



Georgia Pecan Nut News *Summer 2008*

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Contents.....

Effects of Tropical Storm Faye

Do you need to apply any more fertilizer this year?

Water Stage Fruit Split

Weevil Sprays

Effects of Tropical Storm Faye

Lenny Wells

While tropical storm Faye brought much needed rain to south Georgia, it brought a little too much in some areas, along with damaging winds. The counties near the Florida line suffered the most damage from the storm.

Forty mph winds brought down limbs and blew nuts off many trees and as much as 17" of rain within 48 hours in some areas saturated soils to the point that trees leaned over or collapsed under even light wind. In most cases, these were relatively young (<25 year old) cape Fear and Sumner trees.

Grower estimates in damaged areas range from as little as 10% to 50% crop loss. While orchards throughout the pecan growing region of Georgia suffered a few lost branches and minimal nut loss, the damage could have been much worse.

Serious damage to pecans was confined mostly to those counties bordering Florida from Lowndes and Lanier Counties westward.

Areas from Albany northward had minimal to no damage.

Growers who did suffer damage in their orchard, particularly in these hard hit

areas, should document the damage by taking photographs and contact your local FSA office. The ECP program is in effect, but keep in mind that there is currently no money available. In most cases, the state will request such funds as needed. ECP should at least provide help with clean up when funds become available.

What do the storm's effects mean for Georgia's crop? For the most part, we are still in good shape. The crop seemed to get a little bigger as we got into August and more nuts were visible on the trees. Prior to the storm, I would estimate that we were near 80 million lbs. I still believe Georgia's crop will be at least 70-75 million lbs.

Do you need to apply any more fertilizer this year?

Lenny Wells

High costs have many growers questioning the need to apply additional fertilizer this year, and with good reason. I have spoken with many researchers and read much of the historical research conducted on nitrogen application this year to try and determine just how much nitrogen a pecan crop needs. This has led me to make the following recommendations: if your leaf N samples are 2.7% or above, do not apply any additional N, even with a good crop on the trees. For blank trees or those with a light crop, do not fertilize unless leaf N falls below 2.5%. Even when additional N is

needed, 30 to 40 lbs N per acre should be enough late season. I would recommend that in order to minimize cost and increase the efficiency of uptake, N applications be made either in a broadcast band along the herbicide strip and drip emitters, via drip injection, or as liquid N applied on the herbicide strip with a herbicide sprayer. Some preliminary results I have from a study instituted this year indicate that these methods are more efficient and just as, if not more effective at meeting the trees' N needs as is broadcast application.

Potassium and Phosphorous should be applied when leaf levels are below 1.25 and 0.14, respectively. At this point in the season, I would make these applications only when serious deficiencies are apparent. Otherwise, I would plan on making these applications following this year's harvest.

Water Stage Fruit Split

Lenny Wells

Following heavy rains in August of this year, many growers have seen an alarming nut drop on a number of varieties, with as much as 1/3 of the crop appearing to fall from the tree. This occurred prior to Tropical Storm Faye, but a week or so after other rains fell on south Georgia. In most cases this has turned out to be water stage fruit split.

Over 30% of a trees' crop on may exhibit nut drop due to water stage split. In Georgia, this occurs most often on the Schley, Cape Fear, and Sumner varieties, although many others may split as well. Longitudinal splitting during the water stage is driven by internal water pressure on the pecan from mid August to early September. This is usually more severe when trees bear a heavy crop load and soils are dry before a sudden influx of water via rainfall or irrigation. Most water stage split will occur within 24 hours of a thunderstorm. Fruit will drop from the tree approximately seven days

after splitting occurs. High relative humidity and low solar radiation can induce a minor water split before the major episode occurs. When internal splitting occurs, a brown discoloration extends through the shuck along the split area. Later, any portion of the shuck may be discolored, and the nut falls from the tree. The splitting occurs internally and a split or crack in the shuck may or may not be visible. Management of water stage fruit split is difficult. This problem can be minimized with fruit thinning, foliar boron application, and soil water management, but it will not be eliminated.



Water Stage Fruit Split on 'Cape Fear'

Weevil Sprays

Will Hudson

Weevils tend to emerge following rains that saturate orchard soils. Weevil emergence has been fairly strong early this year, and with the pecan crop approximately two weeks behind last year's crop, the potential for weevil damage is there. Growers should check traps regularly or apply knock-down sprays to areas or trees that have historically had heavy weevil infestations in order to time sprays appropriately. With the delayed maturity of this year's crop and already active weevil populations, you should consider making one more application than

is normally made to ensure protection against weevil damage.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Georgia Pecan Growers' Fall Field Day

Tifton , GA

September 11, 2008

8:00 am-1:00 pm

Registration: 8:00 am at the RDC

Schedule:

8:00 Registration

8:30 Welcome

9:00 Depart for Ponder Farm

9:30 Entomology Research

10:00 Pathology Research

10:30 Horticulture Research

11:30 Depart for Blackshank Farm

12:00-1:00 Sponsored Lunch

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Alabama Pecan Growers Meeting

Fairhope, Alabama

September 18, 2008

See <http://www.alabamapecangrowers.com/>
for details

