



providing education and research support to the agricultural industry

May/June 2003

Articles

Portfolios of Agricultural Market Advisory Services: How Much Diversification is Enough?

Recycling Pesticide Containers

Deficit Precipitation over Northern Illinois Continues

Research

Survey Details Herbicide Resistant Weeds in Soybean Fields

On-Farm Production and Commercial Use of Biobased Greases

Biological Clocks "Wake Up" Plants

Ultrasound Used to Detect Quality Beef

Resources

Pastures for Horses CD

Climate change and its effect on water quality and soil resources

Value-Added Development Grant Program

--more--

View current and past issues on the web @

www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/agupdate

Portfolios of Agricultural Market Advisory Services: How Much Diversification is Enough?

(Report 2003-02) AgMAS Project Office, Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, (217)333-2792, agmas@uiuc.edu

Agricultural market advisory services offer specific advice to farmers on how to market their commodities. Farmers can subscribe to one or more of these services and follow their advice as a way of managing price risk. According to portfolio theory, a combination of these services may have risk/return benefits compared to individual services.

This report analyzes the potential risk reduction gains from naïve diversification among market advisory services for corn and soybeans. Results show that increasing the number of (equal-weighting) services reduces portfolio expected risk, but the marginal decrease in risk from adding a new service decreases rapidly with portfolio size. The risk reduction benefits of naïve diversification among advisory services is relatively small compared to the results obtained in previous studies for stock portfolios, and this is mainly because advisory prices, on average, are highly correlated. One service portfolio has only a 20%, 16% and 32% higher expected standard deviation than the minimum risk naïve portfolio for corn, soybeans and 50/50 revenue, respectively.

Most risk reduction benefits are achieved with small portfolios. For instance, a four service portfolio has only 5%, 4% and 9% higher expected standard deviation than the minimum risk naïve portfolio for corn, soybeans and 50/50 revenue, respectively. Based on these results, there does not appear to be strong justification for farmers adopting portfolios with a large number of advisory services. Farmers may well choose portfolios with as few as two or three programs, since the relatively high total subscription costs associated with larger portfolios can be avoided while obtaining most of the benefits from diversification. More information can be found at <http://www.farmdoc.uiuc.edu/agmas/reports/index.html>.



Recycling Pesticide Containers

Mark Mohr, Ext. Spec, Dept of Ag. Eng., Univ. of Illinois, 217-333-9418,
mmohr@uiuc.edu

Is your chemical shed cluttered with empty triple-rinsed chemical jugs?
If you are wondering what to do with them, recycle them!

Plastic from pesticide containers can be recycled into a number of products including pallets, new pesticide containers, fuel for cement kilns, fence posts, roadside signposts, guardrails, drainage tile, sewage tile and hazardous waste drums.

Only clean containers can be recycled. A container must be rinsed, clean, and dry. For your safety, the safety of those who work with the recycling process, and the safety of the consumer of the recycled product, follow the checklist below. If not rinsed and clean, your containers won't be accepted.

- ❖ **Protection:** Always wear protective clothing while rinsing containers.
- ❖ **Empty:** Completely empty the pesticide container.
- ❖ **Clean:** Triple-rinse or pressure-rinse the container immediately after use to prevent drying or caking of formulation residues.
- ❖ **Inspect:** Inspect the container inside and around the spout threads to ensure that it is free of formulation residues. Clean but stained (for example, due to Treflan) containers are acceptable.
- ❖ **Remove:** Discard the cap, foil seal, and label from the container because they will not be accepted for recycling.
- ❖ **Puncture:** Render the container unusable by puncturing it.
- ❖ **Type:** Only containers made from high-density polyethylene (HDPE) #2 plastic are acceptable for recycling.
- ❖ **Keep container dry:** The recycler will not accept a container with liquid in it; keep containers out of the rain

Here's the scoop on where to recycle your containers. There are one-day collection points scattered around Illinois during the growing season. There are also five permanent collection sites that can take containers for recycling, though anyone taking in containers should call ahead. The sites are Illinois Valley Supply, Carrolton; Monmouth Grain and Dryer, Monmouth; Effingham Equity, Altamont; Randolph Ag Service Inc., Heyworth; and UAP/Richter, Atlanta. More information and contacts can be found by calling (800) 641-3934 or online at www.agr.state.il.us/Environment/recycle.html. Information on preparing pesticide containers for recycling can be found at www.PesticideSafety.uiuc.edu under UI Extension "Pesticide Container Preparation" fact sheet.

