January 2009

Field Crops News

Wheat

Split Decision on Nitrogen Applications

Late January or early February is the ideal time to evaluate your wheat tiller density and apply additional nitrogen. Timely applications of nitrogen will help promote additional tillers if your wheat is small. At this stage, 50 tillers per square foot is optimum. If wheat was planted late, tiller counts may be significantly lower. Use the formula below to determine your tillers per square foot.

\[
\text{Tillers per square foot} = \frac{\text{Tillers per yard of row} \times 4}{\text{Row width in inches}}
\]

**If tiller density is less than 50 tillers per square foot:** Apply ½ of the topdress nitrogen in late January, and the remaining ½ in early March. The first application will enhance tillering on warm days without fostering excessive growth. **If tiller density is more than 50 tillers per square foot:** Apply all topdress nitrogen in early March.

Applying all the nitrogen in late January/early February could pose problems. The nitrogen would increase tillering, but it would also make the wheat more prone to freeze damage. This traditional practice may also cause late-season nitrogen stress and reduced potential yields.

Splitting the nitrogen stimulates tillering without the increased risks of freeze damage, disease, and lodging. The second application in March would also give the wheat more nitrogen later in the spring when it is necessary for grain production.

**Tobacco**

Float Tray Sanitation

The most common tobacco greenhouse diseases are damping-off (rhizoctonia or pythium), collar rot (sclerotinia), and bacterial soft rot (Erwinia).

Used trays are a documented source of rhizoctonia damping-off. Before reuse, thoroughly wash the trays and all them to dry. **All used trays should be either fumigated with methyl bromide or steam sterilized prior to reuse.** Do not depend on dipping trays in any sanitation product (including bleach) to kill disease pathogens completely.

To fumigate with methyl bromide, stack trays criss-crossed up to 5 feet high. Then tarp and seal. Apply methyl bromide at 3 pounds per 1,000 cubic feet (length x width x height – all measurements in feet). Allow at least 48 hours of aeration prior to filling with media.
Water Analysis for Float Beds

A good water source should be used for tobacco greenhouse transplant production. The NCDA&CS will provide a water analysis for $5.00/sample. A clean, 16 oz. non-returnable plastic drink bottle will make a perfect water sample bottle. The bottle should be rinsed several times with the water to be tested before collecting the sample. The water should also flow for several minutes prior to collecting the sample. On the solution analysis form, specify ST in the solution code (this stands for transplant production solution source water). In the sample description/comment area, state “tobacco float greenhouse”. Forms are available at the Cooperative Extension office.

Crop Budgets

The 2009 crop budgets for corn, cotton, tobacco, wheat and soybeans, and peanuts are now available online at: http://www.ag-econ.ncsu.edu/extension/Ag_budgets.html. Please contact the Cooperative Extension office if you would like a hard copy.

Upcoming Events

Corn and Soybean Production Meeting
Jan. 22, 2009 at 5:30pm
Onslow County Multipurpose Center
There will be a sponsored meal. You MUST RSVP to ensure we have an adequate amount of food. Please call Nita at the Extension office at 910-455-5873 by Monday, Jan. 19, so plans can be made for the meal.

Regional Tobacco Meeting
Jan. 28, 2009 at 10:00 am
Duplin County Extension Center Auditorium
There will be a sponsored lunch. Please call Nita at the Onslow County Extension Service at 910-455-5873 to RSVP.

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