THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Field Notes for The Week Of

4-18-2022

The Land is Turning Green!

It is hard to believe but April is more than halfway completed, and Mother's Day is just around the corner. The greenhouses are full of flowers and vegetable plants just waiting to make their trip to the outside world. Patience will be a virtue for this planting season as the soil temperature are still running cooler than average and air temperatures for the week of April 18th through the 23rd are expected to be cooler than average. Spring 2022 has been a cooler and wetter than average spring so far and the trend is expected to continue into early May. The cool and wet weather pattern is influencing plant growth. Pastures and hay field across the state are growing slower than average and many plant species are running slightly behind normal growth stage due to the cool conditions. Currently Adams Counties Growing Degree Day Schedule sits at 242 days. **GDD are a measurement of the growth and development of plants and insects during the growing season. This development does not occur unless the temperature is above a minimum threshold value, or a base temperature. The base temperature varies for different organisms and is determined through research and experimentation.** It is important to know your growing degree days to make proper management decisions and be better aware of potential pest that might target crops, harvesting schedules, pesticide applications and many more. According to OSU plant pathology lab a year ago our Growing degree days stood at 266 days and in the year 2018 the growing degree days were as high as 389.

This week I was able to get some field scouting completed between the rain showers. My focus was to visit as many Alfalfa fields as possible, that has become a challenge these days due to less and less dairy farms and the expense of establishment and maintenance of the crop. Alfalfa is commonly referred to as the **Queen of Forage.** The reasoning behind the name is because of its tendency to be very picky and constant need for attention! Alfalfa is a high returning crop but also a high maintenance crop. From fertility, diseases, intense harvest schedules, and pest pressure, it seems like a producer is constantly watching their alfalfa crop. As we sit at 242 growing degree days there is a pest waking up and beginning to hatch and feed on alfalfa. The pest at question is Alfalfa weevil, the growth stage begins with the adults overwintering in alfalfa stems and then as the air temperatures approach 48°F the adults will cluster on the stems and lay eggs of 9-10 masses. As the growing degree days reach 200- 300, eggs will hatch, and young larvae will begin to feed on young sprouting leaves and stems. The 3-instar stage is when peak damage will occur, this stage of growth will take place at 500+ GDD.