no flowers for this season, unless you are growing the re-blooming varieties. If you had winter damage on trees or shrubs, give them a couple more weeks to show signs of life before pruning, unless you are certain there are dead branches. Some plants can begin to leaf out, only to be frozen back. A week or more of warm weather should have them rebounding if there is life left. In rare instances, you might lose some less-than-hardy plants, but severe pruning may sometimes correct some of the damage.

Continue to enjoy your pansies and violas for a while if they've survived the winter, but gradually begin to replace them with summer annuals. Visit garden centers to see what new plants are arriving daily. Try some of our Arkansas Diamond selections—Vermillionaire Cuphea, Wasabi Coleus, Dragons Breath Celosia and Bouquet Purple Torenia. We are also seeing loads of tropicals appearing at our garden centers. They thrive in hot, humid weather, which is likely just around the corner.

Now is the time to prune spring-blooming shrubs and trees if they need it. Pruning should be done as soon after flowering as possible. Be selective in how you prune. Selective thinning or knowing the natural growth of a plant results in a much more pleasing plant profile than the sheared “meatball” look.

Now is also the time to fertilize trees and shrubs. Most of our woody plants only need one application of fertilizer per year. Perennials should also be up and growing well. If you had some early plants that got nipped back by cold, clean up any damaged foliage. Lightly fertilize once they have leafed out again. Peonies may begin to set a copious amount of flowers. Before the blooms open up, consider using perennial stakes around them to prevent them from falling over after a rain.

Webs are likely appearing in many small trees around Arkansas. For a few weeks we will have the marching of the Eastern tent caterpillars. They look much worse than they really are, but they are a nuisance and can make a mess. The larvae gather at a fork in the tree and build a web or "tent”. They use the tent as their nightly lodging and emerge on non-rainy days to feed. The tent enlarges as the caterpillars eat. If you can reach the tents, pull them down on a cloudy day or at dusk when the caterpillars have gathered for the night, and destroy them. Luckily for us, they have a short life span and don’t have more than one generation a year (unlike their cousin, the fall webworm, which will start appearing in a month or so and can have several generations each season).

In The Garden – June

Since the heat is setting in, try to get any pruning chores that are needed done as soon as possible. Once it begins to get hot and dry, plants start slowing down on their growing. We want them to rebound so they can set plenty of flower buds for next year.

Big leaf hydrangeas, oak leaf hydrangeas, and gardenias will begin to bloom if they have not been winter damaged. These are three plants that bloom in the summer but set flower buds in the fall. If you grow any of these three plants and they need pruning, make sure it gets done as soon as the flowers fade. The single-flowered gardenias (Daisy and Kleim’s Hardy) tend to bloom all at once and are done quickly. They can be pruned as needed once all the flowers are gone. Many of the newer gardenias do re-bloom later in the season, so later blooms may be delayed or non-existent, depending on how much pruning is done. For big leaf hydrangeas and oak leaf hydrangeas that need to be pruned, remove older, thicker canes at the soil line after the blooms have faded.

By now, most cool season vegetables are likely beginning to bolt or stop producing as the heat increases ("bolting" is the term used for the flower stalk that appears on lettuce, greens, and onions). As cool season vegetables play out, replant with warm-season crops. Now is a great time to begin planting winter squash, pumpkins and gourds, okra, and southern peas. You can also still plant tomatoes, peppers, eggplants and watermelons.

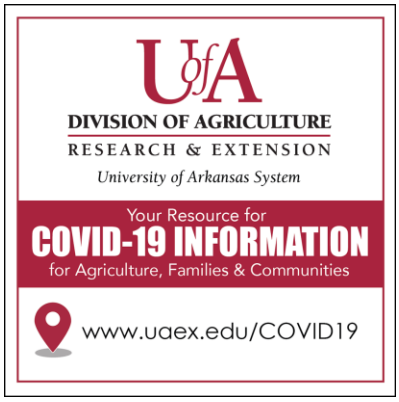
Pay attention to your gardens and monitor for insects and diseases. If you find something you are unsure of, take a good picture and send it to your county agent, or take a sample in. Early detection coupled with proper identification of a problem can lead to a fast solution. Fertilize your tomato plants lightly about every two weeks once they start setting fruit, and make sure you water them evenly. Fluctuations in moisture can lead to quite a few issues, including blossom end rot. We typically get our first calls about blossom end rot when we have a dry spell followed by a heavy downpour. Blossom end rot starts as a water-soaked spot on the bottom of the tomato, which quickly turns black. Most gardeners think they have a disease, but it is a physiological problem—a calcium deficiency typically caused by fluctuations in moisture levels. Mulch your plants, and try to keep the moisture levels even.

Perennial plants are those that come back for at least two seasons. Right now, many are in full bloom, including purple coneflower, daylilies, gaillardia, hardy hibiscus, and lilies. One that continues to gain in popularity is the milkweed. The showiest of them is the bright orange butterfly weed, but all members of the Asclepias genus are great host plants for the monarch butterfly. As flowers end on many perennials, they begin to form a seed pod. But, allowing them to set seed delays more flowers. Deadheading (or removing the spent flowers) will direct energy back into flower production much quicker. Know the fertilizer needs of your perennials. Some like fertility such as hosta, while others require very little, such as Artemisia and lambs ear.

Annual and tropical color choices abound at local nurseries and garden centers. No garden should be without color, so if yours is, start planting. Most annuals and tropical flowers like fertility. Frequent watering also leaches out nutrition, so fertilize every two to three weeks to keep them flowering. As with vegetables and shrubs, monitor your flowers weekly to scout for insects or diseases.

COVID-19

There is a lot of information floating around about COVID-19 – and not all of it is correct. The Cooperative Extension Service has research-based information that you can use. We are building resources to help keep you and your family well during this pandemic. This site has information on how to be safe on the farm, how to use stimulus money and how to keep your small business afloat. Visit http://uaex.edu/covid19.



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