

GYF JULY NEWS

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JUST HOW DRY IS IT ???

If your corn is standing on a shale ridge looking like pineapple, your answer will be "too dry." Many cropfields and pastures in Adams Co. and Maryland are brown and crispy due to inadequate rainfall. Are we in a drought? Depends on how you define a drought.

In *Drought and Its Causes and Effects*, a 1947 publication by I.R. Tannehill the author makes this observation. "We welcome the first clear day after a rainy spell. Rainless days continue for a time and we are pleased to have a long spell of such fine weather. It keeps on and we are a little worried. A few days more and we are really in trouble. The first rainless day in a spell of fine weather contributes as much to the drought as the last, but no one knows how serious it will be until the last dry day is gone and the rains have come again...we are not sure about it until the crops have withered and died." Sounds like a familiar sequence. In early spring we hopefully look for warm dry weather for planting and then later for hay making and combining. But if none of the hay gets wet, and none of the combines get muddy, there may not be adequate moisture for the emerging corn and soybeans. Weather conditions were very favorable this spring and early summer until we hit this hot dry spell. Are we seeing the beginning of a drought?

The National Weather Service Climate Summary at Harrisburg Pa for the months of May and June 2010 reports slightly higher than average rainfall for these months. In May 5.08 inches of rain was recorded; June's total was 4.13. These compare to monthly averages of 4.60 and 3.99. (www.nws.noaa.gov/climate.) This information might indicate that we are not experiencing drought conditions. However, both months were exceptionally warm. June 2010 was the 5th warmest June on record at Harrisburg. Cooling degree days in May exceeded the average. Higher temperatures increase moisture demand by growing plants as anyone who irrigates knows.

There is an official government commission to monitor and evaluate drought conditions. The National Drought Policy Commission composed of 15 federal agencies and departments including USDA was established in 1998. This commission maintains the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS.) Five classes of drought intensity are described in the monitoring system which evaluates short term needs versus available water in a shallow soil profile. The least severe class is "abnormally dry". The most severe is "exceptional drought." In the most recent posting, July 1, 2010, 35% of Pa. is classified as "abnormally dry" including all the southern tier counties from east to west as far as Bedford. The area of "abnormally dry" includes northern Md while southern Md. both east and west of the Chesapeake Bay are classified as "moderate drought." (www.drought.gov) So according to this federal commission we are "dry" heading toward "drought."

Although droughts can be defined by evaluating rainfall, soil moisture, vegetation conditions, stream flow, reservoir levels or economic impact, for farmers the bottom line is that crops and pastures are in poor condition. We may or may not be on the verge of a sustained drought, but a long soaking rain would be a welcome sight !!



DATES TO NOTE

July 12-13, 2010

PAAE/PYFA summer convention, Raystown

July 15, 2010

Manure Expo, see description, 8 am- 5 pm, Penn State's Ag Progress Days show grounds

August 17-19, 2010

PSU Ag Progress Days, Rock Springs research farm near State College

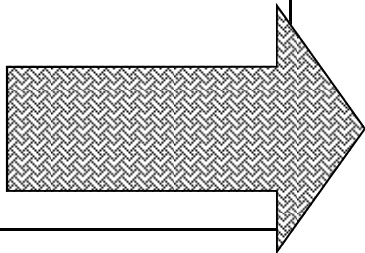
August 24, 2010

GYF field day at Winters farm, Hanover Pa.

10 AM- 3 PM lunch included

August 24-28, 2010

South Mountain Fair, Arendtsville, Pa.



PYFA SUMMER BOARD MEETING and TOUR

7/12-7/13

Join state board officers and PAAE members in beautiful Raystown, Huntingdon County

Schedule: Monday, 7/12/10, 6:00 pm BBQ with PAAE

Tuesday, 7/13/10, 7:30-10:30 am business session

11:00-5:00 PYFA Tour:

Stop 1- Raystown Lake Visitors Center

Lunch at Hoss'

Stop 2- Rice Farm, Williamsburg, producers of raw milk dairy products, pasture fed dairy and layers

Stop 3- Griffith's Deer Farm, hunting preserve, genetics and breeding

6:00-10:00 PYFA/PAAE Family Night dinner

Conference Main Hotel: Comfort Inn, 100 South 4th St. Huntingdon, Pa. 814-643-1600, cost \$74.00/night, use code "PAAE Conference" when making reservation

SAVE THIS DATE - 8/24

Dan Winters is once again planning an educational and enjoyable field day for us. There will be corn and soybeans demo plots to check out. Speakers from agribusinesses and agencies to discuss current agricultural issues. As always, lots of great food and friends. What more could you pack into an afternoon?

Program will run from 10 am until 3 pm with lunch and drinks provided. Dan's farm is at 310 Oxford Ave., Hanover, 17331

Please call Dan to let him know you can make it!

717-880-2206

MANURE EXPO

"BALANCING PRODUCTION & CONSERVATION"

Targeted toward manure handlers, applicators, brokers, dairy, livestock, and poultry producers and professionals, crop consultants and nutrient management specialists.

