



Field Notes for The Week Of

5-9-2022

Planting The Garden

Wet! That is the best way I can describe the beginning of May. The week of May 2nd through the 7th was a slow progress week for farmers across Adams County with frequent showers making it just wet enough to prevent field work. Even though it was a wet week the precipitation amounts were not as high as expected with total rain fall amounts ranging from 1-1.3 inches of rain depending on your location. Even though most of the tractors and planters stood Idle this week grass and forages did not take a break. Through my scouting and farm visits this week I recorded a plenty of forage heights and maturities. With most perennial pastures ranging from 20-25 inches in height at boot to full head. Alfalfa fields I visited ranged from 22-24 inches in height and just beginning bud stage. The winter wheat fields I visited were entering the Feeks growth stage 8-9, this is when the flag leaf is beginning to emerge meaning the boot or early head will be emerging very soon. With an expected heat wave coming this week I expect most or all the forages will be going to full head, this means its time to get that hay mower and baler ready to roll! As forages enter the reproductive stage of growth energy, sugars, protein, and other nutrients will be transferred to the seed rather than the plant. Plants will also start to build more cell wall structures such as lignin to hold the weight of a seed head, all these events equal higher fiber and less digestible forages (lower quality). Even though the wet weather did hinder some of my field work and scouting, I did manage to help put in some community-based gardens. Both the children's home and homeless shelter gardens are off and growing! Today I wanted to touch a little on raised bed gardening and the advantages they offer. Raised bed gardening has become very popular among home gardener over the past years and for good reasons they offer many benefits over conventional gardens here are few to mention.

1. **Less land needed**- Raised bed gardens can provide a lot of produce in a smaller area allowing better management.
2. **Take advantage of poor growing sites** – since good topsoil and compost are common bed fillers heavy clay that stays wet or sandy soils that dry out is not an issue
3. **Better management**- weed control, irrigation, and harvesting can be managed much easier than conventional gardens with large weed seed banks and dependent on mother nature for a drink.
4. **Longer and multiple growing seasons**- Raised beds can be warmed much easier making the growing season start earlier in the spring and last longer in the winter.
5. **Less Bending**- since raised beds are elevated off the ground bending for planting and harvesting is reduced.