Internet Resources

Foreign Agricultural Service

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/>

A wide array of information on weather, exports and markets around the world.

2003 Illinois Fertilizer Research Conference proceedings

<http://frec.cropsci.uiuc.edu/>

Reports on fertilizer research in Illinois can be found here.

Updated and New CAFO Factsheets

<http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/afo/cafofinalrule.cfm>

Forage soybean

<http://www.barc.usda.gov/anri/sasl/soybean.html>

Consider forage soybeans as an alterative crop.

Forage Harvesting Safety

<http://www.age.uiuc.edu/agsafety/fhs.html>

Tips to remember to keep you safe while harvesting hay.

Aquaculture Outlook

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/so/view.asp?f=livestock/ldp-aqs/>
Examines the U.S. aquaculture industry including production, inventory, sales, prices, inputs, and trade of catfish, trout, tilapia, salmon, mollusks, crawfish, shrimp, ornamental fish, and new species.



Rural Route 2 is Available at 1-800-468-1834

<http://www.extension.uiuc.edu/ruralroute/>

The Rural Route 2 service provides confidential business and family financial advice designed to help farm families get through tough times. It helps locate local support and identifies assistance through the IL Farm Development Authority.

Deficit Precipitation over Northern Illinois Continues

Researcher: Bob Scott, Climatologist, (217) 333-4966, rws-cott1@uiuc.edu,

By: Eva Kingston, (217) 244-7270, eva@sws.uiuc.edu

With precipitation totals 6 inches below typical amounts over the last seven months, 69 percent of average, Illinois has experienced the seventh driest September-March period since 1895, and the driest such period over the last 46 years, according to the IL State Water Survey (<http://www.sws.uiuc.edu>), a division of the IL Department of Natural Resources.

Regional precipitation conditions in Illinois for September-March also have been very dry. The northwest and northeast Crop Reporting Districts (CRDs) were the driest on record (50 and 52 % of average, respectively). The west and central CRDs were the second driest (57 and 53 % of average, respectively). The east CRD was fourth driest (57 percent of average). With 73 and 77 % of average, respectively, the west-southwest and east-southeast CRDs were the 15th driest. Precipitation has been near average to above average in the southwest and southeast CRDs, and they are not currently experiencing a deficit.

Technically, these data place the northern half of Illinois in a climatological precipitation drought, and impacts are beginning to be observed in other water resources of the state. Surprisingly, soil moisture conditions within the uppermost 6 inches of soil are relatively near average across Illinois, but sub-soil moisture conditions vary considerably. Observations from the southern third of the state indicate above average moisture levels between 40 and 72 inches below the surface, but conditions in parts of central and northern Illinois in this layer are only 25 percent of normal.

Without a large snowmelt this year, combined with the low precipitation, streamflows along selected rivers and streams are showing below to much below normal flows for this time of year in all but extreme southern Illinois. Overall, current statewide flows are just 37 % of the median flow rates for the end of March and have been below median rates since last October.

Shallow groundwater water table levels in observation wells away from pumping stations are also well below average levels and have been below the

statewide average for the last seven months. Overall, shallow groundwater levels were below average levels for March by 2.2 feet. In northern Illinois, the well at Mt. Morris (Ogle County), where readings began in 1961, reported a record low for March, and the well at Fermi Laboratory (DuPage Cty) reported the lowest monthly level in the 15 years.

Reservoir data have shown only slight impacts from low precipitation totals, primarily because there are no public water reservoirs in the northern third of the state. Some northernmost reservoirs are below normal levels by a few feet, not considered a concern at this time, but these conditions should be monitored closely for those reservoirs not filled by the end of April.

Reduced precipitation is not only present in Illinois, but also over much of the Midwest. Consequently, the water level in Lake Michigan this spring is at its lowest since 1964. The lake is 2 feet below the normal for April and only 8 inches above the record low level observed in 1964.

Fortunately, the precipitation deficit has occurred during a period when monthly rainfall totals in northern and central Illinois are typically low, crops are not using water, and evaporation rates are considerably lower than in warmer seasons. Thus, the primary potential impact of the precipitation deficit currently is on agriculture. Above average rainfall over the next several months is needed to recharge sub-soil moisture in dry areas as crop roots begin to tap into these depths later in the summer. However, without a return to average precipitation, rapid reductions in other water resources within the northern half of Illinois may soon follow.

