

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Updates August 15, 2021

Here are updates from the MSU Extension Field Crops team in Southwest Michigan. If you have any items you would like me to include in future email updates—whether events you want others to know about or topics you would like to have addressed—please send me an email or call the office.

2021 MSU Wheat Trial Results Available

The 2021 MSU Wheat Trial Results are now ready for viewing and can be found on [MSU's Variety Trials website](#). It will also be printed in the August 15 edition of the Michigan Farm News put out by Michigan Farm Bureau.

MSU's Custom Machine Work Costs Updated

Extension often receives calls from various parties wanting to know how much it costs to perform different field operations in crop production. To arrive at an estimate of these services, many land grant universities conduct surveys to find out from those doing the work. [MSU Extension's recently updated report](#) covers a wide number of the basic field machine operations providing a summary of custom machine rates that farms have reported they charged each other during the prior year in the Midwest region. In addition, the report provides a summary of calculated estimates of farm machine activity costs, which provides the average estimate of what it costs a farm to operate a farm machine doing different tasks in the production system.

Farms use this report as a base from which they can determine what could be a fair exchange value for both the provider and recipient of some custom machine work on their farms. In most cases some adjustments are made as the price of fuel changes and for the size or efficiency of the machine work done. It is common for small jobs to have a 20% to 30% higher cost of operation than a larger job that allows the operator to reach the suggested average operations cost.

Forage Variety Trial Input Needed

Rising costs of testing and consolidation of forage seed companies have led to declining entries in public forage variety tests and many universities have discontinued their testing programs. The remaining tests are also at risk of vanishing unless all stakeholders—producers, industry, and public universities—can agree on modifications that improve the economic viability of public variety testing programs. The American Forage and Grassland Council has developed this survey to collect information on what stakeholders expect from forage variety tests and what acceptable costs would be in relation to the expected results. This fall, an AFGC working group will summarize the survey results and use them to draft recommendations for improvements to the current system. It is our hope that based on these recommendations, universities, extension services, and forage breeders can come

together and develop a coordinated forage variety test network that will benefit the development and use of improved forage cultivars across the USA.

Please take the time to [fill out the Survey Monkey survey](#), which should take no more than 5 minutes. You are encouraged to forward the survey link to other forage stakeholders. Everyone affected by forages is welcome to offer input. The more input we have, the better our recommendations can become.

Thank you,
AFGC Forage Variety Trial Task Force.

Updates, Improvements Made to USDA's Prevented Planting Program

Agricultural producers with crop insurance can hay, graze or chop cover crops for silage, haylage or baleage at any time and still receive 100% of the prevented planting payment. Previously, cover crops could only be hayed, grazed or chopped after November 1, otherwise the prevented planting payment was reduced by 65%. USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) added this flexibility as part of a broader effort to encourage producers to use cover crops, an important conservation and good farming practice. Cover crops are especially important on fields prevented from planting as they help reduce soil erosion and boost soil health.

RMA recognizes that cover crops are not planted as an agricultural commodity but rather with the primary purpose for conservation benefits. For the 2021 crop year and beyond, RMA will not consider a cover crop planted following a prevented planting claim to be a second crop. But RMA will continue to consider a cover crop harvested for grain or seed to be a second crop, and it remains subject to a reduction in the prevented planting indemnity in accordance with the policy.

To learn more about this policy change, visit RMA's [Prevented Planting webpage](#). The webpage also has the latest Cover Crop Termination Guidelines, which USDA updated in 2019 as a result of greater flexibilities provided in the 2018 Farm Bill. Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the [RMA Agent Locator](#). Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov.

Forage Seed Supplies Tight, Prices Up

The following announcement was made earlier this month by the [Oregon Seed Association](#) regarding the current state of the incoming crop and resulting price levels.

Regardless of what role you play in the market, there is no question you have heard of the uncertainty of seed supply and the rapidly increasing and ever-changing prices. What has caused this instability?

1. **Seed Yields:** The historical spring drought in most of the major growing regions, combined with extraordinary heat, has resulted in sizable reductions in seed yields across all major species. Irrigated fields did fare quite a bit better, but overall yield averages are well below historic norms and even below normal. Some fields are down 15% and others are down 50%.
2. **Acres:** Oregon and Washington are the capital of USA seed production for a reason. Growing conditions are very favorable and normally seed yields are extremely consistent. However, pressure has been put on available acres in all areas with the influx of hazelnuts in Oregon, and the rise in commodity prices, such as wheat, in others. Other areas outside of Oregon and Washington

have risen due to these challenges but seed yield is much more unpredictable. The salient fact is that if Oregon and Washington don't yield, crop is likely to be tight in any given species.

