

Northwest Field Crops Day

By Ed Lentz – OSU Extension, Hancock County

Late July and early August farmers attend company and university field days to see first hand how new products, new technologies, and management practices affect a growing crop. It is an opportunity for a farmer to visit with experts and researchers as well as share experiences (network) with other farmers.

These informative events may be of greater value this year as farmers have been battling a difficult growing season and still reeling from lower crop prices.

One of these important programs is the summer Field Crops Day sponsored by Ohio State University at the Northwest Agricultural Research Station near Hoytville, OH. This popular field day offers a variety of speakers at various locations on the research farm.

This year's program has researchers speaking on new corn hybrid technology, proper rates of phosphorus and potassium for optimum corn and soybean production, managing difficult soil-borne diseases in soybeans, and methods to improve soil quality.

Corn seed companies have been developing hybrids with specific traits for adverse environmental conditions. These products are sold at a premium with the promise of higher yields during adverse conditions and good yields during normal weather conditions.

Dr. Peter Thomison, State Extension Corn Specialist, has been investigating corn hybrids with special genes for high performance in dry to drought conditions for many years. As a part of these investigations, he has evaluated how these hybrids perform during non-drought years.

He will also discuss how these hybrids have performed so far during this year's excessive rainfall as well as general information on corn response to flooding and extended wet conditions.

Dr. Steve Culman, State Extension Soil Fertility Specialist, will share the results of the long term phosphorus and potassium rate studies for corn and soybean across the state. He will discuss whether current recommendations for these nutrients need to be adjusted for optimum yields and environmental concerns.

Farmers will rely heavily on this data to insure they are applying the proper rates for optimum production and to prevent excess phosphorus from entering the Lake Erie watershed.

Soil-borne diseases have been a major barrier to increased soybean yields in northwestern Ohio. Dr. Anne Dorrance, State Extension Soybean Pathologist,

has had a long-term soybean disease study at the Northwest Research Farm for many years.

She will be showing these plots during her talk and discuss advances that have been made in fighting these diseases and the tools available to farmers to reduce losses from these soil pathogens.

2015 has been designated the International Year of Soils. Farmers have been following practices that improve soil health for years such as conservation tillage and cover crops.

Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Educator Alan Sundermeier has been researching these practices for over ten years at the Northwest Research Station. He will demonstrate how to measure soil quality and share recommendations to improve soil health in farmers' fields.

The complete program and speakers for the wagon tour are as follows:

- Management of Soil-borne Diseases – Dr. Anne Dorrance
- Results from Studying Phosphorus and Potassium Fertilization for Nine Years -- Steve Culman
- Drought Tolerant Corn Hybrids – Dr. Peter Thomison
- Soil Quality Testing and Recommendations – Alan Sundermeier

In addition to the regular tour stops, Ohio State University Extension Specialists and Researchers will be available for general questions during the field day. The research farm has also had to deal with excessive rainfall during June and July.

The Field Day will be Thursday, July 30, 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. at the Northwest Agricultural Research Station, 4240 Range Line Road, Custar, OH 43511 (just across the Hancock County line in Wood County, 2.5 miles northeast of Hoytville at the corner of Oil Center and Range Line roads).

The program is free and open to the public. Farmers and non-farm individuals may participate to see the research farm and listen to the program. Contact the Hancock County Extension Office for more information at 419-422-3851 or the Northwest Agriculture Research Station at 419-257-2060.