

IFMA Congress to jump-start with international perspective

By TOM C. DORAN
AgriNews Publications

NORMAL, Ill. — This summer's International Farm Management Association Congress will hit the ground running with the opening speaker providing an overview of world agriculture.

Robert Thompson, Gardner Endowed Chair in Agriculture Policy at the University of Illinois, will kick off the congress on July 20 with his global perspective, followed by a preview of the week's program.

The IFMA 17 will be held at Illinois State University with speaker sessions on tap for July 20, July 22 and July 24. Day tours are slated for July 21 and July 23.

The Illinois Society of Professional Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers and the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers are hosts of the gathering. Theme of the congress is "Agriculture: Food, Fiber and Energy for the Future."

In his address at ISU's Braden Auditorium, Thompson plans to discuss the financial crisis, biotech's importance, environmental regulations, public policy and other issues. He will put the financial crisis and its impact on world agriculture and demand into perspective.

"I plan to talk some about the impact of the rapidly growing economies in Asia in particular on the international demand for food," he said.

"The most pessimistic outlook that I pick up on China is that their growth rate would drop from around 10 to 5 percent real economic growth this year.

"Of course, (the U.S.) is going to be negative. India is expected to be positive, perhaps something like 5 percent. Even though the high income countries are going backwards, Asia is still going



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to be going forward so the demand for food will be growing.

"I'll be talking about trying to link macroeconomics phenomena with what's going on in the markets and draw the distinction between Asia and many of the developing countries and the situations that we're confronting in the high-income countries."

Thompson plans to discuss technology and the importance of biotechnology.

"I'll try to emphasize the benefits that we've been seeing in this country from the applications of biotechnology in corn and soybeans and the increasing interest of wheat growers in it," he said.

He stresses the importance of investing in agriculture research, including biotech "as the global demand for food continues to increase, and as we try to meet some of our energy needs based on biofuels in the world."

"There is no scientific basis for fearing ag biotechnology on the basis of either human health or environmental damage," he said.

Environmental regulations also need to be addressed, as well.

"I think it's inevitable that we will see tougher environmental regulations in this

country than we've had in the past, probably not as stringent as western Europe has, but certainly moving further in that direction," Thompson said.

"One point I want to make is as we look to the next several years, I think there are a number of areas of public policy that are going to have a much greater potential impact on the well being of agriculture in this country than what we traditionally thought of as agricultural policy.

"I just think what's in the farm bill that the commodity programs are going to be second in the order of importance to macroeconomic policy to environmental policy to energy policy, probably food safety policy and maybe animal welfare policy."

Thompson added he also will communicate to foreign participants some of the uniqueness of what is going on in the United States today and how it may differ from what they know in their home countries.

Thompson also was among the keynote speakers at the international congress hosted by Ireland two years ago. The event is held every other year.

"I thought it was a great meeting over there, and I know there was a lot of enthusiasm for coming to the Corn Belt," he said.

"There is a great deal of interest obviously in what's going on in the Corn Belt in general, and a lot of people have had their eyes particularly focused here as the corn-based ethanol industry has expanded.

"People from around the world who will be coming to visit will certainly have considerable interest in how people are seeing the future of corn-based ethanol and what it means for the cost of feed to folks around the world, and other countries who buy our

corn or buy from other suppliers, as well as soybean meal."

While Thompson was in the United Kingdom and Denmark for speaking engagements last year, he found people to have great interest in learning more about price risk management practices in the United States.

"The common agricultural policy of the European Union basically fixed domestic prices for years," he said. "They set an intervention price for the year, and then if

the world market price was below that, they would charge the difference as in import duty.

"If the world market price was above it, they would pay the difference through an export subsidy, but, as a result, they kept the domestic price basically fixed throughout each cropping season, and farmers really had no reason to develop price risk management skills nor did they.

"But now with the policy reforms that they've undergone in recent years, all of a

sudden they're in a whole new ballgame."

Day passes are available to the public to attend talks not only by Thompson, but also many other prominent speakers. The day passes for the Monday and Wednesday morning sessions will be \$75, and the day pass for Friday's daylong session is \$100.

A registration desk will be located at ISU's Braden Auditorium on those days. Day passes do not include the lunch. Food is available at Bone Student Center.

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When facing compacted soils, practice continuous no-till for better crop yields

HOYTVILLE, Ohio — When using heavy machinery on cropland under potential compaction situations, farmers may get better yields by practicing continuous no-till than with annual deep tillage.

According to results from a six-year Ohio State University compaction study at the Northwest Agricultural Research Station near Hoytville, land in continuous no-till showed less effect from intentional compaction than soil that was deep tilled each fall.

Researchers compacted corn and soybean rotation plots in the fall of 2002 and 2005 using a 20 ton per axle, 600-bushel grain cart.

Averaged over six years, corn yields were reduced by 15 percent on subsoiled plots, as opposed to a 9 percent reduction in no-till fields. For soybeans, yields on subsoiled plots were down 24 percent, compared to a 13 percent yield drop with no-till.

"We think continuous no-till performed better because of the more desirable soil structure," said Randall Reeder, Ohio State University Extension agricultural engineer.

