



Seminole Crop News

[Pest Alert – Black Birds in Small Grains](#)

November 29, 2011

Droves of birds are descending on small grain fields. They are mostly a mixture of Red-winged Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Starlings. They are waiting until the small plant comes up and then pulling it up and eating the part of the seed that's left. They have caused us to replant some oat fields and are causing problems in wheat and other small grain fields. Going to the fields several times a day to scare birds off is needed in lots of fields now, especially in early mornings and evenings. I see some blackbird scare tactics listed in the "Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage" book. Here are some of them: "Propane exploders, rifle or shotgun shooting, electronic noise systems, helium filled balloons tethered in the field, radio controlled model planes, distress calls for birds (can be tape recorded), and scarecrows."

In this photo you can see where they've pulled up some plants. The wheat here is getting too big for birds to do much damage, too good of a root system to be able to pull up plants.





Here's a field of wheat that looks good and has escaped much bird damage so far. The grower has been visiting it to scare off birds. It's about to the stage of not having to worry much about it.

High Yield Wheat Tips

on November 29, 2011



This is what we want to see in May, golden grains ready to harvest.

Here are some critical management inputs for high yield wheat production given to us by Dr. Dewey Lee, UGA Extension Agronomist.

1). Use deep tillage to disrupt hard pans.

Wheat responds well to deep tillage when hard pans are present in our soils, particularly sandy soils. Prepare soils for planting by first tilling with a V-ripper, chisel plow, paraplow or subsoiler. Firm the seed bed with a cultipacker or small, light disk to reduce deep ruts from planting. Till the soil only to a depth that is necessary to break the hard pan. Simple disking is not as effective as deep tillage but it is preferred over no-tilling wheat. No-till wheat can be productive (mostly on heavy, clayey soils) but the yields, in general, are 5 to 25 bushels per acre less than conventionally tilled wheat.

2). Plant high yielding, pest resistant, well adapted varieties.

Yield data for all the recommended varieties for Georgia are found in the current 2011 Georgia Wheat Production Guide or Georgia Small Grain Variety Performance Test Bulletin (<http://www.swvt.uga.edu>). Be sure to note each of the variety characteristics of the variety

you choose such as vernalization, maturity, lodging resistance, pest resistance so as to manage each variety properly for highest yield.

3). Plant the appropriate seeding rate for your planting method.

Wheat can be successfully established by either drilling or broadcasting the seed and incorporating into the soil to a shallow depth. In general, drilling wheat yields 7 to 8% more yield. If incorporation of broadcast seed is poor, then yield differences are even greater. Studies have shown that best yields are obtained with 1.2 million to 1.5 million seeds per acre. This is equivalent to 30-35 seeds per square foot. With a drill, seed wheat at 18 to 25 seeds per row foot (7.5 inch drill width). This rate is equivalent to 30-40 seeds per square foot. Use 10 to 15% more seed when planting after the recommended planting window. Wheat emerges best when planted 1 to 1.5 inches deep. When broadcasting the seed, calibrate the equipment to plant 40 seeds per square foot. When possible, always use high quality, certified seed and save a tag of each separate lot for good record keeping.

4). Plant during your recommended planting period.

The recommended planting dates for Georgia are the seven days prior to and after the five year average first frost day for your farm. Varieties with long vernalization requirements should be planted in the first seven to ten days prior to the first frost day. Extremely early varieties with short vernalization requirements such as Fleming must be planted in the very last days of the recommended window. These varieties will suffer winter injury if planted too early as they would enter the jointing phase (Zadoks GS 32) prior to the time that sub-freezing temperatures generally do not occur.

5). Scout fields for early insect infestations and control potentially damaging insects.

Hessian fly and aphids are the two insects generally causing yield loss in the fall. Control insects by either planting resistant varieties and or using an approved insecticide. Protect wheat from Hessian fly by planting resistant varieties or treating seed either with Cruiser[®] (thiamethoxam) or imidacloprid. See the current Pest Control hand book for proper rates. These seed treatments are also effective against aphids. Aphids vector the Barley yellow dwarf virus and it is important to protect wheat from this virus. For both insects, scout wheat fields 25 to 35 days after emergence for the presence of either aphids or Hessian fly. Apply an approved pyrethroid insecticide if either is present and no seed treatment has been used. Again, scout just prior to topdressing. If aphids are present, then combine insecticides with the nitrogen fertilizer to prevent spring infestations. Thresholds and rates are listed in the Pest Control handbook and Wheat Production Guide.

