



# MILLE LACS SOIL SERVICE ASSN. MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## JANUARY 2025

### FSA DATES, DEADLINES, OR MESSAGES

FSA is currently administering the Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) program. The deadline to apply is Wednesday, January 8, 2025. Eligible producers will need to provide the revenue from their specialty crops for either 2023 or 2024. Specialty crops include fruits, vegetables, honey, Christmas trees, maple sap, and more! If you grow and commercially market these crops or know someone that does, please contact the office as soon as possible!

### JOKE OF THE MONTH

The Indians asked their Chief in autumn if the winter was going to be cold or not. Not knowing an answer, the Chief replied that the winter was going to be cold with lots of snow and that the members of the village were to collect wood to be prepared. Being a good leader, he then went to the next phone booth and called the National Weather Service, and asked "Is this winter going to be cold?"

The man on the phone responded, "This winter is going to be quite cold indeed."

So the Chief went back to speed up his people to collect even more wood to be prepared. A week later he called the National Weather Service again, "Is it going to be a very cold winter?"

The man replied, "It's going to be a very cold winter."

So the Chief goes back to his people and orders them to go find every scrap of wood they can find. Two weeks later he called the National Weather Service again, "Are you absolutely sure that the winter is going to be very cold?"

"Absolutely," the man replies, "The Indians are collecting wood like crazy!"

### ADDING BIOLOGY TO MANAGE DROUGHT AND FERTILIZER EFFICIENCY

**Incomplete ear fill problems resulting from drought stress may also be related to kernel abortion. If plant nutrients are limited during the early stages of kernel development, then kernels at the tip of the ear may abort. Kernels at the tip of the ear are the last to be pollinated and cannot compete as effectively for nutrients as kernels formed earlier. Adding biology to your fertilizer program works most notably during the flowering and reproductive stages to help shield the plant from drought stress.**

**By the time leaf rolling is visible, the plant has already reduced its photosynthesis and you've lost a day of yield.**

**A farmer's greatest vulnerability to drought stress occurs during the flowering and grain fill stages. Your yield potential during these critical growth stages can be compromised as much as 10-40% during flowering and 20-30% during grain fill.**

**Drought stress during these critical stages is becoming more common leading to decreased yields. We have brought in a product that could help your crops withstand drought stress during the critical flowering and reproductive stages.**



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## TAR SPOT

It is no secret that corn tar spot has been making its way into central Minnesota from the southern part of the state. Corn Tar Spot was first observed in Minnesota in 2019 and has since spread to all of the areas surrounding counties. Fortunately, outside of the area where it has spread from, it has not been observed in large quantities showing a significant reduction in yield loss. Unfortunately, yield losses from Tar Spot can range from little to no loss up to 50 bushels lost. For those who aren't familiar, Tar Spot is a fungal disease that damages the leaves of corn and creates small, black, irregular-shaped dots on the plant. One identifier for corn Tar Spot is it cannot be rubbed off of the corn leaf, whereas other similar diseases can.

Tar Spot is most likely to develop in areas where it developed in previous years and during periods of cool, wet weather. Just because it prefers wet and cool weather does not mean it will not spread when the weather is warm and dry. We've spotted an increasing amount of cases over the course of the 2024 crop season. Several different approaches can be taken to combat this disease and prevent its spreading. One way would be to apply fungicides in areas where they are prevalent. Another option would be a hybrid selection. There are currently no hybrids that are fully resistant to corn Tar Spot, but different hybrids offer different levels of resistance. Other options for helping to stop the spread are crop rotations and cultivation. Cultivation helps to bury the infected residue and crop rotation allows more time for the breakdown of infected plant tissue.

While Tar Spot is one of our largest concerns, we spotted other crop fungus diseases that may be of future concern. One of the other diseases we have spotted is called Southern Rust, it's a fungus that causes orange pustules on the upper side of leaves, but can also develop on the stalk, husks, and leaf sheaths.

Southern Rust can create new infections every 7 days and is similar to common rust. Another alarming fungal disease we've spotted in corn is called Northern Corn Leaf Blight, NCLB develops lesions that have a water soaked appearance and can be kind of gray in color. The fungus overwinters in infected leaves, sheaths, and husks. We do look forward to discussing these two diseases in particular in our future newsletters and spreading more helpful information regarding those fungal diseases.

### "Put your trust in us."

We've been in the business for over 55 years, we know what we're doing and we do it well. We still believe in a firm handshake, a hard day's work, and the love our customers have for the land. We're here for you from the first soil sample until harvest. If you want the best, done right & at a fair price - put your trust in us.

**-Mille Lacs Soil Service Assn.**

*Thank You For Choosing  
Mille Lacs Soil Service!*

## TAR SPOT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- **Select Hybrids Carefully.** Hybrids differ in susceptibility to Tar Spot infection. Consult a seed guide and your local agronomist for the most recent hybrid sensitivity ratings when selecting hybrids for fields with a history of Tar Spot.
- **Consider Crop Rotation and Tillage.** Rotating to crops other than corn and using tillage to bury residue can help to reduce fungus inoculum levels in fields.
- **Apply Fungicide When Needed.** Early fungicide applications, at or before the first signs of development, have been effective against Tar Spot in trials. (While early fungicide programs applied before the onset of disease may be effective, late-season, curative fungicide applications are not recommended.)
- **Consider a Two-Pass Fungicide Program.** If conditions are favorable for Tar Spot development early in the season, consider a two-pass fungicide program at the V4-V8 corn growth stage and the VT/RI growth stage. If the risk of Tar Spot is lower, consider an application of fungicide at the VT/RI growth stage, which may also combat other yield-reducing corn foliar diseases. With so many options to choose from, we can help you find the right fungicide program. Consider products like Priaxor, Veltyma, Approach Prima, Delaro, Endura, Trivapro, or Miravis Neo are all great fungicides to incorporate into your management program.