Three attractions are included in EXPO:

- ◆ Industry trade show, exhibits by 50 vendors
- ◆ Manure technology field demonstrations
- ◆ Educational events including continuing education for certified haulers

Speakers from Penn State, Cornell, U of Delaware, U of Maine, U of Maryland, Michigan State, Virginia Tech, Pa DEP, USDA Agricultural Research Service and Pa. Ag Ombudsman

FREE PARKING*****FREE ADMISSION*****NO REGISTRATION

COVER CROP OPTIONS

Have you made decisions and preparations for planting cover crops? With small grain harvest done many fields are open. Corn crop harvest may be arriving sooner than expected if dry weather continues and much of the crop goes for silage. This could be the year for trying a new cover crop, expanding cover crop acres or finally giving this highly recommended practice a try. Here are three cover crops recommended in Managing Cover Crops Profitably, third edition.

RYEGRASS	SORGHUM-SUDANGRASS HYB.	FORAGE RADISH
<p>Annual ryegrass is rated as very good for N scavenging, soil building, erosion and weed fighting and grazing. It grows quickly and will produce 2000-9000 lbs/A/yr. Because of the quick growth and large biomass it can perform as an emergency forage. It is reported to be very palatable.</p> <p>Broadcast seed at a rate of 20 lbs/A into cultivated field or drill 1/4 to 1/2 in. deep. Ryegrass can be mixed with a legume or small grain, in which case reduce seeding rate to 8-15 lbs/A.</p> <p>Some management cautions: ryegrass is a heavy user of moisture and N. It doesn't perform well in drought conditions or low fertility soils. It also can become a weed problem if allowed to set seed.</p> <p>Compared to perennial ryegrass, the annual cultivar is quicker to establish, easier to incorporate and about half as expensive. See <u>Managing Cover Crops Profitably</u>, pg 74</p>	<p>A cover of sorghum-sudangrass hybrid will not only produce impressive amount of biomass, 8000-10000 lbs/A/year, but also is an exceptional soil builder, N fixer, and erosion preventer. In a mix it works well with buckwheat, sunnhemp, forage soybeans and cowpeas.</p> <p>For maximum soil conditioning mowing is recommended. This management stimulates root growth and penetration. Sorghum hybrid can provide quick summer forage although grazing young plants can be hazardous due to prussic acid poisoning.</p> <p>Plant sorghum-sudangrass when soils are warm and moist at a rate of 40-50 lbs/A broadcast or 35-40 lbs/A drilled. These high rates will provide a quick canopy to reduce weeds, but require mowing or grazing to prevent lodging.</p> <p>See <u>Managing Cover Crops Profitably</u>, pg 106</p>	<p>Radishes are grown for their nutrient scavenging properties, superior biomass and quick fall growth. They also are known to assist in pest management because of certain chemical compounds they release. Soil borne pathogens and pests such as nematodes, fungi and some weeds are sensitive to these compounds.</p> <p>Radishes produce impressive amounts of biomass above and below ground. Above ground mass can reach 8000 lbs/A while below ground mass may be as much as 3700 lbs/A.</p> <p>Radishes have been incorporated into crop rotations after corn silage very successfully. A good stand of forage radish will suppress weeds and condition the soil for no till planting in the spring in addition to releasing N for the next crop.</p> <p>Plant after daytime average temp. is below 80 degrees F. Drill 8-12 lbs/A or broadcast 12-20 lbs/A. See <u>MCCP</u>, pg81.</p>

In memory of MERHLE WARFIELD JR.

2/26/1927 - 6/29/2010

Merhle Warfield, 83 years of age, died on June 29, 2010. Merhle was a lifelong dairy farmer in Montgomery Co. Md. He was born and raised on Babble Brook Farm, a small family based dairy farm and eventually took over the operation from his father, Merhle B. Warfield, Sr. Merhle was an agricultural leader in his community. He was a active member of Gettysburg Young Farmers for over 30 years and tried persistently to establish a Young Farmer chapter in Gaithersburg, Md. During the 1980's and 90's Merhle rarely missed a National Institute. He served on the National Institute Committee in 1981. Merhle was a member of the Montgomery County Farmers Club, was nominated for the Maryland Young Farmer award and was selected by the Jaycees as an outstanding young farmer. For years he was also a 4-H leader in the Montgomery County club.

Merhle has left the operation of the family dairy in the hands of his son Merhle Wayne Warfield.

His funeral service was held Saturday July 3, 2010 at Damascus Volunteer Fire Dept. activity center. Memorial contributions may be made to the Upper Montgomery County Farmers Club, c/o Gene Walker, 12051 Prices Distillery Road, Damascus, Md. 20872 or Damascus Volunteer Fire Dept. 26334 Ridge road, Damascus, Md. 20872.

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*"Young farmers are any farmers
willing to learn"*

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PYFA SUMMER CONFERENCE
7/12-7/13
RAYSTOWN, HUNTINGTON, PA.

SUMMER AGRONOMY FIELD DAY
8/24
WINTERS' FARM