

Farm and Weather Summary

Wayne Roush, farm superintendent

Farm Comments

Developments. In 2005, several machinery and facilities improvements were made. Machinery purchases included a new grain auger and a utility vehicle with spot sprayer. Acquisitions also included a 3/4-ton pickup, a feeder wagon, and a tractor transfer with another location. Facilities improvements included installing two bulk bins, erecting a 10,000-bushel drying bin, widening and installing new doors on the feed shed, and adding doors to enclose the silo lean-to. The cattle working alley, squeeze tub, and load-out area were completely rebuilt with sucker rod and well pipe material. The 20-acre tract of land donated in 2003 continues to provide space for project expansion. The prairie establishment/restoration study was expanded to double its original size by transplanting approximately 6,200 potted plants. A prairie plant-identification garden was established. The farm hosted a student from the Maple Valley School System for a summer work experience. An ISU animal science student was also hosted for the summer as part of the intern program.

Field Days and Tours. Seven events were held this year. A total of 714 people attended field days and tours. An event in June highlighted the Asian soybean rust and the rust sentinel plots. An event in July focused on utilizing goats to control invasive species in the Loess Hills. The farm also hosted the association's annual meeting, manure applicator certification training, tractor school for youth, and crop and livestock field days.

New Projects. Asian soybean rust sentinel plots; Dietary protein (lysine) reduction for niche market pigs; Prairie plots expansion and establishment/restoration; Prairie plant-identification garden; and Utilization of condensed corn distillers solubles (CCDS) as a

pasture supplement and as a finishing ration component (for cattle).

Livestock. Livestock projects continue to be the major emphasis at the farm with approximately 866 head of swine finished, 112 head of steers finished, and 72 head of steers pastured. Feeding triticale to swine continues with the evaluation of new varieties and rations. A fall triticale variety seeded in 2004 and harvested during summer 2005 is scheduled for feeding in 2006 and should conclude the triticale feeding trials. A feeding trial for niche market pigs, Dietary protein (lysine) reduction for niche market pigs, was conducted and future replications are being considered. This trial evaluated how diet manipulation might produce a more desirable niche market pig, i.e one with a smaller loineye and more backfat. Cattle trials included a third year of examining 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. These conditions resulted in the early removal of pasture cattle and a severe yield reduction for the final hay cutting. Sixteen head of bulk steers were grazed on pasture while being fed relatively large quantities of CCDS. This feeding was undertaken as a pretrial to evaluate the feasibility of pasture finishing steers with CCDS.

Crop Season Comments

Corn planting was done on May 2–3. Harvesting was done on November 1–2, with an average yield of 170 bushels/acre. Soybeans were planted May 12–13. Harvest was October 10–11, with an average yield of 50 bushels/acre.