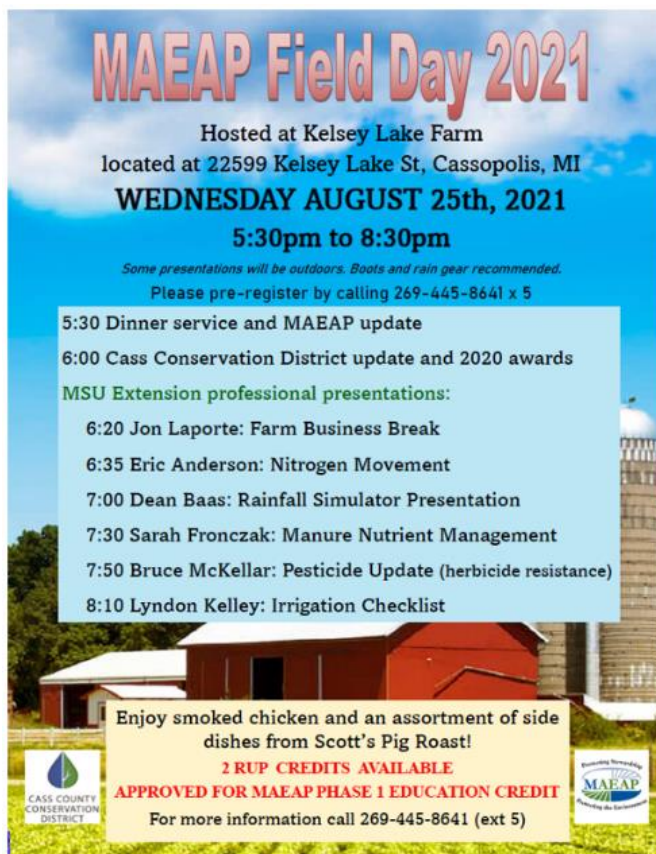
3. **COVID Effect:** The industry is extremely grateful but still in shock at the realization that COVID was a huge net positive to grass seed sales. Simply stated, sales were crazy both in retail and wholesale over the past 1 1/2 years. Homeowners spent on their homes and after a brief pause, outdoor activities – such as sports and golf – rose to new heights as activities that provided exercise and safety from the virus.
4. **Consolidation of Companies:** A few companies were acquired by others, as well as partnerships established to shore up seed supply. This had the real effect of moving inventory into the hands of seed companies with differing approaches to the market and some seed was strategically held for future sales.
5. **Carry-Over Effect:** Due to the above factors, carry-in inventory actually available for sale prior to harvest 2021 was historically low.

Therefore, the result of seed yield, acres, COVID effect, consolidation and carry-over is that grower prices have moved to all-time highs. In a historical first, companies are paying above bargained prices, out of the gate, to help offset grower losses, secure seed to incentivize movement of new crop in the fall and ensure future production.

MSU Extension forage specialist Kim Cassida suggests that “buying later” is not a good strategy this year given the above situation.

Upcoming Field Day Meetings

The Cass County Conservation District and MAEAP are hosting a field day on August 25th. The following day, the MSU Soybean Research and Crop Management Field Day will be held on campus—see details below and in the Calendar Events section.



MAEAP Field Day 2021

Hosted at Kelsey Lake Farm
located at 22599 Kelsey Lake St, Cassopolis, MI
WEDNESDAY AUGUST 25th, 2021
5:30pm to 8:30pm

Some presentations will be outdoors. Boots and rain gear recommended.
Please pre-register by calling 269-445-8641 x 5

5:30 Dinner service and MAEAP update

6:00 Cass Conservation District update and 2020 awards

MSU Extension professional presentations:

6:20 Jon Laporte: Farm Business Break

6:35 Eric Anderson: Nitrogen Movement

7:00 Dean Baas: Rainfall Simulator Presentation

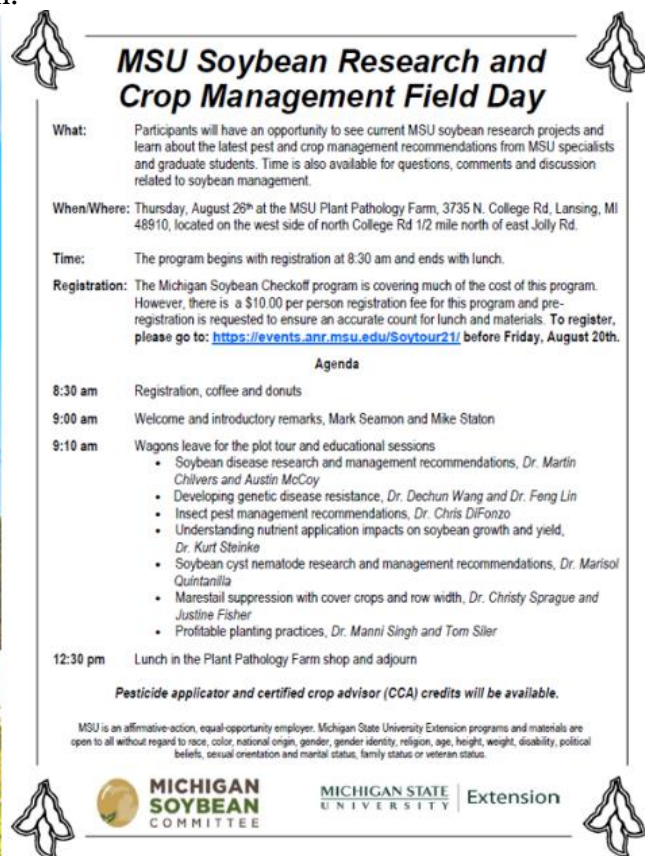
7:30 Sarah Fronczak: Manure Nutrient Management

7:50 Bruce McKellar: Pesticide Update (herbicide resistance)

8:10 Lyndon Kelley: Irrigation Checklist

Enjoy smoked chicken and an assortment of side dishes from Scott's Pig Roast!
2 RUP CREDITS AVAILABLE
APPROVED FOR MAEAP PHASE 1 EDUCATION CREDIT

For more information call 269-445-8641 (ext 5)



MSU Soybean Research and Crop Management Field Day

What: Participants will have an opportunity to see current MSU soybean research projects and learn about the latest pest and crop management recommendations from MSU specialists and graduate students. Time is also available for questions, comments and discussion related to soybean management.

When/Where: Thursday, August 26th at the MSU Plant Pathology Farm, 3735 N. College Rd, Lansing, MI 48910, located on the west side of north College Rd 1/2 mile north of east Jolly Rd.

Time: The program begins with registration at 8:30 am and ends with lunch.

Registration: The Michigan Soybean Checkoff program is covering much of the cost of this program. However, there is a \$10.00 per person registration fee for this program and pre-registration is requested to ensure an accurate count for lunch and materials. To register, please go to: <https://events.anr.msu.edu/Soytour21/> before Friday, August 20th.

Agenda

8:30 am Registration, coffee and donuts

9:00 am Welcome and introductory remarks, Mark Seamon and Mike Staton



9:10 am Wagons leave for the plot tour and educational sessions

- Soybean disease research and management recommendations, *Dr. Martin Chilvers and Austin McCoy*
- Developing genetic disease resistance, *Dr. Dechun Wang and Dr. Feng Lin*
- Insect pest management recommendations, *Dr. Chris DiFonzo*
- Understanding nutrient application impacts on soybean growth and yield, *Dr. Kurt Steinke*
- Soybean cyst nematode research and management recommendations, *Dr. Marisol Quintanilla*
- Marestail suppression with cover crops and row width, *Dr. Christy Sprague and Justine Fisher*
- Profitable planting practices, *Dr. Manni Singh and Tom Siler*

12:30 pm Lunch in the Plant Pathology Farm shop and adjourn

Pesticide applicator and certified crop advisor (CCA) credits will be available.

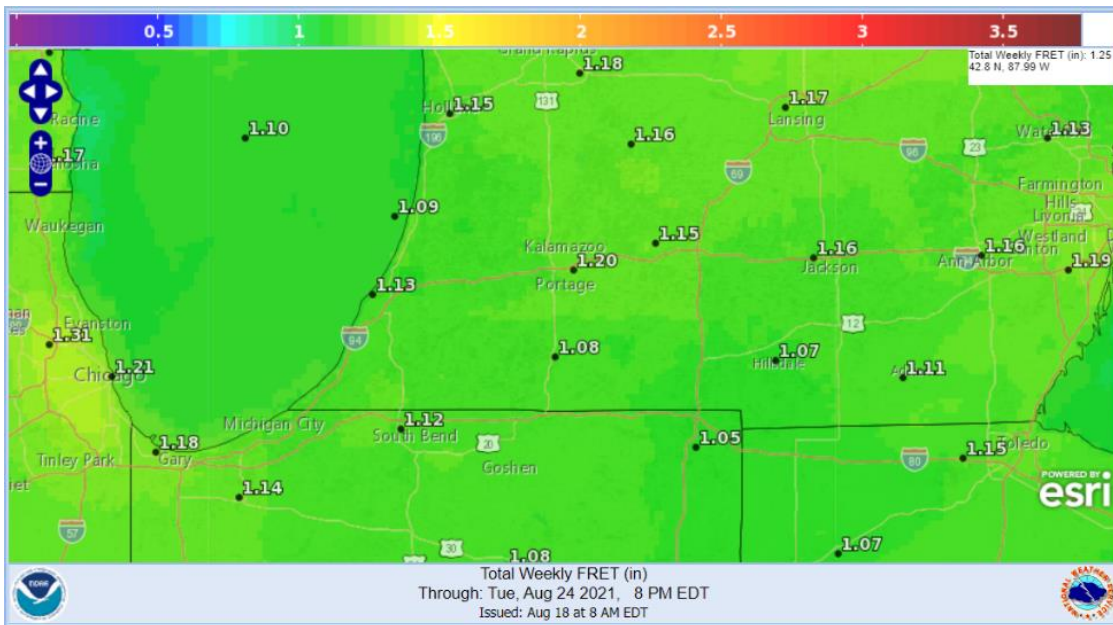
MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation and marital status, family status or veteran status.

