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**WHEAT
FIELD DAY**

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Playing with 3 year olds

Recently I found myself at a local welding shop waiting for a part to get fixed. I sat on the tailgate of the truck waiting and started watching four young children playing in the yard. Soon the mother of the children came out of the house and told the kids to pick up the sticks and twigs in the yard. She sent Johnny to get the red wagon to haul the sticks. Like all good country kids, the work started at once. Johnny got the wagon and the three girls scattered out over the yard gathering sticks.

I marveled at how fast this group took to their jobs. Their mother came over to where I was sitting, said good morning, and I complimented her on how fast the children responded to her request. She smiled, thanked me, and then proceeded to the house.

The work continued in the yard for a couple of minutes. Then the children started making a game out of it. One of the girls was to pick up the dead sticks, while another girl was to pick up green sticks. The oldest little girl was picking up both and was continually yelling at the boy to pull

the wagon closer to her so she didn't have to walk as far.

This went on for a short time as each of the kids started making up silly rules that greatly slowed their progress. One of the girls that was picking up green sticks thought that she was not getting enough help from the girl who was picking up both. She went to the wagon and started throwing some dead sticks back out on the yard. This angered the girl who was picking up the dead sticks, so, she started breaking the green sticks in half to double the work of the other girl. By now all the girls were yelling at the boy pulling wagon.

As I sat on the truck I want-

ed to get a marker out and label each one of these kids. One would be the Risk Management Agency (RMA) another would be Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the third would be the crop insurance companies (AIP). The boy pulling the wagon would have to be the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the sticks represent the farmers.

As time went on, this simple job got more and more out of hand. It seemed that the goal of getting the sticks picked up out of the yard became secondary to their petty, childish arguments. Just at the point where sticks were going to become weapons, the mother came out of the house. She came out to inspect to see if she was getting what she expected. Immediately I labeled her as OIG (Office of Inspector General). She criticized the performance of each of the children explaining to them how she expected the job to be done. As she did this heads dropped and a silence came over the yard. The children started working again. She stood watch on the porch for a few



Playing with 3 year olds (continued)



**FROM RMA
Re: Cover Crops and
Preventive planting**

ACTION:

“For the 2013 crop year, RMA intends to file a Special Provisions statement to allow haying and grazing of cover crops without impacting a potential prevented planting payment for spring 2013 crops.”

The Special Provisions statement states the following:

“In lieu of Section 17(f)(5)(ii) of the Common Crop Insurance Basic Provisions, haying or grazing a cover crop will not impact eligibility for a prevented planting payment provided such action did not contribute to the acreage being prevented from planting.”

minutes and work was getting done but just as soon as she returned to the house the bickering, backbiting and finger pointing started again.

In the not too distant past all of us in the crop insurance industry had a clear vision of what our jobs and duties were. We were to be the safety net that agriculture would depend on in the future when natural disasters would cause crop losses. Today at times I think the vision that we had at that time has been clouded by politics, bureaucracy, jealousy, and fear. We still have an excellent program that works very well but at times we still need to be reminded what our goal is and get each and every player on board.

New producer status and entity issues are each battles that come all the way back to the farm level. Every year we tell producers in person and in our newsletters how important it is to make information match between the FSA

and Crop Insurance. If this information does not match exactly then claims can be reduced or kicked out by any of the above players.

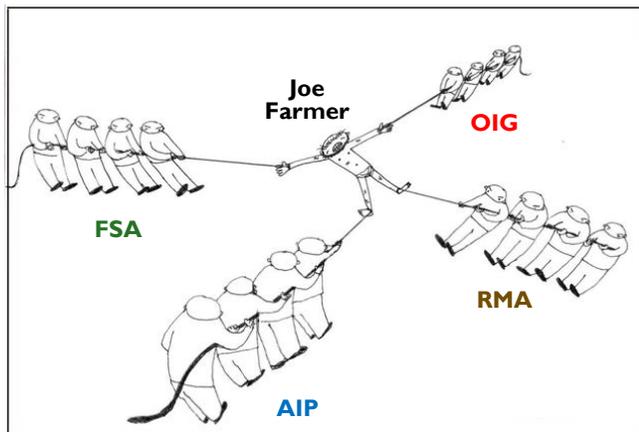
Recently we had a producer do some estate planning and placed his farm in a Revocable Trust. The Revocable Trust was listed at FSA but was not listed with crop insurance. Therefore this producer was not paid a loss in 2012 because he was listed with Crop Insurance as **Joe Farmer** rather than **Joe Farmer Revocable Trust**. Any person would realize that this entity is the same. It has the same social security number, the same operator, and the same bank accounts. Even through all this, bureaucrats insist that it is a different entity. This insured will be expected to pay his bill but will be denied coverage. This double standard unfortunately happens way too often.

