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College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences

Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News

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a newsletter for commercial growers of fruit and vegetable crops

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." Aristotle

Address any questions or comments regarding this newsletter to the individual authors listed after each article or to its editor, Rick Weinzierl, 217-333-6651, weinzier@uiuc.edu. The *Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News* is available on the web at: <http://www.ipm.uiuc.edu/ifvn/index.html>. To receive email notification of new postings of this newsletter, call or write Rick Weinzierl at the number or email address above.

For your calendar ... Strawberry Plasticulture Planting Workshop on September 26 at Bill Bass' farm south of Carbondale. **2006 Midwest Apple Improvement Association Annual Meeting** at the St. Claire County Farm Bureau Building, October 4. See Elizabeth Wahle's notes below for details on these three programs. **Illinois Specialty Crops and Agritourism Conference**, January 11-13, 2007, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield ... details to follow in later issues of this newsletter.

In this issue ...

Regional Updates (from Elizabeth Wahle (including notes on a farm sale September 25, as well as upcoming programs) and Maurice Ogutu)

Notes from Chris Doll (fruit harvests, cork pitting, soil sampling, strawberry irrigation, propagation reminders)

University of Illinois Extension Specialists in Fruit & Vegetable Production & Pest Management

Regional Updates

In southern and southwestern Illinois ...

A last-minute sale notice for those in southern Illinois ... Barlow's Berry & Vegetable Farm will be having a retirement dispersal sale on Monday, September 25th. The sale will be conducted at 14026 Ewing Road, Whittington, IL 62897. Registration and Inspection begins at 8:00 a.m. and the sale commences at 10:00 a.m. For those with web access, here's the sale bill.

Much of the southern region received rain in recent days, some getting more than needed. Closer to I-70 fairly mild storms were experienced, but areas to the south experienced increasing wind levels. I received a few reports of extra apples on the ground due to high winds. And of course more rain is on the way.

Several crops are in harvest, both fruits and vegetables. The main apples in harvest right now are Golden Delicious, Jonathan, and Red Delicious. Recent cool weather, especially in the evenings, has improved color on the reds. I have received several calls from growers following the peach season that their size overall was down, but taste was excellent. Several commented they should have thinned more in face of the heavy early fruit set and early onset of dry conditions. We're still seeing a few late peaches such as Parade in the markets. Everbearing raspberries have been in harvest for a few weeks, and if my bushes are a good indicator, I will be picking well into October. Many raspberry plantings look rough this season after a barrage of Japanese beetles and extended periods of drought. Grape harvest is drawing to an end. Reports from some areas indicate heavy bird predation this season, some even in netted plantings.

I have noticed several markets, mainly those that don't have a fruit or fall vegetable emphasis, closing for the season—a clear sign that fall is upon us. The sweet potatoes I have seen so far are huge—one is a meal in itself. The other fall crops in harvest include pumpkins, greens and okra. Bush lima beans are coming along. The late plantings of peppers and tomatoes are still going strong, but this upcoming cold weather may slow them down a bit. We've seen no serious harvest of horseradish yet.

For growers interested in strawberry plasticulture production, a planting workshop is being held Tuesday, September 26th, at 5:00pm. The workshop is sponsored by University of Illinois Extension and will be hosted by Bill Bass at his farm located six miles south of the Southern Illinois University-Carbondale campus on the northeast corner of Bass Lane and US Route 51. Bernie Colvis, a leader in Midwest plasticulture strawberry production, will be the featured speaker. Bernie will have on hand his planting equipment and will discuss the finer details associated with successful establishment of a strawberry plasticulture system. For more information, contact Elizabeth Wahle at wahle@uiuc.edu or 618-692-9434, or Jeff Kindhart, Dixon Springs Ag Center, at jkindhar@uiuc.edu or 618-695-2444.

