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El Nino pattern to dominate winter weather

Plentiful rains during October helped alleviate significant precipitation deficits across the Panhandle. Before October, the Panhandle was more than four inches below normal precipitation, however now many locations are near normal. The remainder of the state also received timely precipitation. As an added bonus, most of the precipitation prior to December was in the form of rain, which went into groundwater recharge.

Although little faith can be placed on long range forecasts, the next few months may prove interesting. A fairly strong El Nino weather pattern is expected to develop over the next few weeks, dominating global weather. A split flow appears to be developing — a strong northern jet has locked into place over northern Canada, while the southern jet dominates the western United States.

If this trend continues, the extremely bitter cold air will remain over Alaska, while normal to above normal temperatures should occur over most of the United States east of the Rocky Mountains. Unfortunately, the southern jet is responsible for most of the major snowstorms over the central United States.

Al Dutcher
State Climatologist
Agricultural Meteorology

Prepare early for government aid
Grasshopper problems likely to occur in 1995

Late summer and early fall surveys of adult grasshoppers indicate that a high potential exists for grasshopper infestations across much of Nebraska in 1995. Barte Smith of the USDA-APHIS tells us that these surveys identified about 14.5 million acres, primarily in western and northern Nebraska, will likely have high grasshopper infestation levels and subsequent damage. Other portions of the state are expected to have more grasshoppers than in 1994, but not alarmingly high infestations in most cases. With our relatively mild fall, egg survival is expected to be high unless we have a very cold, wet winter.

Obviously, with winter upon us, little except planning can be done for the situation until warmer weather begins. Smith will be working with University of Nebraska extension educators and specialists in the affected areas to organize informational meetings for winter and early spring. These meetings will provide landowners and operators with detailed results of the surveys for their areas. Government programs that might provide cost/share assistance in managing the grasshopper situations also will be discussed. According to Smith, it will be important for interested parties to begin the process early, if government assistance is going to be requested, because there are new requirements for environmental impact statements and other reports to be completed well in advance of when the control actions may be needed. In other words, it will be nearly impossible to obtain government assistance if one waits until the grasshopper problem is critical next summer before initiating the paperwork to obtain approval.

For more information about the grasshopper situation, survey results, or government assistance cost/share programs, contact Barte Smith at (402) 434-2345.

Steve Danielson
Extension Entomologist

Inside

1994 index ......................... 164
Grants for producers .......... 166
CropWatch order form ...... 167
Annual survey ............... 167
1994 CropWatch Index

Acetochlor, 36
Alfalfa
- Early scouting, 3
- Disease, 57, 110
- Insects, 79, 134
- Killing stands, 137
- Seeding risks, 16
- Stand renovation, 15
- Weed control, 137
Alfalfa weevils, 39, 44, 56, 61
Banvel, 34
Bean leaf beetle, 62, 128
Bicep Lite 5L, 2
Broadstrike, 2
Capture 2EC, 98
Cereal leaf beetle, 69
Chinch bugs, 39, 68
Chloride, 23
Clarity, 2
Clothes, pesticide protection, 35, 40
Combination herbicides, 12
Compaction, 14
Concert, 2
Conservation compliance, 164
Corn
- Development, 45, 87, 101, 103, 114, 122, 131, 136, 153, 155
- Disease, 75, 130, 135
- Early frost response, 54
- Fall anhydrous, 145
- Feeding hail damaged grains, 120
- Herbicides, 89
- Insects, 63, 64, 68, 75, 76, 97, 98, 99, 106, 113, 157
- Leaf nitrogen testing, 101
- Replant, 67
- Rootless corn syndrome, 75
- Storm damage, 89
CPMU, 83
CropWatch, 8, 97, 164, 166
Cultural practices, 5, 11, 14, 22, 25, 36, 165
Cutworms, 64
Desiccants for harvest, 135
Diagnostic clinic, 43, 105
Diseases
- Alfalfa, 57, 110
- Corn, 75, 130, 135
- Sorghum, 135, 152
- Soybean, 90, 105, 113, 122
- Trees, shrubs, 139
- Wheat, 9, 35, 69, 92, 116, 130, 163
- Dividend released for wheat, 130
- Drought index, 94, 107, 123
- Dry edible beans
- Mexican bean beetles, 103
- Nitrogen for, 64
- Equipment
- Calibrating sprayers, 13
- Maintaining sprayers, 152
- Rotary hoe, 60
- Winterizing sprayers, 152
- European corn borers, 75, 106, 109, 111
- Management worksheet, 77, 111
- Extension Programming Units, 32
- EPU Map, 51
- Fallow, 36
- Fertilization
- Dry edible beans, 64
- Fall soil sampling, 149
- Fertilizer/herbicide compatibility, 48
- Leaf nitrogen testing, 101
- Liquid nitrogen/herbicide problems, 48
- Nitrate soil tests, 1, 8
- Nitrogen management, 33
- Phosphorus in corn, 18
- Presidedress test, 72
- Sidedressing nitrogen, 83
- Soil tests, 155
- Soybeans, 53
- Starter, 40