If history is a guide, only two years of the remaining years in the top 10 driest September-March periods had slightly above average statewide precipitation amounts in the April-June period that followed (14 and 18 percent above average). Six of the years observed slightly below average rainfall (6-16 % below average), and precipitation in Illinois within the following three months was less than 50 % of average in 1934.

Visit the following web sites:

<http://www.sws.uiuc.edu/atmos/stateclim/Current/current.htm>, <http://www.sws.uiuc.edu/warm>, and <http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html>

Research Results

Survey Details Herbicide Resistant Weeds in Soybean Fields

Researcher: Christy Sprague, Ext. Spec., Dept. Crop Sci., (217) 333-9652, By: Rob Wynstra (217) 333-9446, wynstra@uiuc.edu

Over the last 20 years, herbicide resistant weeds have emerged as a major problem in many Illinois soybeans fields. To date, nine different herbicide-resistant weed biotypes have been confirmed in the state. The herbicide resistance problem, however, has continued to spread across the state and possibly encompass other weed species.

With support from the Illinois Soybean Checkoff Board, researchers in the Department of Crop Sciences at the University of Illinois recently conducted a major survey of growers to better determine the exact scope of the problem and pinpoint important areas for future research. "In our survey, 43 percent of the respondents reported that they had encountered problems from herbicide-resistant weeds," said Christy Sprague, weed scientist with U of I Extension and coordinator for the weeds project. "They identified 26 different weed species with resistance to nine different herbicide classes. The earliest of these problems dates all the way back to 1986."

The survey indicated that waterhemp, ragweed, common lambsquarter, and common cocklebur comprised nearly 80 percent of the herbicide-resistant species in the state. Reports over the last few years have confirmed resistance in those four species to ALS inhibitors, triazine herbicides or even both of those classes. "The respondents also identified some of those weeds as being resistant to other herbicides, including the PPO inhibitors, such as Flexstar, Ultra Blazer, and Cobra," Sprague said. "Since that survey, we have indeed confirmed some waterhemp with resistance to the PPO inhibitors."

U of I weed scientists Aaron Hager and Pat Tranel are now conducting additional research to pinpoint the exact mechanisms at work in this PPO resistance.

"The survey also included reports of waterhemp not being effectively controlled by glyphosate," Sprague said. "Although some of this may be due to environmental conditions, there are some populations that do not seem to fit that explanation. Although no waterhemp population in the state has been confirmed as resistant to glyphosate, there remains some concern that this could become a problem in the future." She notes that researchers in several other Midwest states are working with some waterhemp populations that have not been effectively controlled with glyphosate. They have determined that some of those populations show increased tolerance.

The Illinois survey also identified resistance problems in several other weed species that have not yet been confirmed as resistant in the state. These include horseweed, velvetleaf, morningglory, and woolly cupgrass. "Most of these were reported by only a few respondents and may not truly be resistant," Sprague said. "In the case of horseweed, however, there are confirmed cases of resistance to ALS inhibitors in Ohio and glyphosate in Delaware, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, New Jersey, and Maryland. All of which raises some concern that this could be a potential problem in Illinois."

According to Sprague, one major advantage of the survey is that it allows researchers to more easily identify what new weed species in the state may be developing herbicide resistance. "The results let us get a better handle on what may be some of the emerging weed problems," she said. "We also can get a heads-up on the potential for certain weed species to develop resistance to major herbicides, such as glyphosate. With that kind of information, we can better focus our research on the areas that will be the most productive in dealing with any problem that we may confront in the future."

Ultrasound Used to Detect Quality Beef

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/apr03/cattle0403.htm>
ARS News Service, Agricultural Research Service, USDA,
David Elstein, (301) 504-1654, delstein@ars.usda.gov

In the doctor's office, obstetricians use ultrasound machines to check on the health of a fetus. On the farm, researchers are using the same device to determine which cattle will produce lean, tasty steaks. Scientists from the Agricultural Research Service and Iowa State University have found that scanning live cattle with ultrasound can determine their fat and marbling qualities just as well as measurements taken on the carcass. The technology is used most often on Angus cattle, but ultrasound can be used on all breeds.