The 2006 Midwest Apple Improvement Association Annual Meeting will be held Wednesday, October 4th. Registration at the door is \$10.00 (includes lunch) and begins at 7:30 am at the St. Clair Farm Bureau. The afternoon program will move to Eckert's Country Store & Farms in Belleville for a tour of seedling blocks. Invited speakers for the morning program include Jim Eckert (MAIA President), Peter Hirst (Purdue University), Diane Miller (The Ohio State University), Wally and Wanda Heuser (Summit Sales), Mitch Lynd (Lynd Fruit Farm), and Chris Doll (University of Illinois Extension, retired). A complete program is posted at <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/regions/hort/>. For further details, contact Elizabeth Wahle at wahle@uiuc.edu or 618-692-9434.

Mark your calendars now. For those individuals needing to update their Illinois Food Handler license, a 5-hour recertification training will be held January 11, 2007, in conjunction with the Illinois Specialty Crops and Agritourism Conference at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield, IL. This recertification course will meet all requirements for Illinois Department of Public Health, and will be taught by a University of Illinois Nutrition and Wellness Educator. This recertification is required every five years, and individuals attending must hold an **unexpired** license. There will be a fee (to be determined at a later date), and it will include all training materials, snacks and meals. Attendees must be present for the full five hours of training. If you are attending the Illinois Specialty Crops Conference, this is a good opportunity to complete your recertification too. For further details, contact Elizabeth Wahle at wahle@uiuc.edu or 618-692-9434.

Illinois apple cider makers will again get a chance to see who's the best in the state. After a successful run last January, the 18th Annual Cider Contest and the 5th Annual Hard Cider Contest will again be hosted at the Illinois Specialty Crops Conference in Springfield, January 11 -12, 2007, and will be sponsored by the Illinois State Horticulture Society. Illinois contestants will compete against other Illinois producers for the Illinois State awards. Illinois ciders makers will also have the opportunity to submit their best ciders to challenge the out-of-state entries for the North American and Midwest Awards. Midwest awards are open to states surrounding and including Illinois, and North American awards are open to all cider makers in North America. For the Apple Cider contest, contestants are asked to submit a one-gallon full container of unclarified apple cider that may be fresh or have been stored frozen. Previously frozen samples must be thawed by 10:00a.m. on Friday, January 12th in time for judging. For contestants unable to register in person, ship your cider directly to the conference: Crowne Plaza, Attn: Sarah Lynch, 3000 Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL 61703. Be sure to label shipped packages "Cider Judging Entry-Keep Refrigerated." Shipped entries will be accepted by the hotel 48 hours prior to the start of the conference. Those making hard apple cider will want to get started now in order to have the maximum amount of fermentation time. Make sure your product is hard apple cider, not hard apple cider wine. Although there is no definite break or definition where hard apple cider stops and where wine starts, we are looking for a hard apple cider product with alcohol content below 8%. Hard apple ciders containing other fruit flavoring, such as pear, cherry, peach, or cranberry will not be considered for judging. Hard apple cider contestants are asked to submit a one-quart, but no more than a one-gallon container of product for the hard apple cider-judging contest.

Registration for all apple cider contests will be on Friday, January 12th, from 8:00-9:45am. Judging will commence at 10:00am. The fee will be \$10 per entry. Awards will be announced during the dinner banquet on Friday, January 12th. For additional Cider Contest and Hard Cider Contest information, contact Elizabeth Wahle, Contest Coordinator, wahle@uiuc.edu or 618-692-9434.

Elizabeth Wahle (618-692-9434; wahle@uiuc.edu)

In northern Illinois ... the last two to three weeks have brought a mix of cloudy and sunny days with highs in the 60s to low 80s and lows in the low 50s to 60s (though colder earlier this week). The region received rainfall of 1-4 inches between September 6 and 17, with the greater amounts recorded in the Kankakee area. Wet conditions have led to development of additional disease problems in fruits and vegetables in some areas.

