CEREAL LEAF BEETLES (CLB)

Cereal leaf beetles are the most serious insect pest of small grains in North Carolina. Adult beetles usually arrive in wheat fields in March and are about 3/16 inch long with bluish-black heads and wing covers. The legs and front segment of the thorax are rust-red.

Larvae usually begin to appear in April and are slug-like, have orangish-yellow bodies and brownish-black heads and legs. However, a black globule of mucus and fecal matter usually hides the body coloration, giving them a shiny black, wet appearance. CLB adult feeding does not injure the wheat crop. Larvae, however, eat long strips of green tissue from between leaf veins and may skeletonize entire leaves. Severely defoliated fields take on a white “frosted” cast when lots of green tissue is lost on the upper leaves.

Wheat fields should be scouted for CLB eggs and larvae in April when wheat reaches the “flag leaf” stage. If there are more than 25 eggs plus larvae found on 100 tillers, an insecticide should be applied as soon as possible. This will kill the CLB population before the larvae can skeletonize leaves and reduce yields. Low rates of several insecticides, such as Sevin, Warrior, Karate Z, Mustang Max 0.8EC, Lannate, Tracer 4SC, will control this single generation pest.
NC BOLL WEEVIL FEE

The 2010 NC boll weevil assessment fee will be $1.25 per acre. The amount is unchanged from 2009. The fee supports the Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation’s efforts to monitor cotton acreage for any re-introduction of the boll weevil and to respond promptly with eradication treatment if necessary. Contractors will install and monitor traps from late summer until after harvest and frost. Because the main focus of NC’s program has shifted from eradication to monitoring, farmers should anticipate the number of traps in fields to decrease. Last year, more than 7,200 traps were placed and maintained on 373,600 certified acres of cotton in 55. To allow for trapping and monitoring, cotton growers are required to certify cotton acreage with the Farm Service Agency office by June 30.

COTTON PLANTING DATES

Planting date has a significant influence on cotton yields. Results from planting date trials indicate that optimum yields are obtained when cotton is planted before May 5. Yields decline approximately 12 pounds of lint per acre per day after this date. However, when cotton is planted between May 5, and May 20, yield reduction are not as drastic as reductions when planting occurs from mid to late May. Planting cotton after May 20 should be avoided if at all possible.

While planting date is important, soil temperatures are also critical for germination and early growth of cotton seedlings. Temperatures below 50 degrees during germination can result in decreased emergence and slower early season growth.

Cotton planting should begin when the following conditions are met:

1.) After April 15.
2.) The soil has reached 65 degrees by 10 a.m. at a 3-inch depth in a moist seedbed.
3.) Warm, dry weather is predicted for the next 5 to 7 days.

UPCOMING PESTICIDE CLASSES

April 8, 2010 – Pesticide Safety
“V” Credits  Time: 5:30- 7:30 p.m.

April 20, 2010 – Pesticide Handling
“X, A, B, G, H, I, K, L, M, N, O, T, D” Credits  Time: 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

April 29, 2010 – Pesticide Handling
“X, A, B, G, H, I, K, L, M, N, O, T, D” Credits  Time: 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Please call and RSVP to Nita Walton at 910-455-5873, if you plan on attending. Classes will be offered again in August.
The Month of April “Spotlight”

Buy Fresh, Buy Local When choosing fruits and vegetables always look for produce that is closest to it's most natural form. The less processed the food, the better. This is one of the many reasons we suggest visiting your local farmers’ market. It's a great place to purchase fresh, healthy food directly from the farmer or grower. Onslow County Farmers’ Market is opening for the 2010 market season on April 10th, and it's a perfect time for you to come out and enjoy the best that nature and your local farmers’ have to offer.

The benefits of shopping locally at the farmers’ market are numerous. First the market is filled with food that's good for you, brightly colored fruits and vegetables that change with the season. Enjoy corn on the cob, tomatoes and berries in the summer, or squash, sweet potatoes and collards in fall.

The majority of the produce in supermarkets was picked almost a week before it hits the shelves and traveled many, many miles before being sold. When you shop at the farmers’ market you can be assured that the food you purchase is fresh, hasn't traveled long distances and undergone lots of packaging.

When you buy locally at a farmers’ market, you're doing your part in reducing the energy consumption needed to support large-scale food systems. You're also helping to put money directly into the pockets of local farmers’ who don't or can't produce supermarket quantities. And you're buying recently harvested produce – cutting down the time between the harvest and consumption means more nutrients are preserved.

Finally, the farmers’ market offers great opportunities to try something new. Onslow County farmers’ and growers are there because they have a passion for their product. They're a wealth of information. Don't be afraid to ask questions, as this can be a great chance to get new ideas and tips for food preparation.

Not only will you experience the health benefits of eating locally, but also you'll have some fun and may well learn something new in the process.

The Onslow County Farmers’ Market (located at 4024 Richlands Hwy, Jacksonville, NC 28540) 2010 Season begins Saturday April 10th. The Market is open Tuesdays and Saturdays from 8:30am until 1:30pm.

Starting April 15th, the Thursday Market at 1108 Western Blvd will be open from 12pm – 6pm behind Dick’s Sporting Goods on Western Blvd.