Control aphids when there are:

2 per row foot in the seedling stage, or

6 per row foot when plants are 6-10 inches

2 per stem at stem elongation

5 per flag leaf at boot stage

10 per head including flag

6). Control weeds early to prevent yield loss.

Control ryegrass, wild radish, wild turnips, onions, garlic, henbit, chickweed, and vetch early for maximum weed control efficiency and high yield. Waiting to control these weeds till the spring causes considerable yield loss due to lost tillers and reduced herbicide effectiveness. Scout wheat 25 to 35 days after emergence. Note any weed infestations. Control broadleaf weeds when weeds are small (i.e. 2 to 4 inch wild radish, mustard).

7). Soil test and apply all nutrients according to recommendations for high yield.

Wheat should be planted in soils that have a pH of 6.0 to 6.5. If fertilizing for the wheat crop only, apply all phosphorus and potassium in the fall during seed bed preparation according to soil test recommendations. If applying nutrients for the subsequent crop as well, apply ½ of the potash in the fall and the remainder during the spring at topdressing. Nitrogen should be used in the fall to encourage tiller production prior to the onset of winter. Tillers produced in the fall generally produce the most grain per unit area. It is important though, not to over-fertilize with nitrogen as it may cause excessive growth and result in winter injury.

See earlier posting concerning N at planting.

<http://seminolecropnews.wordpress.com/2011/11/14/wheat-preplant-fertilization/>

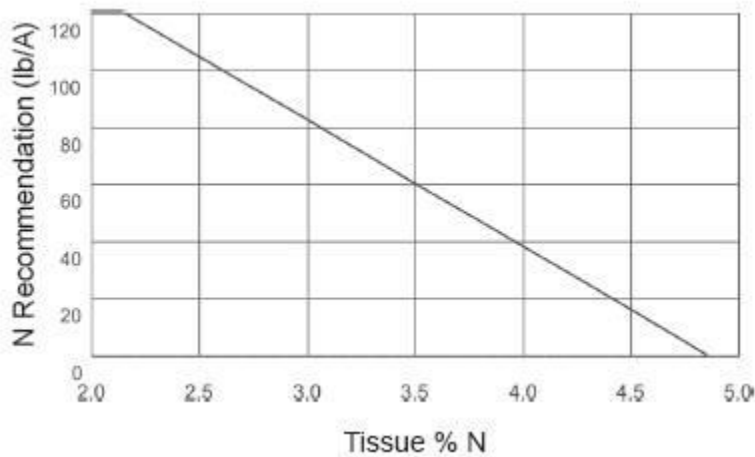
NOTE: If using poultry litter, obtain a nutrient analysis so as to adjust the rate of application according to the nutrient content. In general, 2 tons per acre is sufficient for fall growth. Applying more may increase risk to excessive growth and winter injury.

8). Topdress wheat with nitrogen in a timely manner in late winter and early spring.

During the later days of January, begin counting tillers to determine the need for additional nitrogen applications for the proper tiller production. If tiller counts (a stem with at least three leaves) exceed 80 or more per square foot at Zadoks GS 25, then apply all remaining nitrogen at GS 30 (stem elongation). Usually this occurs during early to mid-February in the southern half of Georgia. In extreme N. Ga, stem elongation may not occur till early March. If the tiller count is less than 80 per square foot, then apply 30 to 40 lbs of N per acre to encourage tiller production prior to the onset of stem elongation. Complete the topdressing prior to 1st node stage. Nitrogen rates will vary according to the soil type, variety lodging resistance, irrigation capability, previous crop, etc. In general, total N rates range from 100 lbs N per acre to 120 lbs N. Tank mix an approved pyrethroid if aphids are present to reduce the risk to the barley yellow dwarf virus. Supply 15 to 20 lbs of S per acre if soils are sandy.

