

Field Days and Farm Tours

Ken Pecinovsky, farm superintendent

You are welcome to use the information contained in this progress report and your advice and/or contribution to future research is welcome. We thank Northeast Iowa Experimental Association members, Iowa State University researchers and extension staff, and agribusiness people for their support. We value all the people whose vision, leadership, hard work, and financial support have contributed to the establishment and success of the association, the research farm, and agricultural research in northeast Iowa. The success of the Northeast Research and Demonstration Farm truly is a group effort.

On March 28, 2001, we held our Northeast Iowa Agricultural Experimental Association annual meeting. Dr. Robert Wisner, professor of economics, gave an overview of global competition, specifically looking at Brazilian soybean expansion and Chinese demand, and the price outlook on 2001 grain markets. Dr. John Sawyer, gave a presentation on phosphorous and water quality research and an explanation of the phosphorous index. A seasonal review of this past year's research was given by Ken Pecinovsky. The board meeting was conducted after the morning presentations.

The annual field days were well attended in 2001. The 25th anniversary of the Northeast Research Farm was celebrated on June 26. Dr. Norman Borlaug, 1970 Nobel Peace Prize winner, was scheduled to give the keynote address and commemorative speech; but due to a recent bout of pneumonia, he could not attend. Dr. Fred Kirschenmann, director of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, delivered the keynote address and presentation of the success of the Northeast Research Farm. Dr. Kirschenmann discussed the partnership of farmers, researchers, and citizens that grew out

of recognized local needs, and the research to be conducted being designed with the help of those whose needs were being addressed. Tours of current research projects concerning crop growth and development, water quality, soil fertility, gardening, organics, weed science, and soil management were given in the afternoon.

On June 14, a workshop on "alternative weed management for reduced and no-herbicide systems" addressed crop rotation, cover crop and mulch effects on weeds, weed identification, and weed dynamics. This was followed by a demonstration of mechanical weed control using row cultivators, flame weeders, and rotary hoes.

Crop tours were conducted on June 15, July 6, and July 20. They included discussions of current agronomic troubles related to this year's growing season. Tours of sites pertinent to topics of interest were given. On July 26 and August 30, land value study meetings were held at the research farm. On the evening of August 2, a butterfly garden/wildflower horticulture program was held at the farm's newly constructed butterfly garden/water pond.

A home demonstration garden tour was held August 18. One presentation explained the various benefits of a large assortment of colored plastic mulches. A variety of compact vine crops were demonstrated. Plants known for dramatic, colorful foliage were compared with plants known for only flower color. "Chickens" were added to this year's demonstration garden through inclusion of garden plants having the word "chicken," "egg," or "feather" in their names. These complemented another demonstration, that of "range-raised" chickens (broilers raised in chicken tractors, moved daily to new grass).

Also to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the research farm, an anniversary garden was grown. It included vegetables and flowers that had achieved “All-American Selection Award” status during the past 25 years.

Topics at the fall field day on September 6 included: historical corn breeding improvements (Dr. Arnel Hallauer); soybean disease update, including top-dieback and viruses from bean leaf beetle and soybean aphids (Dr. X.B. Yang); problem insects and mites in 2001, including bean leaf beetles, soybean aphids, and spider mites (Brian Lang); and stress-induced K deficiency and management (Antonio Mallarino). A seasonal update, including 2001 trends in growth and development of corn and soybeans, was presented by Ken Pecinovsky.

Individuals and tour groups are welcome at the Northeast Research and Demonstration Farm, which is located one mile south of Nashua on Highway 218, then west 1.3 miles on gravel (290th St.). To schedule a tour, please call the farm office at (641) 435-4864.