

Field Crops Newsletter

Granville and Person County
Mikavla Graham

Tobacco Notes – Finishing Up In the Field

I have been out to many farms this month with cases of black shank and other foliar leaf spot diseases. Black shank, in particular, is showing up on varieties that are typically highly resistant to the disease. While we aren't completely sure why this is happening, Dr. Matthew Vann and I spoke of a theory a few weeks ago. This year, the tobacco season started off dry. This allowed plants to develop very large root systems. This is a good thing in many cases, but when looking at disease potential, it could be a contributing factor to the black shank incidence we are seeing. With large root systems come a large surface area where the disease can infect. It also means potentially increased injury when cultivating in season. What could have happened is an increase in the amount of damaged roots, which in turn caused an opening where the disease could come in at a higher rate than in other seasons. I do want to point out that I have seen cases where NC1226 or NC960 is planted beside other varieties that are known to have higher black shank resistance, and the visual difference between the two is astonishing (see the picture below). No recommendation, just an observation I wanted to share.



GL 365 (left) beside NC 960 (right).



Brown spot and frog-eye leaf spot.

I have also seen foliar leaf spots, such as frog-eye leaf spot and angular leaf spot, hop onto leaves in fields very quickly, typically following a rain. This is just a warning to keep you eye out for those as we get well into the priming part of the season. Realistically, there is one product that has the ability to slow down the spread of these diseases – Howler. This is an organic product, and is not a silver bullet, but has been shown to reduce the spread of these leaf spot diseases for about 2 weeks after application. If nothing else, it could hold the diseases off until you can get into the field and pull some leaves.

If you see these symptoms in your field and want a diagnosis from NC State's Plant Disease and Insect Clinic, please let me know. I am more than happy to come to your farm and take some samples.

September 2022

INSIDE

Tobacco Notes

Best Time to Buy Fertilizer

Winter Needs Assessment

Upcoming Events

This newsletter is designed to give you up to date information on crops from NC State University and other sources. For more information:

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Best Time of Year to Buy Fertilizer: Seasonal Patterns

By Elaine Kub, Progressive Farmer Contributing Analyst

The excerpt below is from a Progressive Farmer article. The full article can be found at (https://go.ncsu.edu/progressivefarmer_buyingfertilizer)

Unfortunately, we are all now a little gun-shy about fall fertilizer price patterns, after the shock of 2021's price rally, driven more by sudden supply problems (production plant shutdowns, international phosphorus tariffs, skyrocketing natural gas prices during the Russian invasion of Ukraine) instead of by predictable demand. If we knew prices were going to embark on another unrelentingly upward path from mid-September to next April, then we'd surely want to lock in prices today.

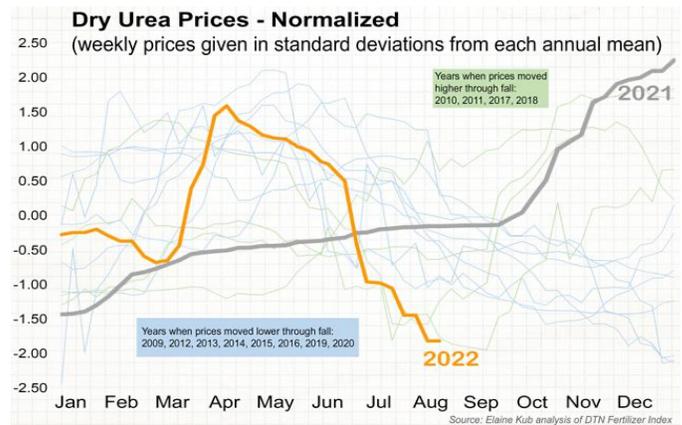
But we don't know and the backwards-looking statistics aren't a very confident guide either.

