

# CLUNETTE KERNEL

WINTER 2008-2009

Winter is in full swing now as we move into January. So far we've seen a little bit of ice, some snow, and some below zero temperatures. What is there to do when the winter weather keeps you inside and cold? Answer, grab your favorite warm beverage and a blanket and settle down with the latest edition of the Clunette Kernel!

## *2008 In Review!*

As we look back at the 2008 growing season it seems as though this was a year where Mother Nature continuously tested us! As most of us can remember we kicked off this past spring with large scale flooding in most parts of the area as well as throughout the Midwest. The concern became as to whether or not we'd be able to get a crop in the ground. Fortunately the rains eventually subsided and our growing season took off with a bang!

### *What a year for Wheat*

Wheat yields, on average, were slightly higher than those from 2007. Growers found themselves breathing a sigh of relief after having very little snow cover last winter combined with the flooding we saw early this spring. As temperatures began to warm up we found ourselves evaluating the overall health of our wheat, and many were asking the question should I keep my wheat or tear it up. After evaluating the actual plants, paying close attention to the crowns and roots looking for rots, many were advised to keep

their wheat. Remember, when evaluating wheat early in the spring, it is best to wait until there is sufficient growth occurring. While the leaves may look dead the crowns may still be healthy. As the soil finally dried most found their wheat crops rebounded well.

Army worms posed only a minimal threat in 2008 to wheat. Very little spraying was done throughout the area for these pesky critters due to the fact that we saw a late emergence of worms. Our main focus was aimed at controlling disease pressure. Due to wet and cool conditions we saw more rust and leaf blotch than we usually do. Plant health treatments proved useful this year at suppressing most disease pressure. Remember by preventing serious disease outbreaks you save yourself more money and preserve more yield than if you were to wait until you had a serious problem on your hands.

### *How about that weather?*

Even as spring gave way to summer Mother Nature was still throwing us curve balls. In early June much of

our area was riddled with hail. Fortunately damage was not severe enough to cause total crop loss.

Those areas hit the hardest might have seen a slight decrease in corn yields when harvest came around, but for the most part corn crops recovered well.

Our biggest concern was controlling the disease pressure in our commercial and seed corn. Common as well as Southern Rust hit our area hard due to humid, wet conditions. As a result a record number of corn acres were sprayed with fungicide in 2008. Did it pay off you ask? Record yields were recorded all across the area in commercial corn this year, and while growing conditions were favorable for great yields they were also favorable for huge losses due to disease. Fungicides played a very important and crucial role in protecting what yield potential was there.

Mother Nature struck yet again in August and September as we saw what had been a fairly wet season turn into a very dry one. Little rain fell in both these months causing most to worry about corn and bean yields. Fortunately most corn yields remained unaffected; however there was a pocket in the Leesburg/Milford area that was hit hard by the drought. These areas saw lower yield averages in both corn and soybeans. Most commercial corn was already in dent by the time the dry weather hit. Preserving test weight was more of an issue than

yield. However bean yields would tell a different story. For our area most beans averaged around forty bushels per acre. This average is down slightly from 2007. All and all, yields were pretty good for the conditions we faced throughout this growing season.

### *It's a Bug thing*

A new pest has slowly been creeping our way from out west over the past couple of years and has officially been given the title and status of pest in this area. The Western Bean Cutworm (WBC) has plagued states out west for years and has now moved heavily into Northern Indiana. The biggest concern with WBC is that these larvae feed on the ears of commercial and seed corn. Depending on the timing of their emergence, WBC can cause problems with pollination as well as open ears up to ear rots and molds. High populations can cause considerable yield loss because unlike Corn Earworms (CE) WBCs are not cannibalistic. What does that mean you ask? That simply means you may have several WBCs feeding on one plant at any given time.

There are several treatment options for controlling WBC infestations. I'm sure most can remember the motto "The Power of X," well the only BT technology that can control WBC is the Herculex Technology! Growers should be aware that Yield Guard provides no protection from WBC. For those growers planting pioneer seed, all pioneer hybrids are

engineered with this Herculex technology except of course for refuge corn. Scouting plays a crucial role in staying on top of this tricky new pest. If you have any further questions feel free to contact Gabe, John, or Meredith for more information.

## *2009 Outlook*

### *Fertilizer*

The biggest question for 2009 has been will fertilizer prices be high or low? Answer; prices peaked back in September and October and have since come down slightly. What does this mean for the grower? This means that prices might now be in check which is good news for the future. For those who purchased fertilizer earlier this fall do not worry, we are willing to work with our growers on averaging out the cost difference. Unfortunately P and K prices remain high which means that starter prices will still be high this spring. Supplies are in good shape though, so going into the 2009 growing season we should have plenty in stock to meet demand.