Weather and Crop/Pest Update

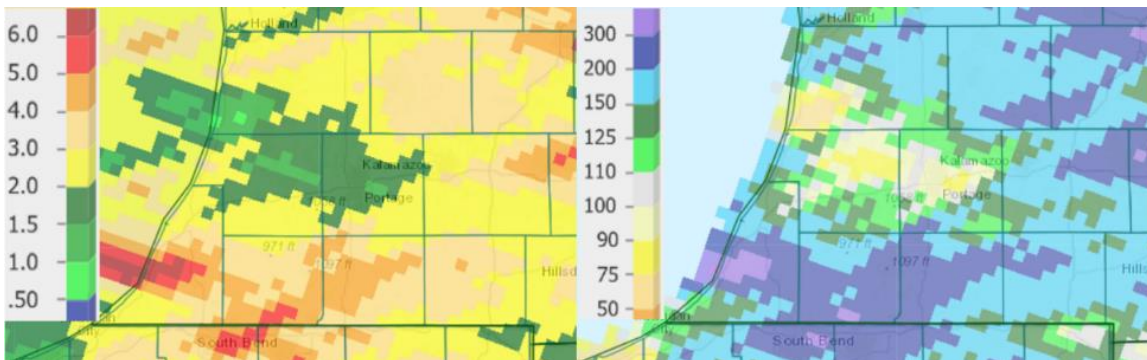
Weather

Temperatures in south-central and southwest Michigan started earlier this month cooler than normal but with the tropical airmass that brought hot and humid air, we ended up being warmer than normal by 2-3 degrees. Currently, temperatures are hovering near normal. We picked up 360 growing degree days (base 50) so far this month (530 base 40 for alfalfa) and are expecting an additional 170 GDD (base 50, or 240 base 40) this coming week. The forecasted reference evapotranspiration is predicted to be about normal with 1.07-1.20 inches for the coming week. The medium-term outlooks are different from each other with the 6-10 day calling for above-normal temperatures while the 8-14 day predicts cooler-than-normal temps heading toward the end of the month.

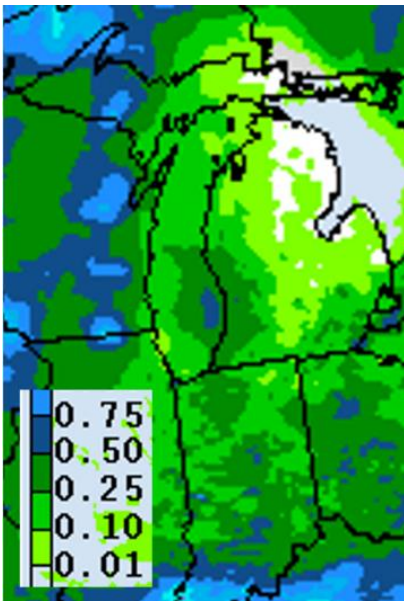


The forecasted reference evapotranspiration (FRET) rate for the week ending Aug. 24.

