Western New York CROP MANAGEMENT

WNYCMA NEWS

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Summer Seeding Preparation

by Joshua Harvey

With the struggles that this year has presented us, there may be some fields slated for spring seedings that were left open and are now scheduled for August seedings or tiling projects. This, in conjunction with wheat harvest beginning, creates many acres that may be planted to alfalfa seeding, if the weather allows.

Fields that were left open this spring and are now awaiting August seeding require a weed-free start. If noxious weeds have accumulated on those fields, consider burning them down with a high rate of glyphosate and/or Gramoxone before applying manure to those fields. This burndown will assist with any sort of tillage used by reducing the soil clumping characteristic of live root systems. You should wait at least 3 days after burndown application before starting any tillage to allow the chemical to work properly. The longer you wait, the better kill you will have.

If you are planning to seed alfalfa/grass mixes after wheat, there are a few things that can be done to help limit the volunteer wheat coming back and choking out your brand new seeding. Taking a secondary tillage tool lightly across your fields after harvest will incorporate some of the wheat seed. Also, giving it a couple days to allow for germination, then going in with a glyphosate product to kill the germinated wheat will help. It won't eliminate the wheat but it will reduce the competition in the new seeding.

Another option is to clear seed the alfalfa. This will allow a follow-up tank mix of broadleaf and grass herbicides (active ingredient Clethodim) to take out the wheat once it is actively growing. If you must have grasses in your stand, you can either frost seed grass in the spring (some grass species work better than others) or drill them in after first cutting. A final option is to plant Roundup Ready Alfalfa, which allows for glyphosate applications as a general weed control.

In addition to weed control, soil preparation and planting practices are paramount in the establishment of seedings. No-tilling can be a viable option in wheat stubble. It can save tillage passes, conserve moisture (not an issue this year), and prevent washouts (has been an issue this year). It also eliminates the unwanted moisture brought to the surface by deep tillage. Although no-tilling can be very successful with the proper set up, I have seen no-till failures, mainly due to improper seed depth. It is very important to keep checking this. If you do decide to go this route, it may be in your best interest to allow some of the volunteer wheat to germinate and then apply glyphosate prior to planting, unless you choose to clear seed.

If you decide to perform some sort of tillage, maybe to take out tractor ruts or bury weed trash from spring idle ground, seedbed preparation is very important. Be sure not to work the ground when wet which may cause big clumps and prevent proper seed to soil contact. The spring buzz was seeding failures across the state, and we saw too many. Having a firm seedbed is the road to success. I like to see the flat roller go across the field after the last tillage pass as a proper firm seedbed will prevent the seed from going too deep. It is

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important to make sure the alfalfa seed is placed ¼ to ½ inch deep. A good rule of thumb to use before pulling the drill into the field is as follows: if you can bounce a basketball on it, or if your boot leaves a half-inch impression, you have prepared your seedbed properly. Once you have drilled your seeding, it is important to flat roll it again. This will push any rocks back down, create capillary action to wick moisture to the seed for quick germination, and help with seed to soil contact.

"A man who is a master of patience is master of everything else"
George Savile

This year, the weather has made it very challenging to complete fieldwork. But it is very important to be patient. If your seeding ground is still on the damp side, it will be in your best interest to wait, as that will raise your odds of a successful catch.

Northern Corn Leaf Blight

by Nick Youngers

This year seems to be the year of cropping challenges. Not only has wet weather made it difficult to accomplish fieldwork in many areas, but insect pressure has also been high. The next challenge, precipitated by the wet weather, may be Northern Corn Leaf Blight (NCLB).

Perdue University states that the infection occurs during periods of moderately warm (64° to 81°F), wet, and humid weather. The fungus requires six to 18 hours of water on the leaf surface to cause infection. Although it can affect many different varieties of corn, certain varieties are more susceptible than others. The most susceptible corn to NCLB is Brown Mid Rib Corn (BMR).

Corn should be scouted at tassel stage and affected fields sprayed within two weeks of tassel. NCLB symptoms appear as narrow tan lesions, as shown in the accompanying picture. They can grow up to seven inches long and have a cigar shape. According to Purdue University, this fungal disease can reduce yield up to 30%. It can also increase the risk of lodging and poor quality feed. Additionally, NCLB can increase the speed of dry down, cause fermentation issues when corn is too dry, and reduce starch content in silage. NCLB causes the ear to not mature properly, much like frosted corn.

There is no real threshold number to use in evaluating the need for fungicide, but, according to Art Graves of Dow, yield can be impacted if 50% of corn in a field has NCLB lesions on the lower leaves. When weighing the options, the gain of one ton of silage will pay for the application. If spraying is deemed necessary, consult the label for the correct amount of water to be used to get adequate plant coverage. Our goal is to protect the ear leaf. Keep in mind that spraying could delay harvest 5-10 days. Please contact your consultant for farm specific questions and fungicide options.

Wet Weather Standard Operating Procedures

by Rhonda Lindquist

In order for a non-discharging CAFO to reasonably assert that they are meeting the "no-discharge" requirement in the new ECL Permit, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) included a caveat that all Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs) include "Wet Weather Standard Operating Procedures" (WWSOPs). WWSOPs are management strategies you can employ to prevent discharges from production areas to surface waters of the State up to, and including, the 100-year, 24-hour storm event. Yes, the 100-year, 24-hour storm event. This amount can vary greatly depending on your location (approximately 5 to 7 inches of rainfall in a 24-hour period).

Production areas include barns, calf hutch areas, bunk silos, silage pads, silage bag areas, cattle walkways, mortality compost areas, manure storages, and any open area used to manage manure (i.e. barnyards, aprons at the end of barns). Some production areas are more challenging than others due to the watershed relative to drainages (ditches) and proximity to surface waters.

A discharge of any pollutant to waters of the state is a violation of the permit. However, any overflow from a waste storage structure, whether or not it results in a discharge to surface waters of the state, is considered a violation. Uncontaminated stormwater runoff from a production area that reaches a water of the state is not a discharge.

WWSOPs can be structural or non-structural. When determining wet weather management strategies, you should consider the risks associated with the site layout and protection needed on an individual basis. These procedures could include additional clean water diversion techniques during high flow events, increased freeboard on storages, or re-routing of BMP overflow paths during high flow events. Non-structural practices and management changes may be directed by the planner. Structural changes to existing engineering practices or installation of new engineering practices recommended in a WWSOP require a professional engineer.

It is important to observe your production area during a storm event and relay your observations to your planner. If they haven't already been completed, your farmstead planner will be working with you to develop the WWSOPs in the near future.

New CAFO Manure Recordkeeping Requirements

As the new CAFO permit becomes effective, there are a few manure recordkeeping changes that are important to make note of:

- Land application records "must include an **up-to-date summary of the total** gallons and/or tons applied per acre per field during the crop year cycle."
- Manure application equipment must be calibrated **annually**.
- If a custom applicator is employed to apply "any manure, process wastewater, and/or digestate," they must sign the Contractor Certification Statement delineated in the permit on **each day** that they provide such service.

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Did You Know?

WNY Crop Management created a Map App, Webmaps and even a database for members to utilize. These tools are free and available for all of our members to view and edit various farm information. You can enter manure applications, planting records and some of the required CAFO records. We even provide installation and training services. For more information, contact your consultant or call a CMA office.

«FarmName»
«FirstName» «LastName»
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