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### ***Southern Rust and Corn Fungicides***

A crop can't ever be 'counted on' until it's in the bin. While with each progressing growth stage we get closer to that time, we're not there yet. This week's finding of corn southern rust in NEK further underscores the need for full season crop monitoring. There's an article in this week's KSU Agronomy eUpdate on it: [https://eupdate.agronomy.ksu.edu/article\\_new/first-report-of-southern-rust-in-kansas-505-5](https://eupdate.agronomy.ksu.edu/article_new/first-report-of-southern-rust-in-kansas-505-5) . It provides information on disease spread as well as management recommendations. The two questions generally arising when dealing with late season southern rust are: will it affect yield and did a previously applied fungicide help?

The answer to both questions depends a lot on hybrid, growth stage, and degree of disease pressure. Most research suggests fungicide applications *can* be effective up until dent growth stage – if disease pressure is high and the hybrid is susceptible – but are probably best timed to be on in advance of the dough stage (R4) of growth. Most corn fungicides will provide approximately three weeks of protection and have their greatest efficacy when applied at the start of the disease's presence rather than after significant infection.

Weather conditions favoring southern rust development include hot temperatures (morning lows in the mid 70's/daytime highs in the mid 90's –temperatures above 100 may not slow it much according to research from southern states) with at least four hours of consecutive leaf wetness. Outside of these conditions, we may still see disease, but progressing more slowly.

Southern rust is certainly a disease that can cause a lot of problems in a short time. Continue to monitor fields for disease pressure and growth stage prior to making treatment decisions. You can follow disease confirmations at <https://corn.ipmPIPE.org/southerncomrust/> .

### ***Lilac Leaf Spot***

Over the past four years, lilacs have increasingly exhibited a fungal disease known as Pseudocercospora Leaf Spot. Not a typical problem for us, the disease has caused significant damage to some stands. The disease favors high humidity and moderate temperatures, often showing up after bloom and becoming very noticeable in mid-late July.

Typically leaf spots don't become severe enough to result in decline of the plant. However, if repeated infections occur, particularly when combined with drought/heat or other stresses, the stress may become too much and plants may decline. Unfortunately, no fungicides have been specifically tested to treat Pseudocercospora and a label search of fungicides in Kansas yields zero labeled products. Even if it did, application would need to be done earlier in the summer and likely repeatedly through the growing season.

Without a fungicide, cultural practices are key. Pseudocercospora can survive two years in plant debris. Cleaning up old leaves/twigs and pruning out dead branches is our best option at this point. Keep plants healthy, including deep (but infrequent) watering when soils are dry.

For more information about Pseudocercospora, check out this reference from Iowa State University: <https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/lilac-pseudocercospora-leaf-spot> . You can request a copy from any District Office as well.

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Cindy Williams  
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No news today.

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### **Value of Early Pregnancy Detection**

As I set down to look at my annual “pull the bulls” date on the calendar, it got me thinking about a timely topic to write about. Every operation has a different timeline for breeding, calving, weaning, marketing... name the subject; but one thing that can be useful sooner rather than later is to know which animals are bred and when in the calving season they are expected to calve. Knowing this information early can help direct management decisions.

There are a number of reasons ranging from shortage of forage resources to marketing opportunities that proves the value in knowing when a cow is pregnant. That information can be used to identify early bred replacements or open females to remove from pasture, in order to extend the grazing season. Heifers confirmed pregnant to an AI sire likely can bring premiums. A group of yearling heifers pregnant with heifer calves would be expected to have less calving difficulty and may be worth more than those carrying males. Looking at the cull side, the cull cow market historically declines the deeper into fall aligning with the common weaning times of spring calving herds. The more cows being culled, the bigger the impact of timely marketing. Whatever the reason, you have to check to know what the status of the females and can then make decisions with that information.

Rectal palpation is the most commonly available tool for pregnancy determination. Experienced technicians can be comfortable with distinguishing 35 to 40-day pregnancies. In the hands of a trained person, a fairly high degree of accuracy in stage of pregnancy can be determined up until 100 -120 days of gestation, before the uterus descends over the pelvic rim. It is becoming more common place for bovine practitioners to offer ultrasound detection. Embryos can be identified as early as 25 to 28 days of age, but 30 days makes a more practical lower age limit. Fetal sexing requires additional experience with ultrasound to gain higher accuracy, but is a benefit to this method. The earliest time to fetal sex is around 55 days but due to variation in development, a time period of 60 to 100 days is generally targeted.

Commercial blood tests are also available to determine pregnancy status. The tests detect one of a number of pregnancy specific proteins produced by the placenta. Depending on which protein and test provider, earliest detection date varies from 28 to 30 days of gestation and proteins remain in the system up to 75 to 90 days after calving. A disadvantage of the blood test is that since the proteins remain in the animal's body after any fetal loss occurs, a positive test indicates both if the female is OR was pregnant and could now be open.

Some embryonic and fetal loss is normally occurring, from 1 to 2% by the second trimester to term is considered normal. Mostly this loss is seen before day 30, but some cows pregnant at 30 days will not be pregnant at day 60. Although early pregnancy loss is not uncommon, and is generally not caused by the process of pregnancy checking, it does mean if performed relatively early it may need to be repeated.

Your local veterinarian can discuss timing and options that best fit your production situation and goals. Stage of pregnancy can be very valuable information when making decisions related to pasture management, adjusting winter feeding plans and trying to take advantage of market opportunities. Processing cattle through a working facility in the heat of summer, may not be high on your wish list of things to do, but giving pregnancy detection, especially early detection, might be worth considering. Your business will be in a better position to adapt to variation in weather and markets with detailed information on pregnancy status and stage of fetal development.

Teresa Hatfield  
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### **Beware of Robotexts**

Recently I have noticed that I have been getting text messages that seem a little off. They sometimes come from a local number and an organization I do business with, like Pay Pal or Amazon. Usually, they tell me that something is wrong with my account. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reports that they are increasingly seeing reports of scammers using text messages to target American consumers. These text messages are called Robotexts.

What is a Robotext? Scam text messages are also known as “smishing.” They are sent by scammers seeking to get you to engage with them. The FCC reports that they are trying to get you to give up your personal information, such as a password, Social Security number, or account number. They also could be looking the scam you out of money. Scammers will try different ways to trick you. They promise gift cards, help you to pay off a student loan, or offer you a low or no-interest credit card. The text may contain misspellings, mysterious links, incomplete information, or misleading information. Also, be on the lookout for messages that say, “they have noticed suspicious activity on your account,” send you a fake invoice, or a fake package delivery notice. The message may contain a link that may take you to a spoofed website that looks like the real thing. If you log into it, the scammer can steal your password to your real account. Other messages could install malware on your phone, and then scammers can steal all your other passwords.

What can you do to protect yourself? Do not respond to suspicious text messages, even if the message includes a link to stop future messages. Do not click on any links contained in the text message. Do not provide the scammer with any information via text or website. Delete all suspicious text messages without clicking on any links. Make sure to keep your devices up to date with the last iOS and security apps. Review the company’s policies regarding opting out of text alerts and selling or sharing your information with third parties. If you think the text could be legitimate, contact the company from known sources of information you know are real. You can also report suspicious text messages by copying them and forwarding them to 7726 (SPAM) or report them to the Federal Trade Commission at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/learn/report-fraud).

*Information Provided by: Federal Communications Commission, Federal Trade Commission*