

July 22, 2010

**A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY
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Off-Station Crop Variety Tour Planned

If you missed the annual field day of the NDSU Williston Research Center or would like to get more information on the cereal and pulse crops grown in this area, plan to attend the tour of the off-station research and demonstration plot which is located on the north side of U.S. Highway 2 five miles west of Ray. The tour will be held Tuesday, August 3, beginning at 8:00 a.m.

Numerous varieties of hard spring wheat, durum, barley, oats, peas and lentils were planted May 11. The plantings established well, and growing conditions have been near perfect.

Neil Riveland, Supt. of the Williston Research Center, will share his information about each variety. Dan Waldstein, our new crop protection specialist for northwest North Dakota will give us an update on looming pest problems which growers need to consider when making future planting decisions. One of the pests he plans to discuss is wheat streak mosaic. This disease has the potential of doing serious damage to wheat. It was found in numerous fields in the north central part of North Dakota. I am not aware of it being a problem in this area, but it has the potential of reaching this far west.

Brad Miller, Agronomist for Dakota Growers Pasta, also has his durum variety plots at this site. He will be available to report new developments.

Neil's staff has nicely identified each variety in the NDSU plot. So, if you cannot attend the official tour, give yourself a walk-through at your convenience.

Cost-Share Herbicide Available

Jim Basaraba, Williams County Weed Control Officer, asked me to remind landowners that the county weed board has authorized the cost-share of the herbicide Milestone. This is a very effective herbicide for Canada thistle; however, it is labeled only in non-cropland such as pastures, rangeland and CRP. Milestone is generally safe around most tree species except those in the legume family. It can be used near but not in streams and ditches with flowing water.

Milestone is a bit spendy but with the county weed program covering 60% of the cost, it becomes affordable.

Blossom End Rot on Tomatoes

I don't know of anyone who does not cherish the taste of a fresh home-grown tomato. However, getting them to the table can be challenging. In the spring gardeners try to avoid frost damage. After that they may have to deal with diseases such as wilt, blights and leaf roll or insects like mites, aphids and worms.

Then there is the perennial problem of blossom end-rot. This is a round, sunken, water-soaked spot that develops on the bottom. The spot eventually grows to a much larger spot that can affect the entire bottom of the fruit.

One of the primary causes of blossom-end rot is extreme fluctuations in soil moisture. Growers usually put tomato plants in the best of soil which can be very porous. This along with some suddenly hot July and August temperatures can change moisture levels in the soil very rapidly.

The solution to preventing blossom-end rot is to maintain uniform soil moisture. Mulches will help but be willing to monitor soil moisture when there is a sudden increase in temperature. Watering the tomatoes heavily before a short vacation is a recipe for blossom-end rot.

The rotted area is unsightly but the rest of the tomato is edible.