NORTHERN MINNESOTA GRASS SEED GROWERS NEWSLETTER
August 6, 2008

GENERAL CROP CONDITION

Swathing and more swathing.

This week saw tough conditions for burning with high humidities, and on and off rain, but fairly nice weather for swathing ryegrass.

Ryegrass

Spring seeded ryegrass fields are being opened this week, and some early fall seeded fields are very close to ready as well. At this time last year, the majority of the spring and the early fall seeded ryegrass had been harvested. Fall seeded ryegrass was being swathed as well.

2008 Ryegrass

Bluegrass

The majority of bluegrass fields have now been harvested. Only a few fields have been burned as the grass is very green and humidity has been high.

The use of a burndown chemical will more than likely be needed to get a good burn this year.
A few tries this year have resulted in poor burns.

Bluegrass Burn

Research

A study on several local fields is underway to ascertain the effects of not burning on the next year's crop yield.

The plot on the right is a non-treatment, and the plot on the left has had all plant material removed.

The plot on the left has had only the chaff and straw removed, while the plot on the right has had all plant material removed.

PEST AND CROP MANAGEMENT

Ryegrass

Keep an eye on ryegrass maturity as fields can turn quickly. When ryegrass is close to the 40% moisture level, seed moisture can drop 2% points or more per day!

Just because your ryegrass is laying flat and looks green does not mean the seed heads are still green. Make sure to stop and check the heads as looks of green can be deceiving if you have a lot of green leaves and straw in your field.

When to swath ryegrass? That is a question being asked by growers. It seems that our eyes are drawn to the most mature areas of the field. When making the determination on when to swath be sure that a **representative sample is taken from the entire field not just the areas that are most mature.** One method to get a representative field sample is to take samples from areas that look mature, from areas that are intermediate and from areas of the field that look green. Note the percentage of the field in each of these categories. This will give you a good overall field estimate of maturity.

Once these samples are collected seed moisture can be determined using a microwave oven. Swathing **should not** begin until moisture content of the seed is 35 to 40%. Seed moisture content is determined rubbing the seed from the spike and using the microwave oven to remove the seed moisture.

Caution: In addition to the seed sample, place a small amount of water in a microwave safe container. This will prevent the seed from exploding in the oven.
Start with a predetermined seed weight (10 grams) and set the microwave oven for 1 to 1.5 minutes. Continue this procedure until the seed weight is constant. For example, if the initial weight was 10 grams and the final weight was 6 grams the seed moisture is 40%.

As ryegrass seed moisture levels decline, the amount of seed shatter will increase. Ryegrass fields that have turned quickly may have to be swathed in the early morning and evening. This technique of not swathing mid-day was a management practice used to reduce seed shatter in timothy seed production.

RUST IN RYEGRASS

As we mentioned previously, rust is being found in a few isolated areas, and primarily on varieties that appear susceptible. However, given the maturity of the crop, an application of fungicide should not be needed or recommended. It appears that for the most part, we have missed out on any real impact of rust in 2008.

If you have what looks like rust in your ryegrass please contact your agronomist and the University of Minnesota. When rust is first observed on ryegrass, be sure to let us know. A student, John Frelich is hired to monitor this season and will be making a few trips north this summer as part of his work.

Send samples to:

```
Eric Watkins
305 Alderman Hall
1970 Folwell Ave.
St. Paul MN 55108
```

The three links below are pest updates from the U of MN and the MN Dept of Ag. These reports are updated regularly during the summer months. The first link is for vegetable crops, second link is the MN Dept of Ag Pest Survey and the third is a crop report from the U of MN in Crookston.

http://www.vegedge.umn.edu/mnfruit&vegnews/Vol4/vol4n1.htm

http://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants/pestmanagement/pestsurvey.htm

http://nwroc.umn.edu/Cropping_Issues/croppingissues.htm

Insects

No real insect pressure at this time.

Ryegrass Growing Degree Days (GDD)

Ryegrass GDD units have been tracked since the 2005 season. A base temp of 32 degrees F has been used for ryegrass (T-Base =32 F). The GDD information presented in the table below is year to date data, through and including August 2 for the years 2005 to 2008.

Year	**2008**	**2007**	**2006**	**2005**	**08 vs. 07**
March	6	90	53	35	-84
April	202	322	529	448	-120
May	508	746	749	641	-238
June	870	991	1014	986	-121
July	1,029	1,149	1,245	1,155	-120
August 1-2	69	71	75	96	-2
Total	2,684	3,369	3,665	3,361	-685

The 2008 season continues to track cooler than any year since 2005. Year-to-date GDD has the 2008 season -685 behind the 2007, -981 behind 2006 and -667 behind 2005. As of last week, the 2008 season was **19.8 days** behind the three year average. This week we are **19.9 days** behind the three year average.

Rust has been observed in area ryegrass fields. The GDD model predicted rust at the accumulation of approximately 1950 GDD. Actual first rust was observed at approximately 2050 GDD.

The 2007 season has finally accumulated enough GDD for plant maturity. Look for swathers to be rolling in area ryegrass fields this week.

The next edition of the newsletter is scheduled to be released on August 13, 2008.

Derek S. Crompton PhD
Local Extension Educator
Grass Seed and Canola Production
UM Ext Regional Center Roseau
1307 3rd st NE Suite 102
Roseau, MN 56751
218-463-0291 fax:218-463-0297
email: cromp006@umn.edu