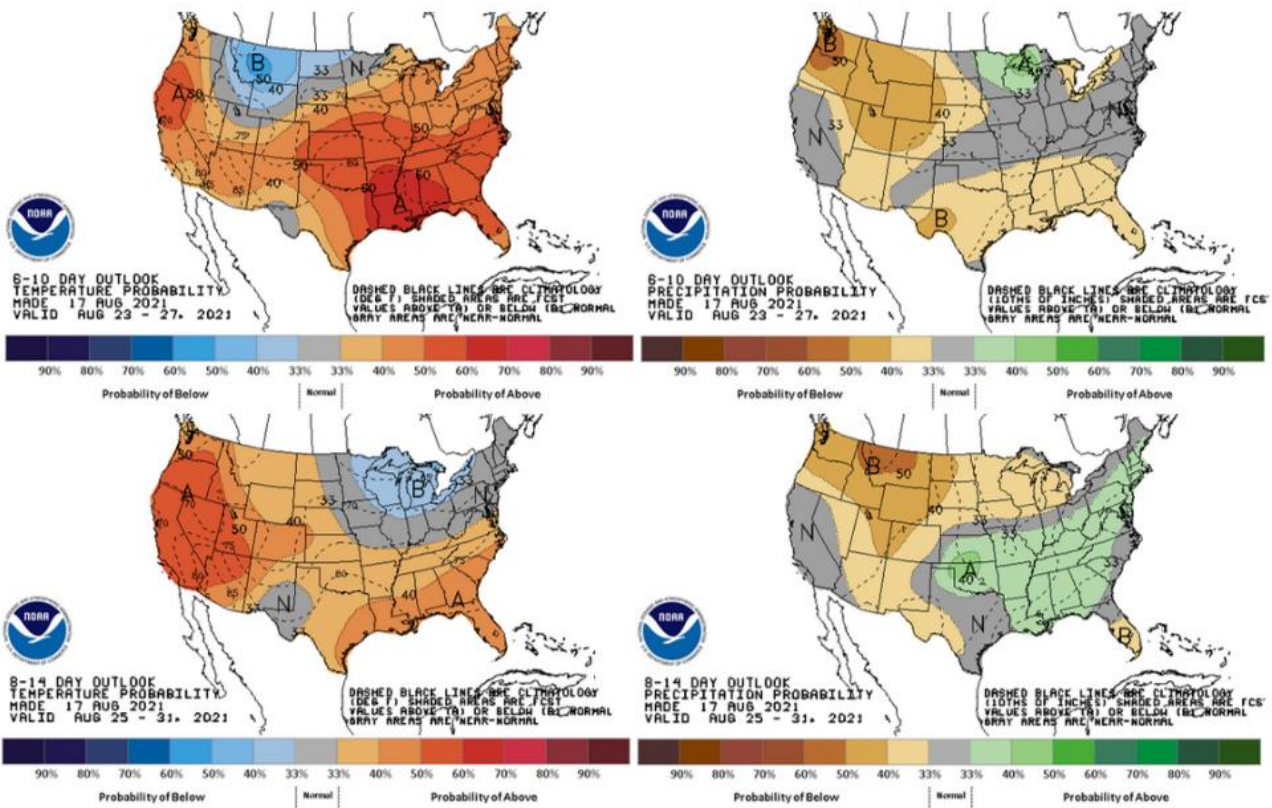
Precipitation in the first half of August has ranged from over 25% below normal to over 200% of normal with the majority of the region receiving 0.5 to 3 inches more than normal. The forecast for the coming week is for less than 0.5 inch of rain. The extended outlooks give no guidance for precipitation for the last week in August with a slight chance of drier than normal conditions near the end of the month.



Precipitation totals (left) and percent of normal (right) for the past 14 days as of August 18.



Precipitation forecast for August 18-25



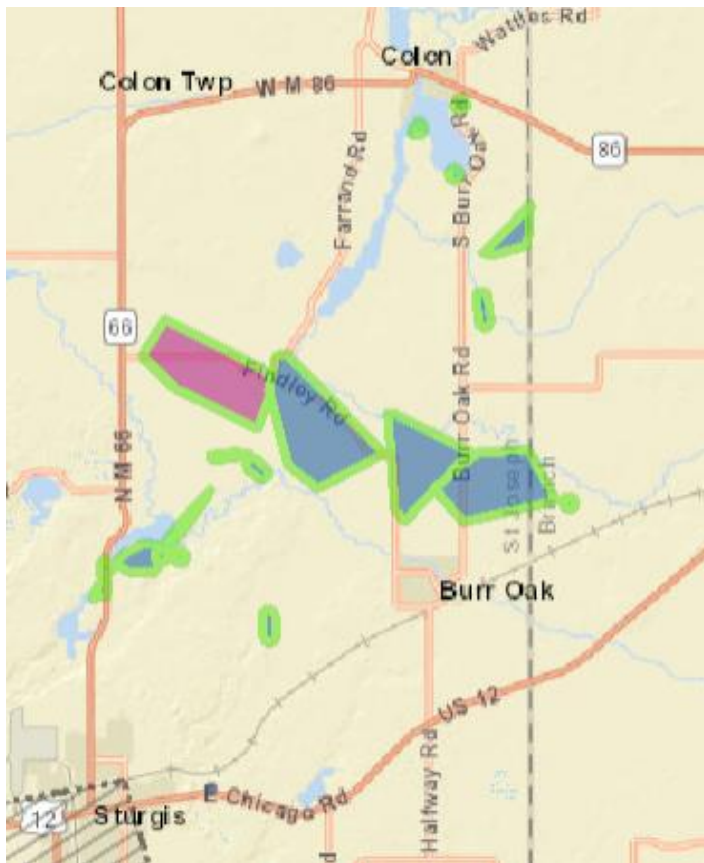
The 6-10 day (Aug. 23-27, top) and 8-14 day (Aug. 25-31, bottom) outlook for temperature (left) and precipitation (right). The 6-10 day outlook is essentially the same.

