

AG HAPPENINGS

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Farley's Thoughts

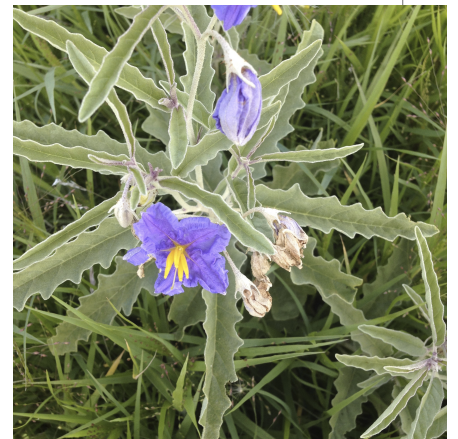
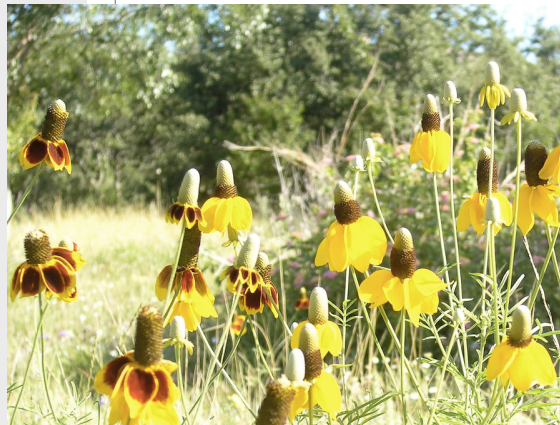
An old farmer like me can't keep from talking about the weather. This has been one of the strangest springs in my lifetime. We had one of the coldest April's in history, followed by one of the hottest and driest Mays ever. Not to mention, it's very dry and very hot the first week of June. The May 25th hail storm was devastating on the folks that happened to be under it.

I have never seen hay disappear as fast as ours did last winter. There had been excess hay for over two years and it didn't look like anything was going to change. Then it got dry in West Texas, our cows ate more hay than ever last winter, and the hay was gone. Now, the first cutting is going to be extremely light. How long can we wait without feeding hay this summer? My guess is mid July for a lot of people. Sounds like a lot of doom and gloom. What's a producer going to do?

That's what I like about people who make a living off

Bull Nettle, Silverleaf Nightshade, Horsenettle, Mexican Hat - What are these?

Maybe you have noticed or at least you will notice soon that this is the year for perennial plants! All of the weeds



mentioned above are **perennial weeds** (come back from roots each year) and in this droughty year they are prolific.!

The issue in a drought year is control. Sprayed early these weeds do suffer some damage but they quickly recover. Sprayed at flower, control is good but the stress from the drought can make it hard for plants to absorb the chemical and/or move the chemical into the roots. Frustrating!

What can you do? Most producers don't want to do this but if we do get fall rains then a broadleaf weedkiller applied a few weeks after a rain and in flowering/seed production will kill a majority of this plant's roots. These sprays all contain a portion of brush control chemical that help get this brushy type weed. Cost is a little higher but well worth it to remove a weed that usually only gets worse.

the land. They have always been able to survive whatever curve ball is thrown their way. There are always a few bright spots. We are already applying fertilizer for the second hay cutting under many pivots. The demand for hay and the price of hay is going to be high. How high the price goes depends on how long it stays drier than normal. The irrigated pecan crop that didn't get hailed out looks fair at this time and the price seems to be going up. The peanut crop is off to a decent start. Cotton is iffy because it is so finicky to get a stand. Milk prices are low but not as low as I was afraid they were going to go. Calf prices are decent.

Batten down the hatches. It looks like it could be quite a ride this summer.

St. Augustine Problems!



Pecan Nut Drop, Pecan Prices, Hickory Shuckworm

We get asked all the time why pecans are dropping off the tree. Most growers suspect scab or maybe an insect but sometimes it's just the tree.



The first drop occurs immediately after pollination and often goes unnoticed. This is probably lack of pollination. The second drop, occurring in June, is the most commonly recognized drop. Certain varieties such as Desirable undergo a very obvious June drop each year. This one is related to crop load and some varieties don't June drop.

The third drop occurs in July and results from problems with endosperm development. This drop is definitely related to stress.

A fourth drop, resulting from problems with embryo development may occur in August. The endosperm provides nourishment for the developing embryo. If the endosperm fails to develop properly, the embryo may be weak and the tree may abort the nut. Also, self pollination or poor pollination can contribute to the failure of embryo development.

So, there are many reasons you may see pecan nutlets turning black and falling off the tree throughout the season. It's good to ask why but sometimes there is nothing you can do.

Pecan prices are a whole other issue and for pecan growers things continue to look good. Pecans in general continue to be in demand and that demand is helping keep prices up. Also there is a lot of good coming from promotion programs both in the US and in other countries. There is every indication that pecan prices will continue to stay good and may even get better as we go through the year.

Lastly don't forget about Hickory Shuckworm.

