

Farm and Weather Summary

Allee Demonstration Farm

Lyle Rossiter, farm superintendent

Farm Comments

Developments. The farm has decided to use ground hay as the main forage source in the cattle rations. The 124 acres of rented land will no longer be part of the farm so that the Allee Farm superintendent can assist with crop plots at the Northwest Research Farm at Sutherland.

Field Days and Tours. One event was held, and a total of 307 people visited the farm. A farm swine tour included a veterinarian roundtable discussion of herd health, farm/vet relationships, alternative facility designs, and management to meet the need of antibiotic-free swine enterprises. Fourteen veterinarians and 74 farm guests attended. Youth involvement increases every year by hosting groups from 4-H, Girl Scouts, grade school children, and the School-to-Work program.

New Projects. On-farm yield variety trials of corn, corn rootworm incidence, and non-linolenic soybeans; USDA collaboration in animal health and feed safety epidemiology study; Iowa Pork Board hoop barn farrowing project; a new farm weather station; NRCS water table well monitoring; and a Practical Farmers of Iowa on-site cooperator.

Livestock. Swine facility design and farrowing systems studies continue to evolve around minimizing labor and decreasing pen/hut set-up time. The Allee Farm purchased 43 bred gilts from the National Pork Board and sold the existing herd because of low conception rates. The gilts were farrowed in four alternative farrowing systems: the heated lean-to barn, the heated hoop barn, the summer hoop barn, and the pasture paddocks. The farrow-to-finish antibiotic-free swine operation produced 676 market pigs. The cattle feeding system continues to improve by using ground hay in the rations. Beef cattle feeding totaled 362 head.

Crop Season Comments

Corn planting started April 26 and was completed April 30. Harvest began October 12 and was completed October 15 with average yields of 191 bushels/acre.

Soybean planting started May 5 and was completed May 9. Harvest began September 25 and was completed September 28 with average yields of 59 bushels/acre.

Weather Comments

Spring 2004. The soil moisture profile was normal, with ideal field soil conditions. Field tillage began April 20. A 1-in. rain on April 25–26 stopped corn planting; however, normal planting conditions resumed during May. Crops germinated with an excellent stand, while growth rates were slightly behind normal.

Summer 2004. June, July, and August months were cooler than normal. Corn and soybeans grew at a slower pace. The farm received 4 inches of rain on June 16, with more rain and cooler temps continuing through June 24. Two inches of rain fell on July 1 and drowned the crops in the low areas. Soybeans were replanted in mid-July and grew throughout August and September.

Fall 2004. Warm days in September helped soybean plant pod development. Soybean harvest started two weeks later than normal. October corn harvest was slowed by rain showers. Corn grain moisture was at 16–19%. Record yields of soybeans and corn required elevators to pile corn on the ground in temporary storage. Replanted soybeans were harvested after the corn. Warm November temperatures allowed fall tillage through the second week of December.

Acknowledgments

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