For many in south-central St. Joseph County and surrounding areas, the main story this past week was the straight-line winds that came through and wreaked havoc. You likely have seen news reports and pictures of (or are living through) the devastation—below are just a few photos Lyndon Kelley and I took in the area. The following was a summary report from the National Weather Service about the event.

ALL DAMAGE APPEARS TO BE RELATED TO STRAIGHT LINE WINDS OR DOWNBURSTS. THE WINDS CAUSED TREE, TREE LIMB, POWER LINE AND POLE DAMAGE WITH REPORTS OF STRUCTURE DAMAGE GENERALLY COMING FROM FALLING TREES OR TREE LIMBS. WHILE AREAS OF DAMAGE WERE REPORTED IN PORTIONS OF KOSCIUSKO, MARSHALL AND ELKHART COUNTIES IN INDIANA, THE GREATEST DAMAGE HAS BEEN REPORTED IN PORTIONS OF ST. JOSEPH, BRANCH AND HILLSDALE COUNTIES IN MICHIGAN. WINDS SPEEDS FOR MUCH OF THE DAMAGE ARE ESTIMATED FROM 60 TO AS HIGH AS 75 MPH. HOWEVER, A FEW INSTANCES OF MORE INTENSE DOWNBURST DAMAGE WERE OBSERVED.

SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE APPEARS TO HAVE OCCURRED IN EASTERN ST. JOSEPH COUNTY IN A SWATH FROM WHITE PIGEON AND CONSTANTINE NORTHEAST TO CENTREVILLE, STURGIS AND COLON. DETAILS FROM THE CITY OF STURGIS AS WELL AS ST. JOSEPH COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INDICATES THAT WIDESPREAD TREE DAMAGE BETWEEN STURGIS AND CENTREVILLE HAS CAUSED RESULTING IN DAMAGE TO OVER 15 MILES OF POWER LINES AND OVER 40 POWER POLES BEING SNAPPED. GROUND AND AERIAL PICTURES OF THE DAMAGE CLEARLY INDICATE STRONG DOWNBURST WINDS SNAPPING OR LEVELING AREAS OF TREES, NUMBERING WELL OVER 100 IN SPOTS. WIND SPEEDS IN THESE AREAS ARE ESTIMATED BETWEEN 85 TO OVER 90 MPH.





