



Field Notes for The Week Of 9-5-2022

When to Park the Baler

September is here and that means fall is here (at least meteorological fall). One would not know it though, with daytime highs in the mid-80s, high humidity, and plenty of moisture, summer seems to want to hang on. According to Jim Noel with the national weather service station in Wilmington Ohio, expect the warm and wet weather to persist well into Fall. The risk of an early frost is very low, and this is good news for many crops that were planted late. With wet trends forecasted harvest delays might still be an issue. Wet Falls can also raise concerns for crop quality loss due to molding, diseases, and persistent insect feeding. With stink bug populations still very notable, plan to harvest soybeans as soon as the crop matures to prevent seed quality issues. This past week was a very busy week for scouting and assisting with the annual Junior Fair Beef BBQ. It was an amazing turnout of support for the Junior Fair with over 2,200 tickets sold! I also managed to conduct some of my fall weed survey this week which is a statewide initiative to evaluate what weeds seem to be most persistent in row crop fields. The top five weeds that I am seeing the most issues with are common water hemp, Palmer amaranth, Giant Ragweed, Johnsongrass, Common Cocklebur. My fall armyworm traps were very low this week and the squash vine bore trap came up empty! The bad news is my stink bug trapping continues to be high and frog eye leaf spot is progressing much of the soybean crop. Corn silage harvest began across the county and some more hay was made in the second half of the week. The second cutting of hay is pretty much wrapped up and some producers have completed a third cutting as well. So, the question of today is that if the warm and wet weather persist in the fall and the grass keep growing as fast as it is currently, when should hay harvest come to a close?

Many of our cool season perennial forages are preparing for wintertime by translocating starches, sugars, and carbohydrates in the root system. This is a critical process within the plant that allows it to survive our extremely variable winter conditions. When harvest, either mechanical or grazing takes place late in the fall, removal of top growth equates to removal of roots. Plants react to harvesting by depleting energy reserves in the root system to regrow new top growth. This is critical for legumes with higher growing points. It is recommended to stop harvesting six weeks before the first frost. For southern Ohio that is mid-September (on normal years). Raising the cutting height is also helpful in regrowth and winter survival. With the warm and wet predictions for this fall many producers might be tempted to make one last cutting, I would recommend being cautious and evaluate your needs and goals. Many barns are currently full of hay and some even have hay from last season. It might be better to save your time, fuel, machinery, and forage stand by just cleaning up the baler and putting it away for 2022.