### *Spring Plans*

We have been working feverishly to finish up spring plans for 2009. If you have not been in to meet with Gabe and finalize details for the 2009 season please call in and set up an appointment to meet with him.

### *Up Coming Plot Work*

There are many new and exciting things on the agenda for 2009 here at Clunette Elevator. We have been asked to conduct research by the Andersons as well as Agrotain International on three fairly new products to this area, Avail, Nutri-Sphere N and Agrotain. Agrotain and Nutris-Sphere are nitrogen stabilizers. They help to control volatility by inhibiting urease enzyme activity allowing for greater nitrogen availability and uptake. Avail is a phosphorus stabilizer that counteracts the fixation of phosphorous by certain cations. Our goal with this plot work is to test the performance of these products. We've learned that information from Kansas and Illinois means very little to our growers here in North Central Indiana. We are excited to bring this information to our growers in a form that they cannot only read but actually see as well.

We are also going to continue to monitor fungicide performance in corn and soybeans. It is our goal to fine tune our plant health programs so that we can guarantee the most bang for your buck! Look for more details on our plots and results to follow in later additions of the Clunette Kernel.

### *Grain Market Outlook*

As we saw in 2008 the grain market was very unpredictable. What can we expect in 2009 you ask? Much of the same, expect the unexpected!

Some words of advice if you are wondering what to do when it comes to dealing with these ever changing markets. Pay attention to your costs, with the prices changing, and sometimes by large margins from day to day, it's important to pay attention to what you are actually spending. Have a marketing plan in place. Know the general direction you are looking to go in, and if you don't know what direction that is, talk to a professional about the matter. It's important to be informed so that you make the best choice for you. Remember, profit is not a bad word!

### *Meter Max News*

It's that time of year again, time to tear the planters down and have your meters and finger pick-up units calibrated on the metermax stand. This year Duane and Virgil are the two guys that will be handling all the calibrations. Please get your units into the elevator as soon as possible.

Furthermore, precision planting is now in its second year of offering a planting monitor that lets the operator see every function of the planter instantaneously. It is a small 8X10 inch touch screen monitor that shows population, singulation, down force pressure, ride quality, speed, vacuum, seed spacing, and much more. The name for this monitor is 20/20 SeedSense. For every function that the 20/20 monitor observes it generates a map of the field that looks similar to a

yield map from a yield monitor. Since 20/20 offers real time data as the planter goes through the field it allows the operator to pick out problems with the planter before some manufacturer monitors will even recognize there is a problem. With the high populations that farmers are planting, and the higher populations seed companies are pushing for, the 20/20 shows how valuable it is to slow down or speed up. Some have commented on how they were able to actually increase their ground speed because their planter held its accuracy, but it has also shown some customers how poor the planter performance is when they try to plant too fast. 20/20 allows for corrections to take place much sooner than most planter monitors.

Additionally, the 20/20 SeedSense monitor allows you to track all your hybrids and varieties that will be used throughout the season. The operator can pick out individual rows for certain hybrids or the entire planter. For seed growers, different populations can be assigned to individual rows as well. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Jared Haughee.

### *Crop Watch News*

2009 will bring about more exciting changes for our scouting program. We continue to strive to bring scouting information to you in the most efficient way we possibly can. It's important for you as a grower to

know what is going on in your field so that you can make an educated crop management decision. One update we are working on is equipping the scouts with hand held GPS devices this year. This will give the grower peace of mind, as they will be able to see the exact spot that the scout checked and what they found there. From these devices we are then hoping to be able to upload the information directly onto the internet, to our company website, where each grower will have a file and password. The goal is to have the information at your finger tips almost instantly after it's collected, allowing for decisions to be made quicker and in a more timely manner. Look for more information to follow in the next edition of the Kernel!

### *Continuing to Serve*

It has always been our motto here at Clunette to provide the best service we can. We continue to upgrade our equipment not only on the application side but the chemical side as well. We have added to our side dressing fleet for 2009 which should ease stress as the season gets busy. We've also made several upgrades to the plant, allowing for not only more capacity but the ability to produce a better quality product as well. We strive to bring new technology to our growers by continuing to train our staff in the latest technological advances to agriculture. Our business is keeping our growers best interests at heart.

We are always open to suggestions and are willing to go the extra distance to help you achieve your goals.

Well folks, we hope you have enjoyed the latest addition of the Clunette Kernel. Look for more editions of the Kernel to follow as we continue through this 2009 year!

### *Quote of the Season*

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and then leave a trail."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson-