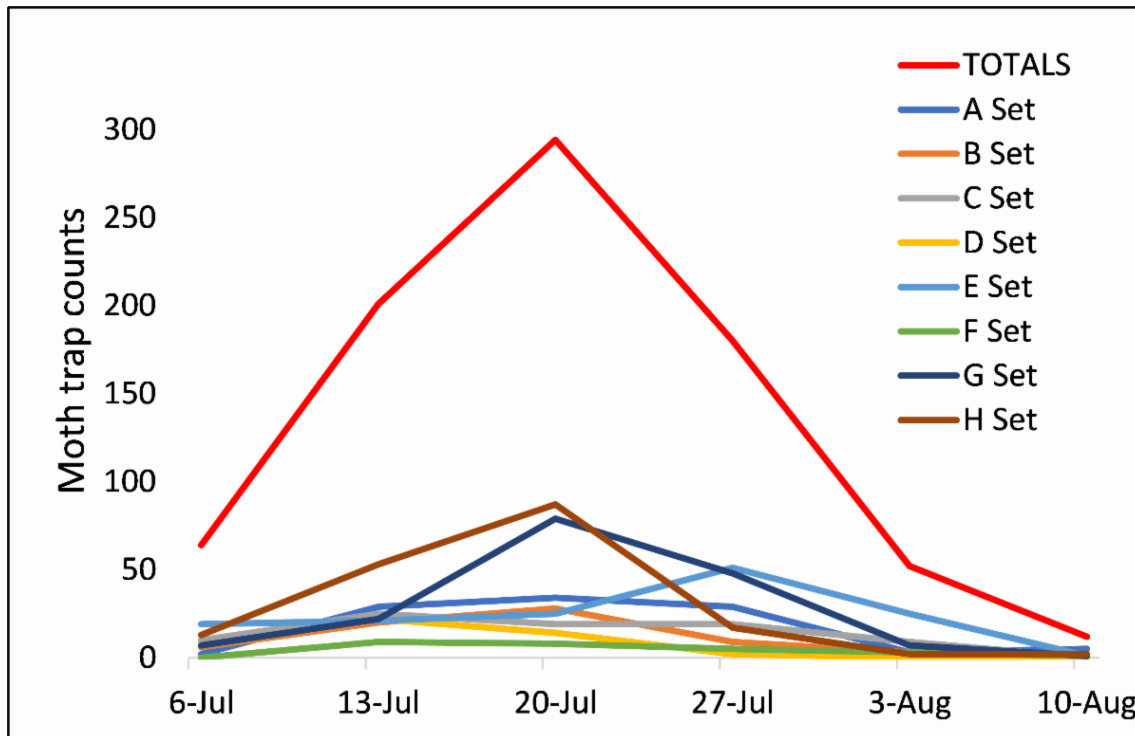
Crops and Pests

Corn in the region is mostly in the dough stage (R4) with some still at late milk stage (R3) while some have been found at very early dent (R5). **Soybean** ranges from beginning seed (R5, seed is 1/8 inch long long in the pod at one of the four uppermost nodes on the main stem) to full seed (R6, pod containing a green seed that fills the pod capacity at one of the four uppermost nodes on the main stem). Both crops will require roughly 1.28-1.44 inches this coming week. According to the USDA's most recent crop forecast, Michigan's average corn yield is expected to be 169 bushels per acre, 15 bushels above last year. If realized, this will be a record high by 7 bushels. Soybean yield is forecast at 48 bushels per acre, up 1 bushel from last year. Total production is forecast at 110 million bushels, up 7 percent from last year. If realized, this will be a record production.

Western bean cutworm (WBC) moth trapping has now ended for the season. The peak flight was the week of July 13-20 with heavy "shoulder" flight activity the week before and after that. At this point, scouting should focus on looking at ears for bore holes, opening up husks and assessing for

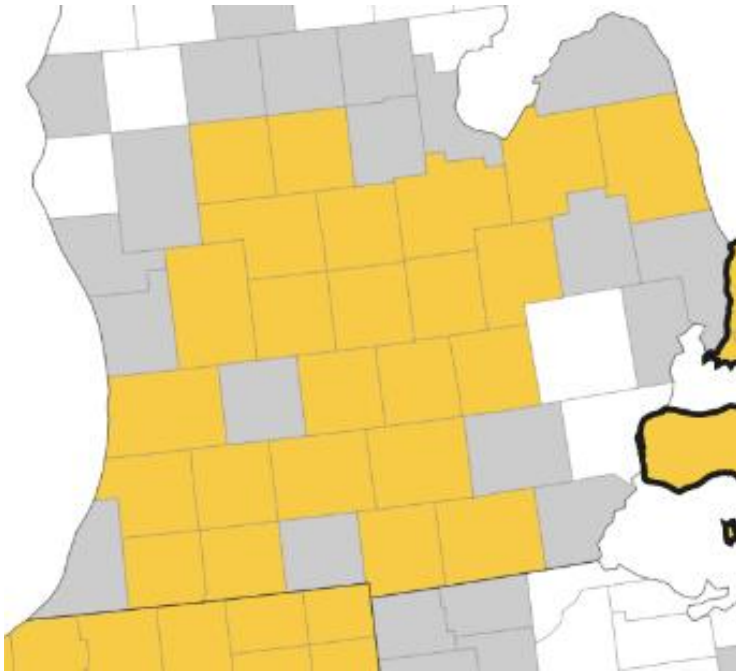
feeding damage. These wounds, in addition to making a mess of the ear, open the door for ear molds with the potential for impacting grain quality and toxin production.

MSU Extension field crops entomologist Chris DiFonzo, along with her counterpart at Ohio State Kelly Tilmon, have co-authored a just-finished version of the MSU-OSU Field Crops Insect Pest Management Guide. It is not available yet online or in print, but if you would like a sneak peek at a copy, let me know.



Western bean cutworm moth trap counts for the 2021 growing season.