(Read DTN's latest Fertilizer Outlook column here: https://go.ncsu.edu/progressivefarmer_nitrogenfertilizers)

By pure numbers, the first week of September has tended to show the lowest z scores: an average of 0.54 times the standard deviation below the annual average. I've averaged the many years' worth of weekly average retail fertilizer prices into monthly average z scores, and if we leave out 2021's bizarre behavior, here is the rough pattern:

MONTH AVE ST DEVIATIONS AWAY FROM THE ANNUAL MEAN

January	-0.19
February	0.13
March	0.45
April	0.57
May	0.64
June	0.29
July	0.01
August	-0.43
September	-0.45
October	-0.34
November	-0.33
December	-0.38



Normalizing urea prices from 2009 through 2022 shows a predictable pattern of relatively high prices during planting season and a less-predictable annual low in early September. (Chart by Elaine Kub)

For instance, to get the z score for the week of Sept. 8, 2017, dry urea at \$302 per ton was \$34 below the 2017 average of \$336, and that difference was -1.95 times the 2017 standard deviation of \$18 per ton. (Also see consistent findings for urea, anhydrous ammonia and liquid N in Gary Schnitkey's April 2016 (<https://go.ncsu.edu/illinoisfertilizerseasonality>))

I must warn you, however, the z scores during fall were much more scattered throughout the years -- sometimes prices go higher; sometimes prices go lower. There is much less statistical significance in the historical data from the fall months and therefore much less predictive power.

Therefore, it's tricky to use the past as a guide for today's dilemma: Should we book 2023 needs now before hurricane season affects natural gas prices or before fall fertilizer application drives up demand? Or should we wait and expect to see prices continue to dwindle lower, the way they did in 2012, back toward a more typical price level? As Russ Quinn put it, "Boy, it sure goes down a lot slower than it goes up." The price for dry urea, as our benchmark for all nitrogen-based fertilizers, currently averages \$812 per ton in the DTN Fertilizer Index, an average of retailer bids across the country. That's almost double the average throughout the previous decade when, with the exceptions of late 2011 and 2012, it never ventured above \$600 per ton.

As we all know from last fall, and from the overall inflationary environment we're living in, we may simply be in a totally new price regime. Predictions based on historical data may be inappropriate and unhelpful. Each market participant will choose to handle the uncertainty in their own way.

Comments above are for educational purposes only and are not meant as specific trade recommendations. The buying and selling of grain or grain futures or options involve substantial risk and are not suitable for everyone.

Winter Programming Needs Assessment

I need YOUR help to support your operation!

Growers! Help me in planning programs for this winter. I would like to identify program topics that you and your farm would benefit from. Please fill out this assessment so I can better serve you! You can fill this out online (<https://forms.gle/9WSpE946thFHZJdg7>) or physically on the form below. To get physical forms back to me, return it by bringing a physical copy to the Granville or Person County Extension office, send a picture to mikayla_graham@ncsu.edu, or text a picture to 704-798-4121.

1. If you were to attend a field day or workshop on WHEAT, what topics would you like to discuss. Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most useful and 1 being the least useful. Please choose "0" if it would not be useful at all.

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Nitrogen Application Timing and Management	<input type="radio"/>					
Weed Control Programs	<input type="radio"/>					
Scouting Best Practices	<input type="radio"/>					
Disease Monitoring and Control	<input type="radio"/>					
Wheat Marketing and Risk Management	<input type="radio"/>					

2. If I offered a weekly workshop, what topics would you be most interested in hearing about? Please choose any that would be of interest.

- Farm Transitions
- Soil Tools to Increase Productivity
- Tobacco Weed Risk Assessment Tool
- Grain Variety Selection Tool 101
- Are Cover Crops a Fit on Your Farm?
- NC State Climate Office

3. What time would you be most likely to attend this workshop in the winter months?

- Morning: 9-10AM
- Lunchtime: 12-1PM
- Evening: 6-7PM

4. Are there any other topics you are interested in that I did not mention above?

5. Are there any specific events that you believe would be beneficial to your operation