(Continued on page 165)
Index (Continued from page 164)

FIFRA, 84
Freeze probabilities, 119
Frontier, 2
Frost, corn response, 54
Fungicide
  Dividend, 130
  Tilt, 46
Grain storage, 5, 46, 86, 138, 143
Gray leaf spot, 130
Grasshoppers, 100, 127, 163
Greenbugs, 68, 109
  In Kansas, 110
Growing degree days, explained, 29
  CDD tables, 29, 38, 52, 60, 66, 74, 80
Guardman, 2
Herbicides
  Acetochlor, 36
  Additives, 58
  Banding, 3
  Banvel, 34
  Chemistry workshop, 166
  Combinations, 12
  Delayed herbicide applications, 50
  Drift, 35
/Fertilizer compatibility, 48
Grazing restrictions, 73
Injury or soybean mosaic, 113
Liquid nitrogen/herbicide problems, 48
Newly labeled, 2
Postemergence, injured crops, 67
Preharvest options, 78
Preplant 2,4-D, 34
Rainfast timetable, 57
Replant options, 65
Software, 11
Hessian fly, 133
  Recommended planting dates, 133
Insecticides
  Corn rootworm evaluation, 157
  Furadan, 53
  Pounce, 45
Insects
  Alfalfa weevils, 39, 44, 56, 61
  Bean leaf beetles, 62, 128
  Biocontrol conference, 129, 150
  Black cutworm moths, 64
  Capture 2EC, 98
  Cereal leaf beetle, 69
Chinch bugs, 39, 68
European corn borer, 77
Grasshoppers, 100, 127, 163
Greenbugs, 68, 109
Hessian fly, 133
In grain bins, 46, 86
Itch mites, 134
Mexican bean beetles, 103
Minute pirate bugs, 93
Pale western cutworm, 21
Panhandle update, 98
Rootworms, 53, 68, 99, 157
Scouting, 47
Seed, seedling pests, 47
Spider mites, 113
Stalk borers, 63
Webworms, 134
Western bean cutworm, 97
Wheat stem sawflies, 104
Wireworms, 28
Insect Guide for Corn and Sorghum, 22
IPM scouting training, 20
Irrigation, 81, 100
Jointed goatgrass, 76
  Conference, 160, 167
Kansas pest reports
  8, 10, 13, 17, 20, 21, 24, 28, 38, 42, 82, 86, 87, 93, 105, 107, 110, 117, 125, 131, 131, 137, 144, 163
Laundering pesticide contaminated clothes, 40, 42
Starch as an aid, 4
Leafy spurge, 56
Meetings, Extension
  Agronomy highlights, 159
  Corn expo, 159
  Crop protection, 159
  Crop and pest management, 163
  Ecofarming, 159
  Forage seminars, 159
  Fort Kearney EPU, 168
Herbicide chemistry workshop, 166
  Jointed goatgrass conference, 160, 167
  Pesticide applicators, 158
Mexican bean beetle, 103
Minute pirate bug, 93
Moss, 43
Nebraska Herb, 11
Nightshade, 41
Nitrate concentrations in grain, 120
No-till
  Seed treatment, 49
  Weed control, 30
Ounce calibration method, 13
Postemergence
  Cultural practices, 5, 11
Pesticides, 84
Pesticide applicator training, testing, 158
Phosphorus in corn, 18
Potato leafhoppers, 79, 91
Pounce, crisis exemption, 45
Preplant 2,4-D, 34
Publications, 22, 104, 128
  Correction to EC94-1509, 62
  Field record book, 24
  Herbicide Guide, 110, 126
  Insect guide, 56
  Purdue pest manuals, 93
  Correction, 128
Replant options
  After herbicides, 65
  After storms, 67
Root and crown rot, wheat, 69
Rotation, 11, 22
Scouting
  Training, 20, 99
Seed treatments, 47, 49
Soil moisture levels, 140, 147, 161
Soil sampling, 149
Soil temperature summary, 29, 38, 52, 60, 66, 80
Sooty stripe, 152
Sorghum
  Development, 114, 131, 136, 153
  Disease, 135, 152
  Harvesting, 144
  Insects, 109
  Replant, 67
  Weed control, postemergence, 74
  Correction, 79
Soybeans
  Development, 122, 131, 136, 153
  Disease, 90, 105, 113, 122
  Fertilizing, 53
  Insects, 62, 79, 91
  Seed treatment, 23
  Correction, 49