Corn tar spot infections have increased in the past couple of weeks due to rain events coupled with high humidity and heavy morning fog and dew. So far most lesions remain low in the canopy with only a “sprinkling” on upper leaves. Severity has been highly variable from field to field, so be sure to hop out of the truck and walk a ways into your fields and do some scouting. We are past the window for optimum fungicide application timing—VT-R1, maybe as late as R3, although according to MSU Extension field crops pathologist Marty Chilvers at the recent field day near Centreville, one study they conducted showed that a R4 application timing did result in significant reduction of disease severity. Knowing the disease severity in your fields may help in knowing when to time harvest to avoid potential lodging issues. Warm and wet conditions also favor other diseases such as northern corn leaf blight and gray leaf spot in corn and white mold, frogeye leaf spot, Cercospora leaf blight, and several others in soybean, and the cool, dry weather coming up will give you a good opportunity to scout.



Tar spot in corn identified in Michigan in 2021 (gold) and past years (gray) as of Aug. 18.

Irrigation Join us for the next [MSU Irrigation Webinar](#) on September 1st. Cost is free, register online to receive the link which will be used for all episodes in the series that air every other Wednesday through September 15th.

Calendar

Titles are clickable links to online content when highlighted and underlined

- August 19** [Field Crops Virtual Breakfast](#). 7-8am. Role of Precision Agriculture in Nutrient Management with Bruno Basso. One RUP and one CCA credit available for each live session. No cost to you, register online once for whole season.
- August 20** [Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands Signup](#). Agricultural producers and landowners in Michigan can apply for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands signup until August 20. To enroll, contact your local USDA [Service Center](#).
- August 24** [Drainage Tools Virtual Workshop](#). 9am-3pm. Learn the basics of using tools to make informed decisions about drainage for crop production and water-quality protection. Cost is free, register online.
- August 25** [Cass County MAEAP Field Day](#). 5:30-8:30pm. Kelsey Lake Farm, 22599 Kelsey Lake St, Cassopolis. Dinner followed by MAEAP and Conservation District updates and several presentations from MSU Extension staff. Please pre-register by calling 269-445-8641 x 5.
- August 26** [Field Crops Virtual Breakfast](#). 7-8am. Getting the Most from Manure Applications with Brook Wilke. One RUP and one CCA credit available for each live session. No cost to you, register online once for whole season.

August 26 **[MSU Soybean Research and Crop Management Update Field Day](#)**. 8:30am-1pm. MSU Plant Pathology Farm, 3735 N. College Road, Lansing, MI. Participants will have an opportunity to see current MSU soybean research projects and learn about the latest pest and crop management recommendations from MSU specialists and graduate students. Cost is \$10/person, register online.

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

Published On August 17, 2021

- **[KELLOGG BIOLOGICAL STATION JOINS MULTI-STATE EFFORT TO INCREASE THE ADOPTION OF PRAIRIE STRIPS ACROSS THE MIDWEST](#)** - [At the W.K. Kellogg Biological Station, the Long-Term Agroecosystem Research Network \(LTAR\) and Long-Term Ecological Research \(LTER\) programs are working to increase the adoption of prairie strips on agricultural landscapes across the Midwest.](#)
- **[ADDRESSING LABOR CHALLENGES TOGETHER](#)** - [Help us understand the current workforce needs of agricultural operations across Michigan.](#)

Published On August 16, 2021

- **[CONSERVATION FOR THE BOTTOM LINE](#)** - [Using conservation practices where it matters most.](#)
- **[JOIN THE FIELD CROPS VIRTUAL BREAKFAST ON AUG. 26 FOR GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR MANURE](#)** - [MSU's Brook Wilke will discuss the advantages of incorporating manure into your cropping system.](#)

Published On August 15, 2021

- **[FLIGHT OF FERTILIZER](#)** - [Using drones for precision application of fertilizer and cover crops](#)
- **[WALK BEFORE YOU RUN](#)** - [Precision soil testing for economic results.](#)

Published On August 10, 2021

- **[KBS LTAR SUMMER 2021 UPDATE](#)** - [After the June and July rains, the corn is looking great on the Kellogg Biological Station Long-Term Agroecosystem Research \(KBS LTAR\) site.](#)

Published On August 9, 2021

- **[MSU EXTENSION RELEASES NEW BUDGETING TOOL FOR ALL CROPS](#)** - [MSU planning tools help make well-informed decisions, a critical part of succeeding in today's farm economy.](#)

Published On August 4, 2021

- **[CROP BUDGET ESTIMATOR \(ALL CROPS\)](#)** - [Crop budget estimator tool that allows budgeting development for any crop intended to be raised.](#)

Eric Anderson
Michigan State University Extension
Field Crops Educator - St. Joseph County
612 E. Main St., Centreville, MI 49032
(269) 359-0565 (Home Office)
(269) 467-5511 (Office)
eaander32@msu.edu