

AG HAPPENINGS

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Farley's Thoughts

You are correct. IT'S
WET !!!!!!!!!

May was an interesting month. I received measurable rainfall 17 out of the 31 days.

The total for the month is approaching 15 inches.

Bermudagrass hay is ready to cut and bale. The quality will be down this year because most of it is already headed out. There should be a lot of quantity in most places. There is also quite a bit of hay left over from last year.

The corn, on every soil type except sand, is exceptional this year. Some of it is already starting to tassel. It should be ready to chop for silage by about the 4th of July.

Sudan was planted later than corn and is waterlogged in most places.

(continued on back)

Weeds - Weeds - Weeds!



I have heard from a lot of people about how green things are, how pretty things look, how much everybody is having to mow! Yes things are growing and as temperatures climb look for things to really grow fast. Certainly the grass is growing but along with the grass so are all the weeds - and I do mean there are lots of weeds.

What happened? I know you put out weedkiller. Why are there so many weeds? There are several reasons but the main one is that the beautiful cool spring kept the grass from growing as fast as it normally would. A lot of folks put out fertilizer and weedkiller early, which is usually good, but this year the slow growing grass left bare spots. These bare spots had weed seeds and with the moisture, open ground, and now warmer temperatures here come the weeds.

You may choose to spray them again or with the moisture and abundant pasture just leave them alone. Just remember that

Farley's Thoughts cont.

Cotton can't be planted because of the excess moisture in May.

Milk and calf prices are down.

Is there any good news? There certainly is.

The pecan crop has lots of potential. Grass is green and plentiful. Cows are slick and fat. Calves are growing. There is lots of hay. Calf prices are down, but still at historic high levels. We have excellent, deep moisture.

Just remember, July and August are ahead of us. We generally go through a hot, dry spell sometime during that period.

I would rather be waiting for it to dry up than waiting for a rain. Jim

Fire Ants: Where Have They Been?

Last year fire ants came back with a vengeance and this year they are adding even more numbers. What happened?

Fire ants are like any of the livestock we raise. As we have droughts we de-stock because of less grass and fire ant (continued on next page)

weeds make weed seeds. Weed seeds will be around till next year.

Anthracnose in Trees



As you can see in the picture this Post Oak is suffering and that is in a year with lots of good rain. Or is the rain the problem?

In this case the rain is the problem or to be clear, the cool, wet weather at budbreak was the problem. White oaks (Post Oak) are particularly susceptible but normally they have warm, dryer conditions in the spring when leafing out. Anthracnose (*Gloeosporium* spp.) needs less than 60 degree (55-60 degree) temperatures to be a problem. The last two springs we have had perfect conditions to see this disease explode and these trees (pictured) are a prime example.

These trees are part of many Post Oaks at the McIlvain family home. It is very disconcerting to have all the trees around your beautiful home suddenly sick and look like they are dying. Michelle was very unhappy and expected something to be done!

In the case of anthracnose in trees, very little can be done. The good part is that very little needs to be done. In almost all cases the trees will leaf back out and be fine. The disease needs specific conditions to grow and as we get hotter and drier the tree can re-

Fire ants cont.

numbers decline as their food sources go away. Bring back the rains, the grass and all the things that feed on plants, and here come the fire ants. Also we can see them easier since the wet soil forces them to build mounds up out of the ground so they can raise their young.



As you disturb their mound they certainly get mad and can swarm all over you. What most people don't realize is that those white "things" are not eggs but are larva or pupae. The eggs are tiny, tiny, and when they hatch the larvae start to grow. They move the larvae around for warmth to develop quicker. We do have some insecticides that can be applied to pastures including our favorite, Extinguish or Extinguish Plus. If you do decide to treat, treating mounds only gets about 10% of the population. Broadcast baits are the best!

Waterlogged Plants

I guess you know that this newsletter has one major theme - Water! (Cont.)

leaf and look normal.

So, the bad part is the tree doesn't look good for now but should look much better in a few weeks!