While researchers have been using ultrasound on farm animals since the 1950s, this was one of the first studies to use it to determine fat content in beef cattle and the first to show how accurate it could be as a predictor.

Ultrasound is a small, non-invasive handheld machine that emits sound waves. These sound waves are turned into images and are displayed on a small monitor so researchers can "see" inside the body. The machine is placed on the animal's back—where rib-eye steaks are located—to see just how lean and muscular the animal is, and to determine marbling, the little pieces of flavor-adding fat in steaks.

While the scanning of each animal may only take a few minutes, the technology will be used primarily by seedstock producers to find ideal cattle for breeding. The researchers at ARS' Roman L. Hruska U.S. Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Center, Neb., and at Iowa State University developed equations to see how accurate the ultrasound is in determining quality beef. They found that ultrasound was just as good at predicting the amount of fat and marbling as traditional methods of studying the carcass.

Biological Clocks "Wake Up" Plants

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/apr03/plant0403.htm>
ARS News Service, Agricultural Research Service, USDA,
David Elstein, (301) 504-1654, delstein@ars.usda.gov

Animal behavior has previously been shown to be shaped by 24-hour circadian rhythms that govern biological processes. Now scientists have found that these "biological clocks" exist in plants as well. Research at the Agricultural Research Service's Vegetable Laboratory in Beltsville, Md., has shown that a biological clock located in the nuclei of plant cells goes off every morning to prepare plants for their various activities.

"Circadian" is a Latin word meaning "about a day." Humans also have these rhythmic "clocks." Jet lag is an example of a person's biological clock being out of sync with the actual time of day.

ARS plant physiologist Autar K. Mattoo has found a few reasons why these inbuilt clocks go off every day in plants at precise times. He has spent considerable time specifically studying the one that controls an enzyme that modifies the protein known as D1, a critical element in the photosynthesis process. Binding phosphorus to D1 at a specific threshold provides a plant with a bio-timing signal that tells it to adjust its metabolism to face the onset of the day's brightest light. The plant also puts on "sunscreen" to protect itself from ultraviolet-B (UV-B) radiation damage.

Experiments were conducted at different times of the year and in different climates, but the theory that the "alarm" goes off a few hours before noon almost always proved true. One thing that can block the accumulation of phosphorus on D1 is the concentration of triazine and urea-type herbicides, such as atrazine and diuron. Mattoo worked on this project with researchers and students from the United States and Israel. As a result of their 22 years of collaborative research, these scientists were the first to determine the whole life cycle of the D1 protein.

On-Farm Production and Commercial Use of Biobased Greases

<http://www.bcs.uni.edu/abil/index.cfm>

Biobased greases derived from soybeans and on-farm processing have been a CSREES competitive grant focus. Partially funded by CSREES, the University of Northern Iowa's Ag-based Industrial Lubricants research program has developed SoyTrak™, an environmentally-friendly soy grease. CSREES has also funded a demonstration of on-the-farm soybean processing and grease manufacturing as a viable, value-added income source.

Norfolk Southern railroad is using SoyTrak™ as an alternative to petroleum-based greases for track lubrication to reduce rail side wear and wheel flange wear in curves. The University of Northern Iowa's Ag-based Industrial Lubricants research program is licensing 24 industrial lubricants, greases, and base oils from soybean oil this year.

Resources to Consider

Publications Plus -University of Illinois

Agricultural and Horticultural Publications

Call 1-800-345-6087 or order on the web

www.PublicationsPlus.uiuc.edu

It's a one-stop shop for a current catalog of research-based information (Mastercard and VISA accepted)

Climate change and its effect on water quality and soil resources

<http://www.swcs.org/docs/Climate%20change-final.pdf>

The Soil and Water Conservation Society has reviewed the literature and with an expert panel produced a report that connects climate change as a possible cause for set backs in progress, effecting water quality and preservation of soil resources.

The report also gives suggestions of what needs to happen to circumvent these set backs. Suggestions include a new way for conservation planning and highlights areas where more information is needed.

Pastures for Horses CD

A new CD-ROM, Pastures for Horses: A Guide to Rotational Grazing, C1387-CD

Available now to help you understand the best way to manage your pasture for your horses. This information-packed CD-ROM, features unbelievably easy navigation tools that will guide you through every phase of pasture development and management.