(Continued on page 166)
### 1994 CropWatch Index (Continued from page 165)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storm damage, 89</th>
<th>Soybean mosaic or phenoxy herbicide, 113</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weed control, postemergence, 71</td>
<td>Freeze probabilities, 119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybean cyst nematode, 105</td>
<td>Hail damaged grains, 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybean chlorosis, 90</td>
<td>Weed control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spider mites, 113</td>
<td>Alfalfa, 137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalk borers, 63</td>
<td>Broadleaf, 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalk rot, 135</td>
<td>Correction, 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer black stem, 110</td>
<td>Dandelions, 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainabile agriculture grants, 166</td>
<td>Desiccants, 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tillage, 23, 25</td>
<td>Grazing lands, 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residue distribution, 136</td>
<td>Leafy spurge, 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilt, 46</td>
<td>Nightshade, 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tough, 2</td>
<td>No-till, 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USDA program, 104</td>
<td>Perennials, 139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation compliance, 164</td>
<td>Postemergence, 57, 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste disposal, 9, 10</td>
<td>Sorghum, 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water quality, 166</td>
<td>Correction, 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply, 6, 39, 70, 81</td>
<td>Soybeans, 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat, 85</td>
<td>Triazine-resistant kochia, 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wipers, bean bars, 89</td>
<td>USDA program, 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woody plants, 63</td>
<td>Conservation compliance, 164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weed control, 78, 85, 92</td>
<td>Waste disposal, 9, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat stem sawflies, 104</td>
<td>Water quality, 166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat streak mosaic, 92, 116</td>
<td>Water supply, 6, 39, 70, 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White mold of soybeans, 122</td>
<td>Weather data, 33, 52, 66, 80, 81, 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wireworms, 28</td>
<td>Weather data, 33, 52, 66, 80, 81, 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker Protection Standard, 37, 128</td>
<td>Weather data, 33, 52, 66, 80, 81, 87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Sustainable agriculture producer grants available in the North Central Region

If you're interested in incorporating some sustainable agriculture practices into your farm or ranch operation or you want to try an alternative crop or develop a new marketing approach, grant funds may be available.

The North Central Region (NCR) Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program again will sponsor its [Implementing Sustainable Agriculture Producer Grant Program](https://www.northcentral.usda.gov/SARE/). Applications for the USDA-funded program are expected to be available Feb. 1 and are due May 1. Approximately $100,000 is available through a competitive process for grants of up to $5,000. In the first three years 87 grants were awarded to producers in the North Central Region, which includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

A wide diversity of demonstration and on-farm research projects have been funded through this program, including rotational grazing, field trials with various tillage systems, farmer networks, alternative crops, composting, equipment modifications, and biocontrol measures. Many projects have emphasized reduced chemical or no-chemical pest control and whole-farm systems. All projects are required to include a means for disseminating information through a field day, publication or workshop. Application forms, which are available from the NCR SARE Office, must include a letter of reference.