What Happens to Soil in Wet Weather?

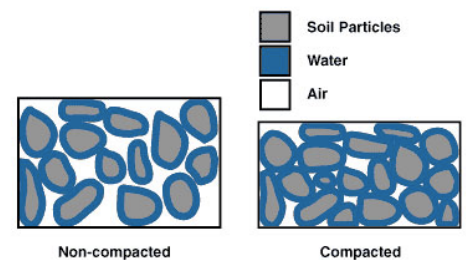
You probably don't think much about the soil as it pours down rain but since the soil is necessary for all of agriculture it should be on our minds. The main worry when we have flooding is of course erosion. You can look at our waterways, streams, rivers and even lakes and know that a lot of soil has washed off just by the color of the water. Even with full grass sod, rains can wash soil off and into the river. Fortunately losses are minimal with sod cover, but huge with farmland, especially just plowed farmland.

So erosion is visible but is that the only problem - NO! Excess water can cause a big problem with compaction. Compaction is basically the removal of the air spaces in soils and replacing it with soil. Soils have a structure and that structure helps hold open pore spaces for roots and oxygen. As those pore spaces get full of water in excessive rainfall that structure gets

compromised. You can

compact a dry soil but it is very difficult. It is very easy to compact a wet soil. If you watch them build a road they wet it, pack it, wet it, pack it, etc. It is good to stay off a wet soil with equipment and animals but that is not always

possible. Also many farmers try to get "into" a field to work it as soon as they can get the tractor to stay "up." This tractor work is really hard on wet soil structure and always leads to soil compaction, especially deep compaction.



Another problem is soil crusting. What? Yes, soil crusting happens as the finer clay particles in soils float up as the heavier sand and silt particles sink. These clay particles then settle onto the soil surface into pore spaces filling them up. Once filled and

Waterlogged Plants Cont.



This picture shows a field with water standing and the crop is lime green. The natural response is that the field needs nitrogen, and it does, except that the field has adequate nitrogen. You can tell from the bright green areas that the field has nitrogen, so what is the problem. The problem is not a lack of nutrients but roots that can take up the nutrients. In fields with excess moisture, even though you can't see it, the roots can not grow. Roots take up oxygen from the soil and without oxygen roots die. They can handle a lack of oxygen for a short period of time but 17 days is too much. One last thing is the idea that the reason for yellow color is that the nitrogen leached below the roots. This is possible but is not as easy as most assume. If there are roots then the roots capture the nitrogen. If the soil is bare and very, very sandy you might see the nitrogen move deep but if there is clay chances are your nitrogen is still there.

bound together they seal or crust. This crusting is worse in heavier clay soils and can be so bad that water can not penetrate on the next rain and plants can not germinate.



Did you know that soils can be water repellent? Sands are typically the worst but all soils can repel water. Soils become water repellent from substances



on or near soil particles. These substances come from a whole range of organisms living on and in the soil – from plant surfaces, to root exudates, to soil fungi, bacteria and bio films. These substances repel water as they cover soil particles. Sands are larger particles and can be covered easier than other

particles. What this means is that as we get rains they don't sink in, they run off. What's really bad is after a fire. These substances melt like wax and coat the soil. Waxes off leaves are the worst but overall erosion can be particularly bad after a fire.

Herbicide Mode of Action

Last newsletter I introduced you to herbicide modes of action and this time we need to learn about Seedling Growth Inhibitors. You may know them as pre-emerge herbicides but the seeds actually do germinate. But depending on the site, they keep the seedling from growing. Some of the most common are known as the “yellow herbicides” because they are bright yellow and stain everything. Treflan, Prowl, Sonalan, Balan, Surflan are root inhibitors. They keep the plant from growing roots. In this same mode of action we also have shoot inhibitors known as Dual, Lasso, Frontier, Harnass. These keep the newly germinated seedling from developing any shoots (leaves).

Both types, shoot and root inhibitors, are good on broadleaf weeds and small seeded grasses.