Learn how rotational grazing can:

- ▶ save you money and time by dramatically increasing forage amounts and improving forage quality-even in small areas
- ▶ reduce negative environmental impact for animals and humans by reducing erosion and runoff
- ▶ raise healthier horses in a natural setting that encourages exercise and lowers the risk of health problems.

Features include:

- ▶ Excel worksheets that calculate pasture acreage, convert metric measurements to English, and more Illinois-specific recommendations for successful, cost-effective pasture establishment and maintenance.
- ▶ A weed management section that includes a weed ID key with a handy guide to poisonous plants and a discussion of chemical-free management options.

This CD is a joint project of Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota Extension. To order, call 1-800-345-6087. Pastures for Horses, C1387-CD sells for \$58.00, plus shipping.

The Field Crop Scouting Manual

Look here for economic thresholds, scouting hints and identification information on the major corn, soybean and small grain pest in Illinois. (214 pages for \$40 with the CD-ROM or only the CD-ROM is \$10). To order call the ITCS Publications office at (800) 345-6087

Forage Legumes-Clovers, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Cicer Milkvetch, Crownvetch, and Alfalfa, Station *Bulletin 608-2003*

This publication covers origination, use, management, comparable yields, adaptation, identifying and characteristics. U of Minnesota Pub. at (800) 876-8636 or at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/catalog/item.html?item=5963>

Biobased Products and Bioenergy Coordination Council (BBCC)

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/bbcc/>

This new Council is to provide a forum through which USDA agencies will coordinate, facilitate and promote research, development, transfer of technology, commercialization, and marketing of biobased products and Bioenergy using renewable domestic agricultural and forestry materials. This includes a broad range of nonfood and nonfeed products, such as chemicals, fibers, construction materials, lubricants, and fuels. Development and commercialization of such biobased and Bioenergy products provide new and expanded markets for agricultural feedstocks, accelerate market penetration, reduce U.S. dependence on petroleum and other imports of critical materials, and diversify agriculture while fostering rural and sustainable development.

Biobased Fuels, Power, and Products State Profiles

for 2002 <http://www.bioproducts-bioenergy.gov/>

Fact sheets for each state include estimated installed power capacity, biofuels production capacity, incentives to increase the use of biomass and federally funded research. Biomass resource data are also available.

Exploring Sustainability in Agriculture www.sare.org/bulletin/explore

This publication provides a snapshot of different producers who apply sustainable principles on their farms and ranches. Ten farmers and ranchers from Montana to New Jersey describe how their farming systems evolved to meet their financial, ecological, and quality of life goals. Articles illustrate practices used on sustainable farms and a list of hints to help consumers make ecologically friendly choices when they buy food.

U.S. Organic Farming In 2000-2001: Adoption Of Certified Systems

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aib780>

U.S. farmland managed under organic systems expanded rapidly throughout the 1990s, and that pace has continued as farmers strive to meet consumer demand in both local and national markets. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) implemented national organic standards on organic production and processing in October 2002, following more than a decade of development. The new uniform standards are expected to facilitate further growth in the organic farm sector. This report updates USDA estimates of land farmed with organic practices for 2000 and 2001, and provides new estimates on the number of certified organic operations in each State.

Value-Added Development Grant Program

The 2002 Farm Bill authorized the U.S. Department of Agriculture to award \$240,000,000 over the next six years (\$40,000,000 per year) to producers or producer groups that engage in value-added ag operations. The Value-Added Development Grant (VADG) program offers two types of grants:

Planning: Grants will be awarded to proposals requesting funds for organizational activities — feasibility studies, business plans, marketing plans, legal expenses, and other expenses associated with beginning a VADG business.

Working Capital: To be eligible for a working capital grant, a feasibility study and a business plan *must* be completed prior to requesting funds. USDA will want a copy of both before a working capital award is given. Working Capital funds cannot be used for "brick and mortar" or for equipment.

The maximum dollar amount for one of these VADG awards is \$500,000. A dollar-for-dollar match is required. Match funds can either be in cash or in-kind - the more cash, the better. None of the match can come from other federal dollars.

