

## Farm and Weather Summary

### Allee Demonstration Farm

Lyle Rossiter, farm superintendent

#### Farm Comments

*Developments.* New 6-ft steel rail fencing and 4-in. steel posts set in a 12-in. concrete curb were erected to divide six feedlot pens. A portable cattle headgate, squeeze chute, weight scale, and double alley system were installed inside the cattle barn.

*Field Days and Tours.* The Allee Memorial Experimental Farm bequest by George M. Allee in 1958 celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year. Dean Wendy Wintersteen presented Recognition Certificates to local businesses for their support of the Allee Farm over the last five decades. One-hundred and eighty guests attended the anniversary field day that included discussions and displays of agriculture crop and livestock research of the past, present, and future. Feature speakers included Dean Wendy Wintersteen, Mark Honeyman, PhD; Kendall Lamkey, PhD; John Lawrence, PhD; JR Tait, PhD; Josh Sievers; and Lyle Rossiter. Iowa State University Extension staff displayed 150 years of success and educational information to the public. The Allee Historic Mansion was open for informative tours of the Allee family history and George Allee's activities related to improving open pollinated corn varieties and his development of Allee Hybrid Corn.

A corn maze in the shape of the Iowa State University mascot "Cy" was sculptured in five acres of corn for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The Iowa Corn Promotion Board used the corn maze to educate local FFA, 4-H clubs, and school students in the uses of corn in their daily lives while the kids walked through the maze. Non-perishable food items were the cost of admittance on Sundays and donated to the local food pantries.

The Newell National Honor Society hosted a haunted corn maze benefit for a local family with 374 guests attending the event.

The Buena Vista special swine class included 32 participants who 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 county fair in July for a total of 128 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 related to crop, swine, beef, and machinery operations. The local 4-H clubs use the farm for monthly meetings and maintain the Newell Booster 4-H Club apple orchard.

The Allee Farm appreciates the community support and the opportunity to be an educational site for all ages and families. A total of 1,208 guests visited the farm in 2008.

*New Projects.* The Northwest Iowa Experimental Association, ISU Research and Demonstration Farms, and ISU Extension agreed to expand on-farm research (OFR) this spring into Buena Vista, Sac, Pocahontas, parts of Carroll, Calhoun, Ida, Cherokee, and Clay counties. OFR assisted individual farmers to set up field-length research and gain data for statistical analysis. Extension crop specialists Paul Kassel, Mark Licht, and Allee Farm superintendent Lyle Rossiter assisted seven farmers with 18 field projects.

The Allee cattle operation started to feed and collect research data for bulls, steers, and heifers from the purebred Angus cowherd at the ISU McNay Research Farm, Chariton, IA.

*Livestock.* Custom finishing of 102 steers, 34 bulls, and 101 heifers was completed this year. The swine demonstration operation uses artificial insemination and farrows in January and July. Feed rations are mixed on the farm and all swine are sold as antibiotic-free to Niman Ranch (148 market hogs).

### **Crop Season Comments**

Corn planting started May 6 and was completed May 13. Harvest began October 17 and was completed November 9 with average yields of 187 bushels/acre.

Soybean planting started May 27 and was completed May 28. Low areas were replanted three times. Five acres were drowned out for the season. Harvest began October 2 and was completed October 9 with average yields of 38 bushels/acre.

### **Weather Comments**

*Winter.* January had eleven days of sub-zero temperatures and a total of 10.25 in. of snow. The warmest day was 41°F, and we received a ½ in. of rain on January 28. February had three days of sub-zero temperatures, 11 in. of snow, and six days of foggy/rainy conditions.

*Spring.* March was cooler than normal. Six inches of snow fell. The ground was frozen throughout March. The high temperature was 55°F on March 26. April was wetter than normal with 3.7 in. of rain and a late snow fell

on April 25. May was cool with eleven days of moisture, and a total of 6.7 in. of rain.

*Summer.* June was cool with 13 nights of temperatures below 55°F and the high temperature was 88°F. Two rain storms with more than 2 in., caused field ponding (total 5.7 in.). Persistent rain during July 1–7 accumulated 6.3 in. of water, causing crop loss and soybean replants in drowned out areas. Cool nights and rain the rest of July slowed crop growth (total rainfall of 8.1 in.). August had warm days and cool nights with no rain for the first two weeks.

*Fall.* September rains totaled 3.2 in. Cool weather allowed crops to reach yield potential. Hail on September 29 did not damage late maturing soybean plants. October was cool. November was very wet with 6.4 in. of rain. Little fall tillage was accomplished before the soil froze on December 2.

### **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, First Community Bank, Citizen First National Bank in Storm Lake, and the 4-H Boosters for their support of the Allee Farm and the farm's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary field day and events.