

## Farm and Weather Summary

### Allee Demonstration Farm

Lyle Rossiter, farm superintendent

#### Farm Comments

*Developments.* Energy conservation improvements to the Allee Farm shop included new insulated doors and replacement of wall insulation. Changing the electric motors from three phase to single phase reduced total energy costs. Increasing the use of biodiesel has not presented seasonal fuel problems with engines during the winter. Labor sharing between the Allee Farm and the Northwest Farm increased the efficiency of both sites during peak seasonal crop and livestock operations.

*Field Days and Tours.* The Buena Vista special swine class included 27 participants that gained swine production knowledge, herdsmanship, and showmanship techniques at the Allee Farm. With the experience, each participant purchased, showed, and marketed four market pigs at the fair in July for a total of 91 pigs. The Allee Farm continues use of the School-to-Work program with the Newell-Fonda Community School District, providing agriculture education from the classroom to practical experiences of crop, swine, beef, and machinery operations. The local 4-H clubs use the farm for monthly meetings and maintain the Newell Booster's apple orchard. This year's late freeze in May froze off buds and the July hail storm destroyed any apple 4-H fund raising opportunities. Visitors this year included grandparents bringing their grandchildren to the farm for their first opportunity to see cattle, pigs and tractors. The Allee Farm appreciates the community support and the opportunity to be an educational site for all ages and families.

*New Projects.* A second season corn-on-corn comparison of rootworm traits with genetic enhanced CRW vs. conventional corn with and without insecticide was conducted. A Vistive soybean vs. conventional soybean comparison

was included in the Northwest Iowa On-Farm Research Report. The Allee Farm's January farrowing is split with the Armstrong Farm to compare pig crushing in farrowing huts vs. pens.

*Livestock.* The farm's cattle operation supported four research projects by backgrounding 371 steers that were moved to three different ISU farms. Custom finishing of 43 steers and 118 heifers was completed during the year. Artificial insemination was adopted by the Allee Farm swine project and conception rates varied (95%, 43%, and 67%). The antibiotic-free hog sales (282 market hogs) received a 7<sup>th</sup> place Niman Ranch meat quality award out of 512 farm members.

#### Crop Season Comments

Corn planting started May 18 and was completed May 19. Harvest began October 29 and was completed November 1 with average yields of 126 bushels/acre.

Soybean planting started May 22 and was completed May 23. Harvest began October 17 and was completed October 24 with average yields of 50 bushels/acre.

#### Weather Comments

*Winter.* January had a total of 17.5 in. of snow. There were four days of below zero wind chill temperatures in January. February had 15 consecutive days of wind chill below zero. On March 2, there was 10 in. of snow with blizzard conditions (snowdrifts 12 ft high). By March 16, all of the snow had melted.

*Spring.* The first measurable spring rain fell on March 31 (2.85 in.). On April 3, there was 1.0 in. of rain with hail, and on April 4, a freeze damaged early apple blossoms with a low temperature of 28°F. The soil stayed frozen until the middle of April. Rain on April 22, 23, and 26 totaled 2.9 in. On May 6 was a heavy rain of

4.2 in. On June 6 a hailstorm damaged soybean and corn crops. Cool weather in June slowed crop growth.

*Summer.* On July 3, a 1.1 in. rain with strong winds (70+ mph) flattened corn and downed trees. Hot, humid temperatures (103°F heat index) during the second and third week of July stressed corn during pollination and livestock. In August, the rain totaled 18.9 in.

*Fall.* September was a normal rainfall month with 3.4 in. and cool temperatures all month. October moisture was 3.0 in. above normal.

November was the driest month with no measurable precipitation. The first snow flurries were on November 22. December had rain (2 in.), ice (2 in.) and snow (4.5 in.) during the first week. Temperatures did not warm enough to melt the ice all month. Nine December foggy days ended the year.

#### **Acknowledgements**

The farm would like to thank the Practical Farmers of Iowa, the Newell-Fonda School-to-Work program, the On-Farm Research Staff, the Newell Cooperative, ISU Extension, and the 4-H Boosters for their support of the Allee Farm.