Producer Categories

Producers must fall into one of these categories to be eligible for funds:

- ▶ Individual Producer or a producer group (groups must be 100 percent producer owned)
- ▶ Farmer/Rancher Cooperatives
- ▶ Agriculture Producer Groups (Trade Association or commodity group as examples)
- ▶ Majority-Controlled Producer Based Business Ventures (producers must own 51 percent or more of this type of business)

The VADG program will fund only those proposals that include development of an EMERGING MARKET. The program will not fund proposals that concentrate on expanding an existing market. It is critical that anyone submitting a proposal clearly identify an emerging market!

Eligible Activities

Value-Added Eligibility is another critical element in developing a proposal. According to USDA, four distinct activities are considered to be value-added - and all activities must fall within one or more of these four activities (we quote USDA):

- ▶ A change in the physical state or form of the product (such as milling wheat into flour).
- ▶ The production of a product in a manner that enhances its value, as demonstrated through a business plan (such as organically produced products).
- ▶ The physical segregation of an agricultural commodity or product in a manner that results in the enhancement of the value of that commodity or product (such as an identity preserved marketing system).
- ▶ The term value-added also includes using any agricultural product or commodity to produce renewable energy on a farm or ranch (example is collecting and converting methane from animal waste to energy).

Deb Yocum of USDA Rural Development in Beatrice, Nebraska provided the Center with copies of a handout with more details about the VADG program. Contact the Center if you would like a copy of the handout.

"Terrorism, Radicalism, and Populism in Agriculture"

<http://store.yahoo.com/isupress/0813821584.html>

Luther Tweeten, Ohio State Univ., Prof. Emeritus of Agricultural Trade and Policy discusses the strengths and vulnerabilities of our agricultural systems to a terrorist attack. Iowa State Univ Press at 800-862-6657

More Internet Resources

Illinois Average Farm Price Received Database Tool

www.farmdoc.uiuc.edu/manage/pricehistory/price_history

The Illinois Average Farm Price Received Database Tool it shows the average farm price received data, for multiple commodities, in the state of Illinois from 1960 to present. These historical price series are often useful for long-range planning. Seven commodities are included in the tool: corn, soybeans, wheat, barrows and gilts, steers and heifers, calves and milk. Monthly average prices and monthly marketing weights are available for corn, soybeans and wheat. Only monthly average prices are available for barrows and gilts, steers and heifers, calves and milk. It is important to note that the prices represent the average price actually received by farmers, and therefore, may be different from average prices offered by the market.

Counter-Cyclical Payment Tool

www.farmdoc.uiuc.edu/marketing

The tool calculates what the average market price needs to be for a given commodity for the rest of the year in order for the marketing year average price to just equal the threshold price and result in no counter-cyclical payment. The tool currently addresses corn, soybeans and wheat, but oats, barley, grain sorghum, and upland cotton will be added shortly.

Prices Inquiry System

<http://www3.rma.usda.gov/apps/pricesinquiry/>

This software provides the ability to retrieve the following information: Insurance Plan, Unit of Measure, Type Code, Practice Code, Option Code/Rate Class/Crush District, Cat Price/Cat Amount, Established Price/Reference Maximum Amount, Additional Price, Base Price, and Harvest Price by State and County for individual/all crop(s). The results can be printed in the tabular format.

Educational Opportunities

U of Illinois Agriculture Events

<http://web.aces.uiuc.edu/ve/>

New programs are being confirmed every day. Keep in touch with your Extension Office for programs addressing the topics that interest you and are offered in your County.

Statewide University of Illinois Extension Calendar Website

<http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/cie2/offices/calendar.cfm>

To search for programs throughout the state, check out Extension's searchable calendar. Search by location, topic or date to find a program of your interest.

Small Grains Twilight Field Day

Ellen Phillips, Crop Systems Educator, Countryside Extension Center, 708-352-0109, ephillips@uiuc.edu

June 24, Northern Illinois Agronomy Research Station, Shabbona, IL

Growing and marketing small grains will be the focus of the Small Grains Twilight Field Day on June 24 at 5:30 pm. the Northern Illinois Agronomy Research Station, Shabbona, IL. The evening will begin with a light supper while Jim Quinton, Director, Illinois Wheat Association provides a Small Grains Market Outlook. Other topics will include "Fitting Small Grains into the Farm Bill Details" and Niche Markets for Small Grains" Dr. Fred Kolb will round out the evening at the small grains research plots discussing "Small grain varieties and Diseases" For more information or to register, please contact the University of Illinois DeKalb Extension Unit at 815-758-8194.

