

Farm and Weather Summary

Wayne Roush, farm superintendent

Farm Comments

Developments. Don Hummel transferred to the Western Research Farm from the Lauren Christian Swine Farm, Atlantic, Iowa. Don's past experience in livestock projects and production is a welcome addition. Machinery transfers this year included a hydraulic hog cart, a feed auger wagon with a scale, several feed bulk bins, a bale transport trailer, and assorted shop tools and supplies. The farm disposed of a tractor and a manure spreader. Facility improvements consisted of the purchase of a new electronic cattle scale for the feedlot, installation of eight new low-energy cattle fountains in the finishing building, and improvements to the cattle load-out corral. Preliminary steps were taken to install three bulk bins at the cattle feed-processing area. The bins will be used to store cattle supplements. The new swine density project necessitated the remodeling of the three existing 30 × 60 ft swine hoops. Posts and fencing were installed to divide and re-adjust interior pen sizes to fit project demands, and improvements were made to the exterior weighing and sorting area. A cement floor was added to the bedded areas of the swine mini-hoops, with adjustments to the gates and doors to fit the new floor. The 40-acre tract of land that was donated in 2003 continues to provide space for expanding projects. A new prairie establishment/restoration study was started on the tract with funding provided by the Iowa Department of Transportation. The farm hosted a student from the Maple Valley School for a summer work experience. This experience enabled the student to add practical experience to the classroom training.

Field Days and Tours. Six events were held. A total of 287 people attended field days and tours. The Loess Hills seminar tour was again 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 confinement-site manure applicator training, as well as crops and livestock field days.

New Projects. Swine Finishing Hoops Stocking Density/Pork Quality Evaluation, Steve Lonergan; D.O.T. Prairie Establishment and Restoration Project, Brian Wilsey; Demonstration participant: Predictive Evaluations for Alfalfa Quality (PEAQ) Survey, Todd Vagts.

Livestock. Livestock projects continue to be the major emphasis at the farm with approximately 1,200 head of swine finished, 112 head of steers finished, and 56 head of steers pastured. Triticale feeding to finishing swine continues with the evaluation of new varieties and diets. Additionally, a spring triticale variety was seeded and harvested for feeding in the winter of 2004/05. A fall triticale variety was seeded for harvest and feeding in 2005. Hoop remodeling allowed a swine density/pork quality study to be done. Performance and pork quality were evaluated in relationship to hoop stocking density and air quality. An off-site confinement treatment was also included. Cattle trials continue to examine condensed corn distillers solubles (CCDS) as a feedstuff, both as a feedlot ration ingredient and as a pasture supplement. Dry weather late in the summer once again plagued pasture conditions and alfalfa production, resulting in the early removal of pastured cattle on September 2 and the loss of the final cutting of hay.

Crop Season Comments

Corn planting began April 28 and was harvested October 26, with an average yield of 193 bushels/acre. Soybeans were planted May 18 and were harvested October 7, with an average yield of 40 bushels/acre.