

Farm and Weather Summary

Wayne Roush, superintendent

Farm Comments

Developments: The Welles Farm Partnership donation of an adjacent 40 acres was finalized. The gift allowed a prairie ecosystem trial to be started on that site. An assessment of the remainder of the tract was undertaken, and two grant applications were submitted for additional prairie studies. The farm's original 30 × 84 ft swine hoop was replaced by three 30 × 60 ft hoops. Concrete was added within the hoops and in an outside connecting alley and sorting area. The hoop facilities will give additional space and flexibility for future research projects. The farm's greenhouse was moved to another farm. A skid steer loader was transferred from another farm. A new hay rake was obtained through a partial donation and purchase from a local vendor. The farm hosted two student interns during the summer of 2003. One was an FFA member and high school student from the Maple Valley District, and the other was an education major from Iowa Western Community College. Both students were seeking to supplement their classroom training with practical experience.

Field Days and Tours: Eight events were held. A total of 771 people attended field days and tours. The Loess Hills Seminar Tour was held at the farm. The farm was a tour site and also hosted a Saturday break-out session. Attendees toured the farm and participated in activities, which qualified as continuing education credits for both educators and other professionals. The farm also hosted the Monona County Visioning

Tour. More than 70 people attended and discussed how the farm and other resources within the county could be utilized by its citizens.

New Projects: The Role of Plant Evenness and Dissimilarity in Prairie Ecosystem Process and Stability Rates, Brian Wilsey; Utilization of Condensed Corn Distillers Solubles (CCDS) as a Pasture Supplement and as a Finishing Ration Component, Pete Hoffman.

Livestock: The major livestock related challenge in 2003 was the dry summer conditions. The hot and dry weather shortened pastures and required the early removal of all pasture cattle on September 2. It also caused the loss of one cutting of hay. A new cattle trial utilizing an ethanol by-product was initiated. This trial will evaluate the use of condensed corn distillers solubles (CCDS) in a finishing ration and as a pasture supplement. Swine trials continue to focus on evaluating triticale as a swine feedstuff. The swine mortality/alligator project concluded with the processing and sale of the alligators on September 2. More than 600 people have visited the farm to view the alligator project.

Crop Season Comments

Corn planting began May 12, and was harvested October 24 with an average yield of 144 bushels/acre. Soybeans were planted May 15 and were harvested October 16 with an average yield of 35 bushels/acre.