

Meadowlark District Extension News
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Meadowlark Extension District Wheat Plot Tour – June 2

The annual Meadowlark Extension District Wheat Variety Plot Tour will be held this year on Tuesday, June 2, 2015. We'll kick off at 9:00 a.m. with a discussion of the 11 entries in the plot located five and three quarter miles west of Highway 75 on 176th Rd. (3/4 of a mile west of the intersection of T and 176 Roads). There are three new entries we are evaluating in this year's plot - Mint, KanMark, and Wizard – to go along with returning entries Fuller, Grainfield, Wolf, Cedar, Redhawk, Everest, Armour, and 1863. We'll talk seed treatments and stripe rust (should I have applied a fungicide after all?!) plus general disease and variety characteristics for each plot entry. Doug and Leonard Edelman are the plot cooperators and our first stop hosts.

Our wheat 'tour' this year will also include a second stop at Stoller Farms for a tour of a Nitrogen Sensor Evaluation Plot. This plot is located a quarter mile south of the intersection of U and 176 Roads southwest of Sabetha. K-State Research & Extension Soil Fertility Specialist Dr. Dave Mengel will share information on his work using nitrogen sensors to determine wheat nitrogen needs and application considerations. Byron Stoller is the plot cooperator.

Northeast Area Extension Agronomist Dr. Stu Duncan will be on hand to discuss the 'state of the wheat crop' plus information on plot entries. Refreshments are sponsored courtesy of the Kansas Wheat Alliance and Meadowlark Extension District. Appreciation is expressed to plot cooperators and participating seed companies. Hope to see you June 2nd! Contact the Meadowlark Extension District Office in Seneca at (785) 336-2184 for more details.

Thinning Excess Fruit

Talked to a fruit grower the other day that showed me some damage from heavy fruit set last year. The branch had so much fruit on it that it broke loose and actually damaged a second tree as well! Could we be in for the same this year? If you avoided freeze damage, conditions have been good enough that we could again see excellent fruit set.

You can't go wrong with too much fruit, can you? Actually, it can cause problems if a thinning program isn't implemented. With pears and apples, for instance, a heavy fruit crop can interfere with fruit bud development this summer, potentially resulting in a smaller fruit crop next year. Like the grower I spoke with, too much weight on limbs can break a tree down. Thinning can help keep trees from damage. It also helps promote larger fruit on this year's crop since too much fruit = decreased fruit size.

Average fruit thinning recommendations are as follows. As long as the average on the branch is close to these, fruit should size well:

- Apples/pears: 4 to 6 inches apart
- Peaches: 6 to 8 inches apart
- Plums: 4 to 5 inches apart
- Apricots: 2 to 4 inches between fruit.

Cherries are not thinned and can produce a full fruit load. Take a look at your trees today. A little preventative maintenance could make the difference between a fruit crop – or even tree! – or nothing next year!