Funding decisions for the program will be made in late July 1995, with funds available in mid-fall. For a copy of the grant application packet or a list of previously funded grants, contact the NCR SARE Program, 13A Activities Bldg., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68583-0840 or call (402) 472-7081.

Steven Waller
NCR SARE Regional Coordinator
Now's the time to renew your *CropWatch* subscription

Take a few moments now to renew your subscription to *CropWatch* will help insure that you don't miss a single issue. Publication is scheduled to begin again in March 1995 and continue at least into November. In the past few years, the scope of the newsletter has broadened to include weather and crop production information in addition to pest scouting and management. This year a team of Extension specialists in soil fertility joined the experts already writing regular pieces for the newsletter. Insect and disease reports from Kansas also were added to help our readers in the southern tier of counties know more about what might be moving their way. We hope these changes have helped you, the reader, better address your agricultural production challenges.

We appreciate your subscription. If you're already a reader, you know that our writers are state Extension specialists in entomology, plant pathology, weed science, agronomy, agricultural meteorology, and agricultural engineering, who routinely gather scouting, management and research data from throughout the state before formulating their recommendations. If you have any suggestions for how we could improve *CropWatch*, call or add a note on the survey on pages 169-170.

If you're like many of our readers you've probably saved input costs from the scouting and management recommendations, the savings reported by readers being many times over the actual $25 cost of a subscription.

Lisa Jasa
*CropWatch* Editor

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To subscribe to *CropWatch* for the 1995 production season, fill out the form below and send with a check for $25 made payable to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to:

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Reader survey

Dear CropWatch Subscriber,

We value your opinion and want to know what you think about CropWatch? What do you like and what don't you like about it? How can we improve it for you? Please take a moment and fill out this survey. Then fold it, tape it, and return it to us, postage free. Thank you.

1. What is your occupation? __________________________________________________________________________ How would you categorize it?
   Farmer/Rancher________ Business Manager________ Sales/Applicators________
   Consultant________ University Extension/Research________ Other (specify)____________________________________

2. If you are a producer, 1) how many acres do you farm and what crops do you produce; or 2) what kind and how many livestock do you raise? __________________________________________________________________________

3. What is most valuable about CropWatch? __________________________________________________________________________

4. What changes would you make in the subject matter? __________________________________________________________________________

5. Are there subject matter areas you would add? If so, what? __________________________________________________________________________

6. Have you changed any pest management or crop production practices as a result of information in CropWatch?
   Yes ______ No ______ If so, in what areas? (Please check all that apply.)
   Pesticide selection______ Pesticide timing______ Scouting______ Nonchemical controls______
   Other (Please describe)_______________________________________________________________________

7. Can you give an example and/or assign a dollar value per acre to your savings? __________________________________________________________________________

8. Are you getting the information you need on a timely basis? ______ If not, please give specific examples. __________________________________________________________________________

9. With "1" being most important and "10" being least important, please rank the following subject matter areas in the order of their importance for you.
   _____ Agronomic information    _____ Insect control
   _____ Biological control       _____ Pesticide updates
   _____ Disease control         _____ Variety trials
   _____ Equipment               _____ Weather effects
   _____ Information sources     _____ Weed control

10. Do you read all or part of the newsletter and how do you decide what to read? What do you do with the newsletter when you're done reading it?
    __________________________________________________________________________

11. How many other people read your newsletter after you're done? __________________________________________________________________________

12. Do you plan to subscribe to CropWatch in 1995? Yes ______ No ______ If not, please explain __________________________________________________________________________
What is your age? Under 30_____ 30-40_____ 40-50_____ 50-60_____ Over 60_____  

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If you indicated you would like to receive this newsletter via computer link, please indicate what service you would use to access it. If you would like to receive it by FAX, please provide your name and address so we can contact you. The cost for the FAX copy is expected to be higher than that for just the printed copy.  

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