

Weekly Article

8-16-2021

How Can it Be Dry So Soon?

Hello, my Name is Richard Purdin with OSU Extension, Ag and Natural Resource Educator and Community Development Educator for Adams County. I hope to better inform local producers and the public of the latest news in the world of agriculture. It is hard to believe but the end of August is fast approaching, this means summer is almost over. Fall is just around the corner, but the weather sure doesn't show it, with the next two weeks showing highs in the 90's or high 80's it looks like summer might stick around a little while. With that said daytime highs in the 90's and nighttime lows in the upper 60's has really shown just how inefficient all those heavy rain falls received in July were. In my travels, I have noticed a lot of crops to show some stress due to the heat and dry stretch of weather. The soil is quite hard and compacted after large beating rains that tend to runoff and not soak in. So, what are some things we as farmer can do to alleviate the issues with surface compaction and help loosen the soil up. Today I want to discuss some best management practices that can be put into practice to help make our soils more resilient to hard rainfalls.

1. **It all starts with the soil type** – knowing your soil type is important, this is one thing that cannot be changed. Sandy soils are more resilient to surface compaction due to the size of the particle of soil. Sand is the largest mineral particle in the soil. There is larger amount of pore space in between the particles, allowing more air and water to be absorbed into the soil. The downside is that water is easily soaked through the soil profile at a fast rate or lost to evaporation. Silts and clays (most of Adams County soils) on the other hand have much smaller particles that hold tightly together. Silts and Clays will tend to hold on to moisture longer and are prone to having depleted pore space or allowing oxygen into the soil. When large rains contact silts and clays, they can compact the small particles tightly together making oxygen a limited resource in the soil.
2. **Get to know your soil-** Taking soil test can be a financial asset in a farming operation. Not only can taking a routine soil test save you money on fertilizer inputs it can help you understand the impacts of your farming practices. No-till farming has been widely adapted across the county but many, but is it making a difference on soil health? A soil test will tell you your organic matter% (OM), Calcium, and Magnesium amounts. Soils with

high amounts of organic matter are more prone to absorbing moisture and holding on to moisture longer than lower organic matter soils. Soils with higher amounts of calcium and Magnesium have been shown to be healthier, allowing crops to utilize moisture more efficiently.

3. **Protect the soil you have-** Protecting your soil should be a know brainer! You wouldn't want your new \$300,000 combine sit outside year-round, why wouldn't you cover your soil too? Using cover crops and rotating your field to a perennial crop every 3-5 years can help amore the soil surface and add organic matter back to the soil. If you have never tried cover crops before this fall would be a great start. Cereal grains such as Winter wheat, Cereal rye, triticale, barley, oats, and speltz can be sown after soybean and corn harvest.

Some other details to go over.

- September 10th Precision Application field day located at the Ohio Valley Career and Technical Center, 175 Lloyd Road West Union, Ohio 45693. Start time is 9:30 am and end time is 12:00pm. The cost is free and Luch will be provided. Contact Richard Purdin at (937) 544 2339 or email at purdin.19@osu.edu to register by September 6th. The field day will feature flying on cover crops and fungicide on standing crops with a drone. There will be speakers present to talk about the benefits of cover crops and proper grazing and foraging cover crops.
- September 14th, 2021, Adams County BQA/ Cattle Handling workshop will be held at the Adams County fairgrounds (Show Arena) 5:30 to 8:00pm. Contact the Adams County Extension office at (937) 544-2339 to RSVP.
- Farm Science Review Tickets are available at the office, the event will be September 21-23 in person!

From the field

- Corn has reached R-4 to R-5, starting to make a dent.
- Burley Tobacco harvest is in full swing and cigar wrapper tobacco harvest is almost complete.
- Potassium deficiencies are showing up in soybeans in stressed areas of the field (compacted and wet areas)
- Brown Marmorated Stink bug populations on the rise.
- Be on the look out for spotted lantern fly.
- Pumpkin growers need to continue to scout for powdery mildew and the pesky cucumber beetle.