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# CropLinks

information on forages, corn and cereals

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This issue of CropLinks contains an insert of the Corn Guide (which has multi-year yield results of the top performing grain and silage corn hybrids). There is also articles about the 2015 cropping season, selecting soybean varieties, plus an update on the Atlantic Grains Council trials done in Nova Scotia by Perennia and DalAC.

## ***How did the 2015 Cropping Season Treat You?***

Every cropping year has its unique quirks with 2015 however, sort of cornering the market on funky weather. All that snow from mid-February onward didn't melt out of fields until May 5 - 15th. The late snow melt meant fertilizer on

### ***Ordering Soybean and Cereal Seed for 2016***

The 2015 Maritime Soybean Test information and 2016 Cereal Guide to Variety Selection won't be on our website until December 10-15th. This shouldn't be a problem for cereal where there aren't the November-December early booking discount programs that both corn and soybeans have. For soybeans, I'd suggest you go to our website ([www.perennia.ca](http://www.perennia.ca)) and on the Quick Links found on the right side of screen, click on soybeans and the 2014 Maritime Soybean Variety Trials report is there. Shown in this report are the multi-year yields for Roundup Ready varieties (that are less than 2550 heat units), Roundup Ready (over 2550 heat units) and Non-Roundup Ready varietal performance results. Please consider that if you want May 5-15th planted soybeans harvested by September 25-October 5th, then you need to be realistic in the variety and heat unit rating you choose. Most Valley growers that want to plant winter wheat on soybean fields need to be using 2425-2625 heat unit rated varieties. From these Maritime Soybean Test results and from weighing off some fields this year, I don't see the yield gain from using 2650- 2800 heat unit varieties here.

winter wheat and 1st cut haylage went on at least 3 weeks late, and most corn and soybean planting didn't occur until May 16-30th. This was followed up with cool June- mid July weather which really hampered vegetative development in corn and consequently resulted in pollination/ kernel formation happening at last two weeks later than normal.

July 2015 was also very dry with the Greenwood-Windsor area only having around 1 inch of rainfall (25-30mm) and the Truro -Antigonish areas not faring much better with 40-65 mm. The weather complaints ended in July, with both August and September generally having an extra 25% heat over the same timeframe in 2014. Another bonus for many growers was the killing frost of -1.5 to -2°C on corn did not occur in the majority of fields until October 26-27th. There were some exceptions in the Shubenacadie-Truro areas (and other low lying areas around NS) where a killing frost on corn right down to the "cob leaf" did occur in late September. The October-November harvest conditions this year are much drier compared to last year when October to the end of December had 200 mm more rainfall than the 30 year norms for Kentville (i.e. 527mm versus 333 mm).

For many growers 2015 ended up being a very good yielding year. Although yields were lower for those growers with a fair amount of winter wheat, soybean or corn acreage on either sandier soils that suffered from July dryness, OR had cornfields killed prematurely by a late September frost. Here's a quick crop yield summary...

*continued on page 2*

**Alfalfa-grass Haylage:** more than normal winterkill on alfalfa and even some grass species (worse on older fields). Decent 2nd and 3rd cuts made up somewhat for lighter 1st cut yields.

**Grass Haylage:** reasonable 1st cut yields when harvested 1-2 weeks later than normal. Low 2nd cut yields in mid-July to early August due to low rainfalls on the shallower rooted grasses. There were lots of late September grass silage harvesting to hopefully provide adequate stored forage inventory until next June. More silage corn will be fed on many of these farms to compensate for less stored grass silage or hay.

**Winter Wheat:** there were the biggest yields ever for many Valley growers with these fields going 2.2-2.5 tonnes/acre at 14-17% moisture. Valley or Truro area growers on sandier soil had yield reductions, as well as some Canning-Grand Pre growers that had disease problems during the grain fill period.

**Soybeans:** generally NS had very good yields on soils that had enough moisture retention through the July dryness. Field yields of 1.2-1.5 tonnes/acre occurred for many growers.

**Corn:** both grain and silage corn yields were quite variable from field to field. Corn struggled more than soybeans and wheat with the cool June-mid July soil conditions. The July dryness added to this stress on the sandier soils. In central NS especially, more grain corn yields will be down on fields that were killed in late September before black layer physiological maturity occurred. The Annapolis Valley corn yields are high for some growers, but average or slightly above for most growers. Fortunately by mid-November we are well along on our grain corn harvest. If our limited drying capacity can steadily keep moving product through, and our weather cooperates somewhat, we'll hopefully be pretty much done corn harvest by December 5th.

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## ***2015 Atlantic Grains Council (AGC) Trials done in Nova Scotia by DalAC or Perennia***

- Through Growing Forward 2 funding from the Government of Canada and Nova Scotia, plus the Maritime growers levy there is about \$500,000 in new research funding for corn, soybeans and cereals in the overall region. This funding will also be in place for 2016 and 2017.
- Doug MacDonald and the team at DalAC have used some of this AGC funding to do several small plot research trials on a range of corn nitrogen fertilizer rates, soybean inoculum assessments, low nitrogen and sulphur fertilizer rates on soybeans, date of soybean seeding trial and evaluation of several cereal fungicides
- Perennia had 14 fields strip trials that had individual treatment/harvest strips of 0.3 to 0.6 acres each, with 2-3 replicates per field. These trials were:
  1. nitrogen fertilizer on winter wheat (2N rates and 2N sources at Bruce Parsons, Kevin Baker and two of James Kinsman's fields)
  2. assessment of 3 soybean plant populations on 15 inch row spacing (at Dykeview Farms, Nick deGraaf and Duncan McCurdy's)
  3. soybean fungicide evaluation of Priaxor applied at early flowering on fields of Kevin Baker and Fred & Duane Scott's
  4. corn nitrogen topdress fertilizer source comparison of Ammonium Nitrate or a 50/50 blend of AN and ESN Urea or Agrotain treated Urea. These 5 trial fields were at the DalAC farm, Mike and Amanda Eisses, Justin Beck, James Kinsman and Kevin Baker's. All fertilizer treatments on either corn or winter wheat were applied by the same customer applicator with an on-board monitor and rate adjustment technology on this Kuhn spinner spreader.
- Many thanks to the growers that hosted one or more of these AGC-NS crop trials done by either DalAC or Perennia
- Also thanks to you NS growers that have had a levy taken on corn (\$0.35 /tonne), wheat (\$0.50/tonne) and soybeans (\$1.00/tonne) sold to participating buyers
- A huge thank-you for the extra administration work done by Biggs Farm Ltd., West Nova Agro Commodities, Parrish and Heimbecker, Clarence Farm Services, Nutreco, Co-op Atlantic, Brennan Farms and other Maritime buyers in collecting this grower research levy on every tonne purchased by them
- There should be lots of extra crop management information available to Maritime growers produced from this Atlantic Grain Council initiative
- Plans are being worked on to hold grower information sessions in Berwick and Shubenacadie in mid-February to present the results from the 2015 AGC-NS crop trials