The figure below is a guide used by growers in North Carolina and Virginia to determine the need for nitrogen at GS 30 (or Feekes 5). A tissue analysis is needed for final N application

determination. It is assumed that the average tiller count will be above 100 per square foot.



9). **Scout fields for the onset of diseases.**

Powdery mildew, stripe rust, leaf rust and leaf and glume blotch are diseases that can be control with an approved fungicide application. Begin scouting fields when the plant reaches GS 32-37 (Feekes GS 7-8). In general, powdery mildew and stripe rust will likely appear first. If no disease is present by GS 58 (Feekes 10.5) but expected, then apply the proper rate of fungicide to maintain the high yield potential and test weight. See the current Pest Control Handbook or Wheat Production Guide for rate and timing information.

10). **Harvest as early as possible.**

Soft red winter wheat easily sprouts when the grain is exposed to rainy conditions after maturity. Harvest the crop as soon as possible to avoid field losses and to maintain good quality grain. Dry the grain if harvesting above 15% moisture. Usually wheat can be easily harvested between 16-18% moisture.

November 28, 2011



Agriculture is the food you eat, clothes you wear and the fuel that runs your life. From the local Georgia farm to the globally stocked supermarket, access to safe and affordable products is important. Learn what's ahead for this vital industry at the 2012 Ag Forecast

series to be held 10 a.m. to noon Jan. 23 in Macon, Jan. 24 in Tifton, Jan. 25 in Statesboro, Jan. 26 in Gainesville and Jan. 27 in Carrollton.

Producers, policymakers, agribusiness professionals and consumers will hear the 2012 economic outlook for agriculture from University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences economists. Regional speakers will discuss farm labor issues.

Participants will receive a copy of the 2012 Ag Forecast book, which gives a detailed analysis of each major agricultural product – from broilers to blueberries – produced in Georgia. The UGA CAES, Georgia Farm Bureau and the Georgia Department of Agriculture annually present the series. Registration is \$30 per person or \$200 for a table of eight. For more information and to register, visit www.georgiaagforecast.com. Registration deadline is Jan. 19.

Article by April Sorrow, UGA Faces http://georgiafaces.caes.uga.edu/?public=viewStory&pk_id=4281

Question of the Week – Olives

November 23, 2011

Last week's question was asking what tree was in the photo and it was olives.

We recently looked at some 3 year old Olive trees near Lakeland Georgia. The trees looked good and hopefully growing them will become a good alternative for Georgia growers. There are still a lot of things to learn about growing them here including yield and marketing and even processing of the olives so I would be cautious.



Here below is an article by the Georgia Department of Agriculture concerning this enterprise.

For the first time since the 1800s, there has been an olive harvest on the U.S. East Coast, and it was near the southeastern Georgia city of Lakeland.

Olive oil, according to research provided to Georgia Olive Farms (GOF), which planted its first 16 acres in April 2009, was shipped in barrels from the Georgia coast back in the 19th Century.

“I don’t know what happened, if it was hurricanes or the Civil War, but everyone is telling us that this is the first commercial harvest on the East Coast,” said Jason Shaw, one of GOF’s founders.

Shaw first dreamed about planting olive orchards in the Deep South when he was studying abroad in Verona, Italy, in 1996. He noticed that Italy and southern Georgia have similar weather patterns (hot and humid) for growing olives.

“That sparked our imagination back then,” he said, and soon the Shaws became interested in olive orchards in California. “We went to the West Coast, and felt like there’s no reason why we couldn’t make it work here.”

Jason, his brother, Sam, and cousin, Kevin, joined forces in 2009 to plant a super high-density olive orchard (over 600 trees per acre) suitable for mechanical harvesting. With Berrien Sutton of Homerville, Ga., they formed GOF as a cooperative association to develop the olive industry in Georgia and surrounding states.

The goal of Georgia Olive Farms is to produce high-quality extra-virgin olive oil in the South, thereby giving farmers here a viable fall cash crop. The feasibility of table olive production also is being studied. “Our main focus is on production of the extra-virgin olive oil,” Shaw said.