Research and Weed Control Field Days

On July 9 and August 4, University of Illinois, Northern Illinois Agronomy Research Center, Shabbona, Illinois will host, a field tour also held on July 9 with the tour beginning at 5 pm. U of I weed scientists and graduate students will discuss some of the more than 30 weed control

research studies currently being conducted at the Center. The 1½ hour tour will give participants the opportunity to view results of numerous research projects evaluating herbicide effectiveness, crop tolerance and management practices. A meal will be available on site at the conclusion of the tour.

The U of I Northern Illinois Agronomy Research Center, located in DeKalb County can be reached by going 1 mile east of Shabbona on Route 30, then 5½ miles north on University Road.

Continuing education units for Certified Crop Advisers will be available for both field days.

2003 Illinois Forage Expo

The 2003 Illinois Forage Expo will be held on July 1, 2003 at the north edge of Macomb Illinois. The center of operations will be the Western Illinois Univ. Livestock Center, located a mile west of Route 67 on Tower Road (N1400), the intersection of Tower Road and Wigwam Hollow. The event's theme is "*Forages + Livestock = Profitability*".

Forage Expo 2003 will focus on both forages for grazing and harvesting systems. There will be field demonstrations of forage harvesting equipment and commercial displays of forage related products and equipment. Also, educational programs focusing on pasture and alfalfa production will be offered. The Expo will start at 9 am and conclude at 4 pm. There is no admission charge. Expo hosts are Western Illinois University, City of Macomb, and Tim Sullivan

Forage Expo 2003 is sponsored by Western Illinois University, University of Illinois Extension, Illinois Forage and Grassland Council, Western Illinois Forage and Grassland Council, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Grazing Land Conservation Initiative. For information about Forage Expo 2003 or if interested in exhibiting contact by Dean Oswald, Animal Systems Educator at the Macomb Extension Center (309) 836-3366 or e-mail oswaldd@uiuc.edu.

Summer Tax Seminars Set

Bob Sampson, Extension Communications Specialist, (217) 244-0225; rsampson@uiuc.edu
Reservations are now being accepted for a series of University of Illinois Extension tax seminars. The seminars are designed for experienced income tax practitioners who assist taxpayers in preparing and filing income tax returns.

"Each seminar will cover the latest changes to tax law and discuss complex issues associated with the seminar topic," explained Terri Kobel, program director for Extension's Farm Income Tax School.

A two-day seminar, LLC's Taxed as Partnership, will attempt to simplify many of the Internal Revenue Code sections. Presenters include Myron "Mike" Kelsey, a professor emeritus at Michigan State University, and Gary Hoff, a U of I Extension tax specialist. The seminar is scheduled for June 17-18 in Bloomington, June 19-20 in Collinsville, July 8-9 in Hoffman Estates, and July 10-11 in Tinley Park.

A one-day program will be offered on Farm Entity Selection. It will review the various entity alternatives that farmers can use and provide recommendations based upon specific situations. Presenters include Hoff and Roger McEowen, an Extension specialist at Kansas State University. The seminar is scheduled for July 16 in Bloomington and July 17 in Collinsville. Only persons who have registered will be able to attend the seminars. Prior to the June 2 registration deadline, the fee for the LLC seminar is \$300. After June 2, the charge is \$330. Prior to July 3, the Farm Entity seminar registration is \$150 and \$180 after that date.

Registration can be completed online at: <http://www.ace.uiuc.edu/TaxSchool> . Telephone registrations will not be accepted but information is available at (217) 333-1829.

About the Ag Update Newsletter

The Ag Update Newsletter is a bi-monthly newsletter providing education and research support to the agricultural industry. Current and past issues may be found at the following website <http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/agupdate/index.html>

Contact your county Extension office and request to be put on their agricultural mailing list to receive the local agricultural newsletter and notices about upcoming agricultural events near you. To find your counties location, phone and website go to: <http://web.aces.uiuc.edu/ve/>

For further information about this newsletter, please contact:

Ellen Phillips
Extension Educator – Crop Systems
Countryside Extension Center
University of Illinois Extension
6438 Joliet Rd.
Countryside, IL 60525
(708) 352-0109
phillipe@mail.aces.uiuc.edu