Picking of apple varieties such as Honey Crisp, Jonathan, Cortland, Fuji, and Liberty is going on in pick-your-own orchards in the region. Fall-bearing raspberry picking is still going on as well. Picking of sweet corn, peppers, tomatoes, melons, cucumbers, and squash continues. The heavy rains in some areas contributed to increased problems with such diseases as bacterial spot in pumpkins, phytophthora rot (peppers, and vine crops), angular & cercospora leaf spots (cucumbers and melons), and fusarium fruit rots in pumpkins and other vine crops. Bacterial

canker, bacterial spot, and early blight have been observed in tomatoes, along with mosaic viruses and powdery mildew in pumpkin and squash. Squash bugs, cucumber beetles, and western corn rootworm beetles are also present in pumpkin and squash. Pumpkin harvesting has commenced on some farms, particularly for the wholesale market.

Maurice Ogutu (708-352-0109; ogutu@uiuc.edu)

Notes from Chris Doll

(Written on September 19) Fall will arrive officially early on Saturday morning, but the current weather makes it seem like an early fall. A nice rain last weekend followed by temps of 50 degrees on Tuesday means that it is more like apple weather. It should be a great week for growers of red apples and those who want a red blush on the yellow varieties. The phenology chart shows that we are a few days ahead of last year and several days ahead of normal. That means that the sugars are generally present to help the coloring along. The cool weather should help against pressure of fruit drop, but NAA and Retain treatments should be effective.

Some beautiful Jonathans have been marketed, and the Reds and Goldenes will follow. The grocers have finally decided to push the volume of 3-pound bags by lowering the price to 2/\$5.00. The U.S. Apple Commission crop estimates show a 6% increase in volume over 2005 for the Midwest states, but a 6 percent decrease from 2005 for the nation. The figures for Illinois were up 8 percent and Michigan was up 2 percent.

Recent apple orchard observations included little or no sooty blotch and flyspeck, low levels of bitter rot, a fair amount of necrotic leaf blotch on Goldenes and other susceptible varieties, a few recent codling moth entries but much less than last year, and occasional San Jose scale on fruits. A combination of Apogee sprays and a very dry situation makes the orchard a candidate for minimal pruning this winter. Other blocks have plenty of growth, especially on trees with lighter crops. I have also noted some uneven ripening beginning with Honeycrisp, but also noticeable on Jons, Goldenes, Jonagold, and Sun crisp. Does anyone else want to blame the heat or give another reason?

Peach harvest is complete. Drought conditions caused reduced fruit size for some growers and also caused a reduction in overall shoot production. Some San Jose scale has been seen on peaches also, so increased oil or better coverage will be required for next year.

Deer are working over some orchards and hunting season cannot come fast enough. In the meantime, some soap or repellent sprays might be in order. Some vole activity has been noted too, both the pine and meadow species. Sheltered bait stations can be put out at any time or if a grower spends lots of time in the orchard, having some bait available to drop in the hole or runway when fresh activity is seen will help a little. The Penn State Fruit Production Guide Budgets lists rodenticides as a \$10 an acre expense.

The same 2006 Penn State Budget for fresh market apples (<http://tfpg.cas.psu.edu/90.htm>) lists fungicide costs of \$205 as 8% and insecticide costs of \$268 as 10% of the total variable cost of \$2763 per acre. Labor accounted for 71% of the total cost or \$1810 per acre. The spray costs are for 12 sprays, which is 2-4 fewer than most southern Illinois growers apply.

The Midwest Apple Improvement Association meeting on October 4 at Eckert Orchards near Belleville will be a good opportunity to see and hear about new varieties. I hope to see you there.

Chris Doll

Words of Wisdom ...bumper stickers worth reading ...

- My child was "Inmate of the Month" at the California Youth Correctional Center.
- Your kid may be an honor student, but YOU are still an IDIOT.
- I want to die in my sleep like my grandfather ... not screaming and yelling like the passengers in his car.
- I brake for no one.
- Keep honking, I'm reloading.
- I brake for ... no apparent reason.
- Forget about World Peace, Visualize Using Your Turn Signal.

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