The orchards consist of 96 percent Abrequina variety olive trees, along with two others: Arbosana and Koroneiki. Shaw said the Abrequina works better for them than traditional ones because of its cold-hardiness.

“A lot of what we’ve done up to this point is experimental,” said Shaw. “We’ve tried different pruning techniques, but it’s still farming, and we have to see what works best for us in our area.” And, that includes how the South Georgia weather affects the olives.

A test orchard with traditional varieties was planted in conjunction with the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, and a small three-acre organic orchard was developed in 2010.

GOF growers who have been experimenting with various fertilization and irrigation techniques said they will share information gathered with those wanting to raise olives, and contracts are available. A distributor for olive trees on the East Coast, GOF is in business to furnish large quantities of trees to major orchards or ornamental trees to individuals.

While most people may assume that growing olives in South Georgia is a new idea, olives in that area are, in reality, a tradition older than the U.S. In archeological excavations of 16th Century Franciscan settlements in Florida up through Georgia, olive pits have been found.

And, in the early 18th Century, British settlers arriving at St. Simon's Island found olive trees growing alongside orange groves. These olives were most likely brought on board ships to the New World by Spanish explorers as early as 1526.

The Georgia Department of Agriculture has written, and helped the growers obtain, a Georgia Specialty Crop Grant from the Agricultural Marketing Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The \$100,000 three-year grant began in 2009 and carries through this year to promote competitiveness of specialty crops.

"The grants have been critical because we've been able to bring in experts to meet with us and share their expertise," Shaw said.

"The Department of Agriculture is behind entrepreneurs like the Shaws 100 percent," said Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture Gary Black. "There's a lot of interest among farmers for specialty crops like olives, and we're going to do whatever we can to promote and help market these crops."

As with all fruit, flavor can differ significantly depending upon which point in the season harvest occurs. The harvest season for olives runs from Labor Day through November. Olives collected during early harvesting yield oil characterized by a crisper flavor with a very clear color. As the season moves along, the oil extracted has a mellower, buttery flavor, and color becomes more rich and golden.

"We like to let the olives ripen, so we have a milder, buttery flavor," Shaw said.

Whether the fruit is harvested by machine or hand, time is critical because olives need processing within 24 hours. Otherwise, the fruit begins to ferment, affecting the flavor in a negative way. To harvest its crop, GPF uses blueberry equipment modified for olives.

After harvesting, olives are refrigerated immediately and taken to a local cold-storage facility, where they are cooled to a recommended temperature of 41 degrees F.

The olives are trucked to Texas for milling and processing into oil, and transported back to Georgia for labeling and bottling. Shaw said they should produce about 500 acres of olives within five years, yielding 1,800 tons annually. And, he would like to have 20,000 acres in the next 10 years. His goal: to satisfy the local market's demand for olive oil, along with that of the entire East Coast.

Beth Meeks, an area marketing coordinator for the Department, began working with the GOF growers when they planted their first tree in 2009.

"There is a lot of interest in olives from local farmers...they are sitting back and seeing how it goes," she said, adding that the soil in Southeast Georgia is "pretty good" for olive growing. "The Shaws have done really well," Meeks said.

“We’ve worked to get them to different food shows, where they’ve met several high-end chefs interested in their olive oil,” she said. Events included shows for Georgia Grown products and the Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Conference.

“A lot of the executive chefs generally are interested in local and sustainable foods,” Shaw said. “They sometimes have trouble finding local products, including olive oil.”

“Beth has really been a God-send to us,” Shaw said. “She’s been a real help to us in all kinds of ways. It’s been amazing.”

The process of extracting oil from olives has been a constant one since the beginning of recorded history. Through the centuries, only the equipment has undergone significant changes, as fruit is harvested, crushed, and the remaining solids are removed from the liquid produced.

“We’re really excited about this,” Shaw concluded. “We think it’s a good thing for Georgia agriculture and for economic development in general.”

For more information on Georgia Olive Farms, call 229-561-0960 or access their web page link, www.georgiaolivefarms.com.

Now for this week’s Question: Can you tell me what is happening in this field?



Later,

Rome