This insect is hard to scout and hard to control but we continue to see more and more damage each year. The larva feeds in the shuck and this feeding damage affects the growing embryo and leaves characteristic tracking on the shell. The only way to control shuckworm is to spray at egg lay so that the emerging larva is killed before it enters the shuck.



(Continued from above)

Do you recognize the problem in the St. Augustine grass picture above? Most people can see that something is wrong because the picture is a closeup but what you don't see in the picture is what this problem causes - yellow St. Augustine in July.

This disease is called Grey Leaf Spot and is a fungal disease known to be a problem in summer with warm temperatures, lots of water and too much fertilizer. So basically anybody that tries to baby their St. Augustine grass is probably going to have this disease.

The disease starts off in spots that turn yellow and then begin to die. The picture above was taken early in the disease cycle. It only takes a few days to turn yellow and die.

What can you do? Don't over fertilize and don't water at night, only early morning. If it gets bad then apply a fungicide like Daconil on a regular 7-10 day schedule.

Sendero Brush Herbicide

This is the time of year when producers can do a great job controlling brush, specifically mesquite! In the past we used a mix of Reclaim and Remedy with water and sprayed leaves to wet. Control was 70-80% and we were happy with that. In the last few years producers are now switching to Sendero. Dow AgroSciences introduced this

Sugarcane Aphid on Sorghum and Sudan

Hay is short this year!! A winter where producers fed at least a year and a half of hay, a lingering drought, and hot, hot temperatures are all making hay very short this year. As a result many growers are doing all they can to grow more hay and one of those things is planting a forage sorghum or Sudan even though we know Sugarcane Aphid will be a problem.

So we sold more seed this year than in the last two years but nobody was able to plant very early and not planting early means that these crops will be small when we begin to see the aphid. It is anticipated that these hot temperatures and young plants will cause a problem sometime in June - so be looking. If you see a problem we can spray with either Transform or Sivanto insecticide and this treatment will take care of the problem till harvest. The key is making the chemical application before the aphid population explodes.



Grasshoppers - A Growing Problem!

We started off this spring with almost no grasshoppers. In fact most producers did not add the typical grasshopper control chemical to their pasture fertilizer and that was a good decision. Now things are changing!

What happened? Well we have had the perfect weather for grasshoppers and they are making their presence known. The picture to the right shows a pigweed in the middle of a Sudan field that was completely eaten by grasshoppers. The grasshoppers were not overwhelming in numbers yet but they were definitely there and beginning to be an issue. In some corn fields we are seeing damage on the field edges. Be sure and look at your hay fields and pastures since we don't have hay to spare feeding grasshoppers.



product several years ago and it contains the active ingredient from Reclaim and aminopyralid found in Grazon Next. These two chemicals together are much more active on mesquite and the % control goes up significantly.

The mixing rate for Sendero is 1% Sendero, 1/4% Surfactant and if needed a blue dye. The mesquite trees are sprayed to wet making sure to cover all the leaves.

If you are driving around in the country you may see several large pastures with dying mesquites. In many cases these were sprayed either by a helicopter or if the mesquites are small by a ground rig. Either way the mesquite trees are well on their way to being DEAD!

Corn Silage Field Day

Farley's along with Mycogen Corn Seed is sponsoring a Corn Silage Field Day, Tuesday, June 19, at Southland Dairy on Hwy 219, south of Dublin. The field day will start at 1pm with lunch on the dairy and after lunch a tour of the variety trial will be conducted.

If you would like to attend please let us know so that we can be sure there is enough lunches available.

Spray Drift?

Most of the time neighbors get along well, no problems at all, but try spraying a pasture and have that herbicide drift onto a garden or prized peach trees and neighbors become enemies - quick!

This spring and even the last few days the wind has been blowing and blowing hard. It is not unusual for the wind to be calm one minute and howling the next. This can be a real problem if you are in a tractor cab pulling a sprayer and don't notice. Why is this a topic for discussion? Mainly because of the changing landscape of our area.

There are plenty of new landowners and with new landowners has come vegetables, grapes, pecans and more and these crops do not tolerate pasture herbicide drift. Added to this problem is the resistant weeds we now have and growers are trying new chemicals that sometimes can cause many problems for other producers. A drive down most any county road and you can see a cotton field that wasn't there before, a new grape vineyard that has sprung up or a new homesite being built.

Bermudagrass Stem Maggot

This insect is a problem and when you add in a drought and it is a really bad problem! Nobody in this area has enough hay and so there will be a real need to make sure this insect doesn't take what little hay we do produce. What can you do? To make sure you don't let this insect become a problem you have to spray an insecticide and you have to do this even though you don't see any damage. This is hard for growers but basically if you want to avoid this insect pest you must make an application between one cutting and the next.

Can you see this insect? Most producers can't find the maggot in the stem but they are visible if you're diligent looking. But if you want to know if you have adult flies you have to take a few minutes, sit down in your hay field and be still. If they are there then within minutes the Bermudagrass Stem Maggot fly or adult will be buzzing around and land on the grass leaves to lay eggs. Eggs hatch into small maggots and it is at this stage before they go into the stem that insecticides are effective.

