

Area

Despite spring freeze corn looks good, agronomist says

By KIMBERLY BRANDT
Oberlin Herald

OBERLIN — The corn crop in Decatur County has sustained some damage from the May 14 freeze and the wind.

Brian Olson, agronomist with Kansas State University Research and Extension, said the corn did suffer some freeze damage, but since the temperatures warmed up right after that, most of the crop has pulled through. There has also been some damage from wind shredding

the leaves that are out on the plant. The growing point on corn is below the ground, he said, which is good. On soybeans and sunflowers, that point is above ground, so those plants are a little more sensitive. The corn is at a stage where it hasn't yet shot up, he said. It is establishing the root system below the ground pretty extensively. In the next couple weeks, it will start to gain height if the area has the moisture for it to grow. Olson said each corn plant uses

four-tenths to five-tenths of an inch of water a day, especially when it starts to gain size. The area doesn't really have the subsoil moisture needed to sustain the crop, he said, but we could get a good harvest with timely rains. By timely, Olson added, he means just about once a week. Corn, milo and other crops can grow with little to no sub soil moisture, he said, if there are timely rains. That is up to Mother Nature. Olson said it is still too early to

see any other problems with the corn crop. Having little to no subsoil moisture is a problem with sunflowers, too, he said. One of the advantages of that crop is that the plants are able to go down very deep to get water. If there isn't any water in the ground, however, that advantage is gone. Grain sorghum, or milo, he said, is a good dryland alternative for farmers, but still it needs water. "It will be a wait-and-see game

this year," he said. "Last spring, there was a good rainfall pattern in Decatur County and there was a good wheat crop. The rain shut off at the end of June, but there was a pretty good profile left. This year, there is hardly any soil profile and it doesn't seem that Mother Nature is going to give us a good weather pattern, but she could." Olson said they are planting a test plot of corn, sorghum and sunflowers. He said if they get anything at the end of the year, there will be a

tour or they will do something with it. Typically, he said, corn takes anywhere from 96 to 114 days to mature. A lot of people use corn that matures in 100 to 105 days. The longer it takes to mature the more water the plant uses, he said, but the higher yield. Once the plants are mature, then they dry down for harvest. Normally harvest comes in October or November, depending on the weather and if a field is being cut for silage or grain.

Stearman Fly-In planned Saturday and Sunday

By KAREN KRIEN
The Saint Francis Herald

ST. FRANCIS — Those attending the 22nd annual Stearman Fly-In have begun arriving in St. Francis for the weekend events. Many people come early so they can be up at sunrise to watch the hot air balloons fly at 7 a.m. Central Time both Saturday and Sunday. The takeoffs depend upon the weather, wind speeds and forecasts. The main events start Saturday morning when Stearman aircraft (World War II-vintage open-cockpit, fabric-covered biplanes powered by radial engines) begin landing at the Cheyenne County Airport, south of U.S. 36. They will be accompanied by other aircraft, including warbirds and

experimentals. During the two-day event, there will be tandem skydives which allows a novice passenger to share a parachute jump with an experienced skydiver. Both Stearman rides and tandem skydives are available to the public, with sign-up at the west hangers at the airport. Breakfast and lunch will be served both days on the airport grounds. The St. Francis Chamber of Commerce is hosting a barbecue in Sawhill Park at 7 p.m. Saturday. For those who may need a ride around the airport, the Chamber will have golf carts and experienced drivers who will give rides. There is no admission fee for the show. For information, log on to www.stearmanflyin.org or call 785-332-2251.

Tornado touches down near Dresden Friday

OBERLIN — People in southern Decatur County spent some time in basements and storm shelters last Friday night, with reports of a tornado on the ground north of Dresden and moving towards Jennings. While there was no damage reported, much of Decatur County got a much-needed rain. Oberlin observers generally reported .60 to .70 of an inch, various

reports said. Thunderstorms formed off the high terrain in eastern Colorado, said Meteorologist Dave Floyd with the National Weather Service in Goodland. The upper winds carried the storms to the east during the evening and the atmosphere was favorable to allow the storms to keep regenerating.

The clouds could be seen in the distance most of the day. Around 9 p.m., it started to rain and by 9:30 p.m. the lightning which had been lighting up the western sky started to roll into Oberlin. Earlier this week, meteorologists were still going through the information from the storm. Floyd said around 9:50 p.m., there was a call in from a Kyle Railroad crew that

there was a tornado on the ground one mile north of Dresden. At that time the weather service put out a tornado warning. Decatur County Emergency Preparedness Director Bert Cool said he sounded the sirens for Dresden and Jennings. Floyd said radar did show that the thunderstorm was capable of producing a tornado, though there was no way to prove it. He said the one thing radar doesn't show is a tornado on the ground. That is why, said Floyd, they need spotters and people to call in because they don't know if a tornado has hit the ground. Around 10:09 p.m., a call came in that a tornado had been spotted two miles west of Jennings. At that time, the spotter said the storm was headed east. The only other tornado reported that night was in Greeley County, south of Tribune. It was on the ground for two minutes over open fields, Floyd said, and didn't cause any damage.

State begins disaster plan for animals

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — While most rescue efforts after a large-scale disaster focus on humans, officials from several Kansas agencies met Wednesday to discuss a statewide plan to extend the same kind of emergency help to animals. The Kansas Animal Disaster Preparedness plan is designed to prepare a statewide network of agencies and volunteers who will fan out to rescue, feed, quarantine or even bury animals involved in a disaster.

The team will respond to all types of emergencies, including natural disasters, bioterrorism or a widespread animal disease, such as foot-and-mouth. It's based on a program started in North Carolina after Hurricane Floyd devastated that state in 1999, killing millions of poultry, cattle, swine and pets. More than 120 veterinarians and state officials met Wednesday at Kansas State University with lead-

ers of the North Carolina State Animal Response Team, the group that coordinates that state's animal rescue efforts. While many of the details of Kansas' plan — including funding — are not final, it generally expands plans the state already has for dealing with foreign animal diseases, said Sheila Dodson, a veterinarian from Shawnee who serves on a steering committee developing the Kansas response.

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