

Gem gears up for annual hog roast

The Gem Lions Club's Hog Roast has become a tradition over the years, marking the beginning of the school year and the end of summer.

This year it's scheduled from 5 to 8 p.m., Wednesday at the Gem Community Building.

"The hog roast is a big deal in the city of Gem," said Mayor Phyllis Ziegelmeier.

Ziegelmeier said that in the past perhaps 10 times the number of people who actually live in Gem have shown up. She said the roast has been going on since the mid 1980s. The annual event helps raise money for the club's community projects.

The group will be accepting do-

nations for the meal, and raffling eight halves of hog. Raffle tickets cost \$5 each or \$20 for five, and each ticket has eight chances to win.

The club also accepts used eyeglasses and hearing aids for recycling.

Entertainment includes bluegrass, folk and country music along with a horseshoe-throwing contest.

Sponsors for the hog raffle are Frontier Ag of Brewster, Frontier Ag of Mingo, High Plains Co-op, CPS of Oakley, American Implement of Colby, Golden Harvest, Tom Sloan, Franz/Tubbs Chiropractic and Ziegelmeier Farms.

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Bob McLemore was the emcee for the entertainment at the Gem Lions Club's Hog Roast last year. The Lions Club fund raiser attracts far more people than live in the town.



K-State economists add up costs of farming, past and present

In the latest installment to the Arthur Capper Cooperative Center fact sheet series, Brian Briggeman and Chuck Mickelsen explore the evolution of the costs of agricultural production, and peer into the future evolution of these costs.

"Today, the costs of agricultural production have surged to the historically high levels of the late

1970s," said Briggeman, director of the Arthur Capper Cooperative Center at Kansas State University.

Briggeman and Mickelsen, both from the Department of Agricultural Economics at K-State, compared these elevated costs to the 1970s, showing that technological costs have surged for today's producers. On an inflation-adjusted

basis, total costs of producing an acre of corn are just two percent higher today than they were in 1975. Where the differences lie between these two time periods is in the cost of seed, nearly 200 percent higher, and cost of machinery and equipment, nearly 100 percent higher.

"While some costs have risen

sharply, land rental costs remain below their 1970s highs," said Briggeman. "Looking ahead, economic conditions suggest costs may continue their rise, especially land rents."

These added costs have provided benefits to farmers, such as improved yields and farm efficiency. And at today's commodity

prices, these benefits have led to solid profit opportunities for crop farmers.

However, history has shown that these profits are often short-lived. So, the question is will these profits hold if these sizable costs continue to grow?

For information about what producers can do in the face of rising

costs, interested readers should read the fact sheet, "Rising and Changing Costs of Production Agriculture," available online at www.accc.ksu.edu/.

Information is available by contacting Briggeman at bbrigg@k-state.edu or (785) 532-2573.

Corn rust fungus starts attacking crops in Kansas at the start of August

Small, light brown, circular lesions covering corn leaves this time of year are not a welcome sight.

Southern corn rust, a fungal disease caused by the Puccinia polysora pathogen, begins to show up in Kansas around Aug. 1 each year, according to K-State Research and Extension plant pathologist Doug Jardine. Corn producers, particularly those who farm north of Interstate 70, should evaluate each field for the disease and determine if fungicide treatment is necessary and economical.

Jardine identified southern corn rust in Kansas for the first time in 2013 on Aug. 1 in McPherson County. He said he has since seen it in other north-central Kansas counties including Riley, Clay,

Cloud and Washington, but there may be more cases other crop scouts have identified elsewhere.

The disease does not live year-round in Kansas, as it requires a live plant to survive. It lives mainly in southern Texas and northern Mexico, where temperatures allow corn to grow year-round, and it travels northward to the U.S. Corn Belt each summer. Because the disease is currently widespread in south central Nebraska, it would have had to blow over Kansas from those southern areas.

The negative impact of southern corn rust depends heavily on a number of factors:

- Weather forecast.
- Stage of crop development.
- Yield potential of the field.
- Amount of disease in the field.

• Susceptibility of the hybrid.

Southern rust is favored by hot, humid conditions, which Kansas experienced in early August. However, mid-August temperatures cooled, which Jardine said slowed the spread of southern rust.

Although the recent weather has been a benefit to farmers, the stage of the corn might be a problem.

"The problem this year is corn was planted two to three weeks late," Jardine said. "This is a problem across the entire Corn Belt."

If corn is hit with southern rust and has not yet passed the soft dough stage - 35 days before maturity - it may be beneficial for farmers to spray fungicides. Products containing a triazole mode of action are recommended.

If the corn is already in the dent-

ing phase of maturity, Jardine said producers probably won't see an economic benefit to spraying, as the rust likely won't affect the yield too much. He said much of south central Kansas has reached that denting stage of development already and likely won't need to be sprayed.

Jardine said corn producers should evaluate each field separately. If southern rust has hit a field of younger corn and the corn has good yield potential, spraying could be economical.

"There is some good corn this year, and some of it has 200 (bushel per acre) yield potential," Jardine said. "A field with a reasonable amount of rust could have 10 to 15 percent yield loss."

A 10 percent loss on a 200-bush-

el per acre yield is 20 bushels. If corn is at \$6 per bushel, that could mean \$120 loss per acre. Therefore, Jardine said, it would be economical to pay \$30 per acre to spray that field.

Jardine said the worst-case situation would be to see an epidemic of southern rust early on that is not treated, and producers could see as much as a 30 percent loss. With the current cooler-than-normal August temperatures, though, that is not a likely situation this year.

Another tip for producers is to research how susceptible their corn hybrid might be to southern rust. Genetic resistance to southern rust is limited, with most hybrids rating 5 to 7 on a scale of 1 to 9 (1 being resistant). In Kansas, greatest yield losses to southern

rust occur when susceptible hybrids are planted late or when the disease arrives earlier than normal. The crop that is two to four weeks behind and is more susceptible to southern rust should be examined very closely.

The K-State publication MF-3016, Corn Rust Identification and Management in Kansas (www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/plant2/mf3016.pdf) has information on southern rust, as well as common rust, and outlines the differences in identification and management of these two diseases.



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