Recently the Office of Inspector General audited the Risk Management Agency and found that they did not have sufficient edits in their programs to match FSA data to Crop Insurance in regard to New Producer status. Therefore they have required both agencies to go back in time and find these discrepancies and why they did not match. This has caused a paperwork nightmare for all parties involved and the only loser is the farmer

that this program was designed to protect. Can you remember if you planted wheat in 2009? If so was it grazed? Was it interseeded with clover? If you can great!!! Can you do the same for 1996? This is what we are being asked to do.

The point that I am making in this article is that we need to stop and reset. When this business was in its infancy we had clear defined goals. These goals were to protect the agricultural producers in this country from financial disasters, and to help all Americans by providing an affordable and consistent food supply. Today as a country and as an industry we have gotten away from our goals. It is time to stop and reevaluate what our goals are, why we are doing it, and try again.

Agriculture in this country has repeatedly been the salvation to our nation. Persons who are involved in farming typically demonstrate a higher work ethic, morality, and contribute more to their communities than any other group of people yet we are scrutinized like a preacher in a tavern. Could Social Services, Department of Defense, the Secret Service, EPA, the Department of Education, or the Office of Administration hold up to the same standards that the government is requiring agriculture to do?



Waiting on the Wheat

This year it is impossible to talk about the wheat crop in general as we have seen so many variables and different situations across the country. Most of the interesting photos that we have included have come from south Missouri where wheat is becoming an important grain in most operations. It is interesting to travel 2-3 hundred miles south on a regular basis because we see how plants are developing 3 weeks in advance to central Missouri. The problems that are faced in south Missouri are the exact same issues that we face in central Missouri. The yield potential is the same but at times the uses can be different.

The biggest difference in the two areas is that wheat in the southern part of the state may be used as a dual purpose crop. The wheat is planted during the normal planting time but is then grazed until late winter right before the plant is ready to break dormancy. At that time the cattle are pulled out and the crop is treated in a manner that would promote top yields.

Last year our top producer in Newton County came in with wheat yields of 118 bu/acre. This farm was followed by several producers in the 111 bu/acre range. These yields were not produced by dumb luck. They did have some

excellent growing conditions but they had other advantages as well.

Look at the two photos to the right. The one on the top is a dual purpose field for fall grazing and also for grain, the bottom picture is a field planted to produce grain. These pictures were taken only a day apart but you can readily tell that these fields had management differences because of the intended use of the crop.

As all are aware, poultry production is very well established in this area and has been for many years. These producers have used strong levels of poultry litter as fertilizer for a long time thus building up the phosphorus level in the soil. Phosphorus is extremely important in giving wheat that early boost that encourages seedling growth and early plant development. This was the case with the dual purpose field. This field had ample phosphorus and demonstrated above average seedling growth, root development and excellent tillering.

We saw some farms in the area that had good yield even though the pH on these farms was less than the desired levels. Going back to my soil science classes this makes sense because one of the drawbacks of having a low pH is low



DP - dual purpose field



GO - grain only field



The plant on the left had ample phosphorus as compared to the one on the right

Waiting on the Wheat (continued)



Freeze Damaged Wheat

phosphorus availability. In contrast the field for grain did not have the luxury of years of manure application however, it did not show any signs of phosphorous deficiencies.

The biggest visual differences in these two fields can be attributed to planting date and seeding rate. With a dual purpose crop it is important to have increased seeding rate to establish acceptable fall forage. The dual purpose (DP) field was planted

around 30 days earlier than the grain only (GO) field and the seeding rate was about 1.5 times the field used for grain.

The DP field was heavily grazed last fall and until late winter. The forage that was produced by this crop was very valuable as we all understand how high hay and grain prices have been this year. As spring approached and a few warm days hit in March we saw the DP field literally jump in growth.

On the 29th of March this field had already started jointing and was susceptible to freeze and frost damage. As we inspected this field we started to find some freeze damage that had occurred just days before. Notice the bent stem and the broken stem at the node in the picture. This damage will, if found early, show a bleached watery area on the stem at the point of damage and darkened leaf area as you proceed up the plant. This is the classic example of freeze damage to wheat.