"Good no-till soils are firm, with natural channels for root growth and movement of water and air. Tillage tends to destroy that soil structure."

Previous compaction research at the same site gave results more favorable to subsoiling, but there was a key difference.

Once annual subsoiling began on the compacted plots, there was no additional intentional compaction for 12 years. In that situation, subsoiling gave consistently higher corn and soybean yields, compared to shallow chisel plowing.

When the research practices were changed in 2002 to include intentional compaction every three years, and continuous no-till replaced chisel plowing, the benefit of deep tillage disappeared, Reeder said.

"The current research is much closer to the real world because the average square foot of soil on farms with big equipment is going to be driven on at least every three or four years," he said.

Soil moisture plays a big role in compaction, Reeder said, and as spring progresses and Ohio receives more rain, soil moisture may be the factor in deciding when to start planting.

"Wet soil compacts deeper than dry soil," he explained. "Typically in late April and early May, there is only one day out of three that is dry enough to plant."

Reeder said that under compacted soils, farmers could easily lose 5 to 10 percent of their corn or soybean yields. So, how do farmers know if their fields are compacted?

"Most farmers don't know, because they don't have any non-compacted area for comparison," he answered. "But there is a way to get around this mystery. It's called controlled traffic. With controlled traffic, a grower never has to be concerned about whether or not the soil is susceptible to compaction."

Controlled traffic is a method whereby all farm equipment is the same width — or multiples of that width — and traffic is confined to specific paths year after year.

Without switching to controlled traffic, there are other ways growers can help minimize compaction.

Run tires at the correct pressure for the load.

"Many farm tires are over-inflated, which reduces the tire footprint, increasing compaction," Reeder said. "Many farmers can easily reduce tire pressure and it won't cost them anything."

Remove excess weights that make a tractor heavier than necessary. Extra ballast needed for a tillage operation could be removed when pulling a planter.

Add more tires, or switch to bigger tires or rubber tracks because the more rubber that comes into contact with the ground, the less pressure on the soil.

Consider improving surface and subsurface drainage. A good drainage system helps the soil dry out faster, reducing the potential for soil compaction.

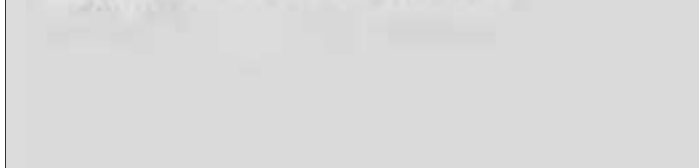
Compaction can have a number of impacts on the soil and the plants growing in it. Compaction destroys the soil structure and causes erosion by keeping water out.

It prevents plant roots from penetrating deep into the soil, and traps carbon dioxide while preventing oxygen from reaching plant roots. The result suffocates the plant either killing the plant or impacting yield performance.

Continuous no-till may be

one practice to help minimize the negative effects, Reeder said.

THE SYNGENTA FIELD REPORT



Prevention and Cure – Important for those Diseases You Don't See

Growers know they need to scout their fields; they understand the importance of early disease detection and have seen the studies that show the potential return on investment when incorporating a fungicide in their crop protection program. But what about the areas they don't get to on a regular basis? Or fields that are planted in intervals, meaning disease pressure affects the crop at different stages? These are situations when a fungicide with two modes of action – preventative AND curative – is helpful.

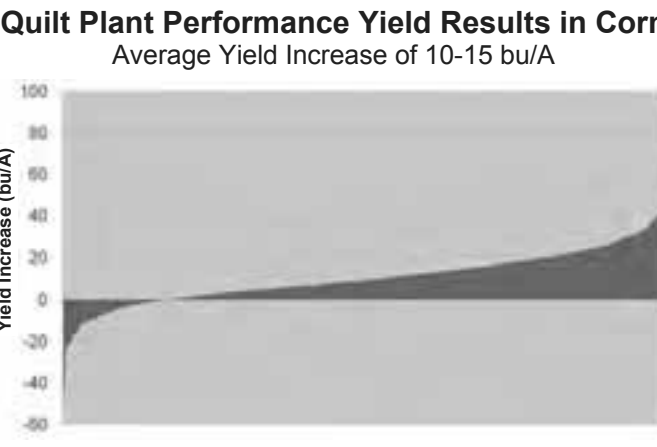
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According to The Ohio State University and Purdue University Extension partnership newsletter "Ag Answers," gray leaf spot can cause up to a 50 percent yield loss in corn, depending on the level of disease present.¹ Additional data from Iowa State University suggests even greater losses of up to 69 percent.²

Quilt includes proven active ingredients that stop fungal growth and spore germination to combat diseases that reduce yields. The active

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Source: 2006-2008 field comparisons across the United States. There is an 82 percent positive yield response.

For more information, visit www.farmassist.com, www.quiltfungicide.com, or call Syngenta Customer Center at 1-866-SYNGENTA (A) (866-796-4368).

¹ Dr. Pat Lipps, The Ohio State University Extension Newsletter, 1999.
² G. P. Munkvold, et. al. Probabilities for Profitable Fungicide Use Against Gray Leaf Spot in Hybrid Maize, 2001.