Because this field was fertilized with litter, the producer will not have the flexibility to control the nitrogen on the crop and therefore we can expect to see excessive vegetative growth on this field. This extra fall nitrogen encouraged rapid early growth. It should have ample late season nitrogen to produce grain.

In this field we observed moderate pressure from several winter annuals. These weeds were sprayed



Commonly Used Chemicals and their effectiveness

| | RATE | Stagonospora | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | Powdery Mildew | leaf/glume blotch | Septoria leaf blotch | Tan Spot | Stripe Rust | Leaf rust | Stem Rust | Head Scab |
| Caramba 0.75L | 10.0 - 17.0 | VG | VG | -- | VG | E | E | E | G |
| Prosario 421 SC | 6.5 - 8.2 | G | VG | VG | VG | E | E | E | G |
| Quilt 200 SC | 10.5 - 14.0 | VG | VG | VG | VG | E | E | VG | NL |
| Quilt Xcel 2.2 SE | 10.5 - 14.0 | VG | VG | VG | VG | E | E | VG | NL |
| Avaris 200 SC | 10.5 - 14.0 | VG | VG | VG | VG | E | E | VG | NL |

Waiting on the Wheat (continued)

with Harmony which should work nicely. We encountered several producers this year that wanted to spray wheat with 2-4-D. This practice is something that I would not encourage when wheat is still small and tillering. 2-4-D is a hormone regulator that could affect the tillers on a wheat plant especially if it is sprayed at the wrong time.

The GO field in contrast was planted later and commercial fertilizer was used. This field received enough nitrogen to supply the plant with ample nutrients to grow but not the lush amount that would encourage excessive vegetative growth. This field was sprayed in the fall to control winter annuals with excellent results. We scouted this field for aphids and did not find any during this inspection.

The day after the picture was taken the producer was going to top dress this wheat with 40# of nitrogen to bring it out of dormancy. Later this field will receive 2 additional applications of liquid nitrogen with the use of streamer bars to feed the plant at specific times during its growth cycle.

Both of these producers were considering using fungicides on their crops. The question then be-

comes what fungicide to use and why. There are many good fungicides on the market but it is imperative that we use one that controls the foliar diseases that we are identifying.

Septoria, glume blotch, powdery mildew, and rust are all common diseases to the wheat plant that can be controlled with most fungicides. As the plant matures and the flag leaf emerges is the time when I apply the chemical that controls my leaf diseases. These are all the ones listed in the chart on page 4 with the exception of head scab. Head scab on the other hand is a disease that you have to be much more selective with when it comes to what product to apply.

I saw one field in particular this year that would have benefited from earlier application. This field was one that was used as a DP field and needed to be rolled in the spring. The roller damaged the leaves on the wheat plant making the plant very susceptible to fungible diseases.

When spraying fungicides timing is everything. This is one area that it does not pay to be conservative. The most important leaf on the plant to protect is the flag leaf. This leaf provides the majority of photosynthesis for the matur-



Damage done when leaf was pinched by rolling

ing plant. The other leaves contribute but not to the extent of the flag leaf. So when this leaf emerges it is my intent to spray and keep it healthy. Once damage is incurred it cannot be reversed. It seems pointless to me to worry about head scab if we are not willing to protecting the flag leaf to insure optimum yield potential.

If it is your intent to spray for head scab, the window for this application is very short. On my operation as soon as the heads are 90% emerged it is my intent to have a plane flying on Caramba. The optimal time to apply this chemical is as

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Waiting on the Wheat (continued)

soon as the head emerges from the boot.

Both the GO field and the DP field of wheat should produce good yields. If I were to pick one today that I thought would yield the highest I would probably pick the GO field. The reason for this choice is primarily due to the freeze damage that we observed on the DP field. The extent of this damage could not be determined at the time

we visited it but I doubt that it would be very severe. On the other hand if I were to pick the field that had the greatest potential for profitability I would choose the DP field. This field provided a great amount of forage to a large group of stocker cattle that were rotated between several wheat fields. With stocker cattle near the \$150/cwt and a daily gain of 3.5 lbs, a pro-

ducer can afford to have a slight yield drag and still take advantage of this forage source.

Wheat, rye, barley, and other fall seeded crops are becoming of greater importance to agriculture all across the midwest. It is the challenge of producers to find management methods that will optimize the returns in each of these systems.

Planting Progress ?

As of April 21 corn planting is only at 4% planted nationwide. This is the slowest start that we have had in the US since 1993. Even though we are a few weeks behind normal we still have a good possibility of hitting the expected trend yield.

The item that is the most in jeopardy is trying to figure how many intended acres are switching from corn to beans because of this late spring. If you have traveled much of the northern half of the US you will realize how far north corn has moved. In North Dakota, I was shocked to see how much corn was planted in the northern sections as compared to the past. I would

have to think that the late spring this year would dramatically affect corn plantings in that area. Last week I was in central Minnesota and got caught in a snow storm. In that area ice is still on the lakes and no field work has been done. It's not too late for MN, IA, or MO at this time but there comes a point when yields will begin to fall and producers even in this area will start switching crops.

A few years ago the RMA shortened the final planting of corn in Moniteau County and eastward to May 31. Cooper county and its adjoining counties to the west and south was shortened to May 25 and in the

very southwest corner of Missouri it was shorted to May 10. After these dates the late planting provisions come in to effect and the yield is reduced 1% each day during the late planting period for a maximum of 25 days.

After that time Preventive Planting (PP) would have to be used or the crop would need to be switched. I am not inclined to ever use preventive planting except in the most extreme situations. PP claims can severely impact your proven yields if you choose this option. If I had my choice I would readily choose to plant another crop whether it was soybeans or milo rather than taking the pre-



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Planting Progress ? (continued)

ventive plant option.

Today I was asked how acreage switching would affect the markets. We must remember that the reason that the acres are being switched is because the season is late. Yes, some corn acres will go to soybeans but this historically happens on ground that is marginal for corn to start with. Any big move in that direction would

have to help stabilize the corn market but it may not be an equal relationship with beans. The good news is that the drought over much of the corn belt is broken and yields should be considerably higher than last year.

First crop soybean acres may increase some but the late season will encourage many producers who double crop to reconsider this

practice if the wheat or barley harvest is delayed. It is premature at this time to speculate how this hand will play out. It is my prediction that spring will come this year as it always has in the past. There will be a lot of late nights but with the mechanization today planting can take place much faster than it did in 1993.



Final Plant Dates for Corn
 ■ May 10
 ■ May 25
 ■ May 31

Fescue is Jointing - Cheat is Heading

This morning I have visited with producers that are considering cutting their wheat for hay. The cold spring and the up and down temperatures have stifled the vegetative growth in many pastures. These producers don't think these pastures can recover and produce forage anywhere close to normal levels. The fescue

plants are jointing with very little undergrowth and the cheat plants are heading.

These producers are in a desperate situation. To keep livestock without having to liquidate herds, they are considering cutting the wheat crop for hay or chopping it for haylage.

If you find yourself in this situation it is imperative that you notify this office prior to destroying the wheat crop. Because the wheat crop is covered under crop insurance an appraisal will have to be done to determine its potential yield prior to destroying this crop.

Hail Already!

April 17th was the first report of hail damage in the area across central Missouri. Even though the wheat was not headed, producers have reported that they saw wheat plants broken below the joint. Damage can still occur even though the head is not exposed.

If you have possible hail

damage, it is important to notify us as soon as possible after the event so we can get the loss recorded and sent to the adjusters. Adjusters usually like to wait for ten days after the event to better see any damage that might have incurred.

If your wheat has not been damaged you can still get

hail coverage for this crop. Most producers have already placed this coverage but each year there are a few that get side tracked with other events and fail to get coverage before hail hits their crop. Hail coverage is very inexpensive and is a product that can protect the profitability of wheat.

Livestock Risk Protection



LRP is a very simple and cost effective way of locking in a minimum price floor for your livestock. Call us today so we can explain this program and its benefits to you and your operation.

660-433-6300



Our 1st hail claim for 2013 was on April 17



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New Producers

Some producers are getting letters informing them that their New Producer status is being removed. This is because the information that the FSA and RMA does not match.

This week we had a producer who called RCIS and asked what information they needed to resolve this issue. The producer has since sent this office baling records for wheat acres that were listed at FSA but not with RMA. If wheat was not to be harvested for grain this record would identify why the yield was not reported to

the RMA.

When we write a crop insurance policy we check with the producer to establish yield history. This history is beneficial to the producer. T-yields generally, are lower than a producer's average and are only used when a producer begins producing a new crop in a county.

I don't know how this will play out or what information will be requested. However I would urge you to call the number that is listed on the New Producer letter and specifically ask what information is being sought.

We as agents have been left out of the loop and don't know what years to look for or why they error out. Crop insurance agents do not get copies of the download that identifies these discrepancies between RMA and the FSA.

If you call the number listed on the letter get specifics on what information is being sought, the dates and crop years that don't match, and the name of the person that you talked to. This will be helpful in resolving these situations.



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