

# Farm&Home

## Disease concerns for corn crop

Despite the challenges this years crop season has presented, field conditions across the county are fairly good. Early season conditions allowed for early planting that was followed by an above

average wet spell that delayed wheat harvest and planting. As a result, you can expect crops throughout the county to be at varying stages of maturity. As a result of erratic weather conditions the past few weeks we still need to be diligent in scouting corn and soybean crops.

Common rust of corn, caused by the fungus Puccinia sorghi, is easy to find in corn fields in Kentucky. The fungus that causes common rust produces brown to brick red pustules that are present on upper and lower surfaces of the leaves. Young leaves are more susceptible to rust infection than mature leaves. In



most years, common rust does not require management in hybrid field corn in Kentucky. Southern rust of corn, caused by the fungus Puccinia polysora, has been confirmed in LaRue county in 2024. Typically, we confirm southern rust in Kentucky in mid-July each year, depending on weather conditions. Southern rust is first

observed as raised, dusty orange pustules on the upper surface of the leaf. Pustules will typically be present only on the upper surface of the leaf. Tar spot, caused by the fungus Phyllachora maydis, is an important corn disease in the northern corn belt. Tar spot develops rapidly when temperatures average 64-73° F

over 30 days or more. Temperatures above 73° F slow tar spot development. Tar spot is slow to develop when relative humidity is high (over 90%). Symptoms and signs of tar spot may not appear for several weeks after infection. Fungicide applications to manage tar spot should occur between tasseling silking (VT-R1) through milk stage (R3). Late

applications (R5 or dent) are not needed for tar spot management in Kentucky. If disease is suspected, the fastest way to get a diagnosis through the Plant Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (PDDL) is to submit samples through the Extension service. I often get asked about the impact of corn disease on our crop

yields. The answer is relatively complicated in Kentucky yield loss will depend on the crop growth stage of a field. Extension research data show that application of fungicides may be needed to protect yield while corn is in the tasseling through milk growth stages. Once corn is past milk stage, fungicides are likely not needed to manage the disease. This year especially with delayed corn planting scouting and monitoring for disease presence is key to determining if or when a fungicide will be needed for southern rust management. For more information about corn disease concerns contact the LaRue County Cooperative Extension Service.

**FARM & HOME CALENDAR**  
**LaRue County Cattlemen's Association**  
• Tuesday, Aug. 12, 7 p.m. — LaRue County Extension Service

## Packing a safe lunch box

It's almost time for back to school which means some caregivers will be packing lunches for their children to take to school. Here are some helpful tips in making a safe lunch box.

- **Make packing your child's lunch a fun activity** — Ask them to help, and let them make choices about what to include. It is a great way to teach them about good nutrition and food safety at the same time.
- **Buy insulated bags and containers** — Use soft-sided insulated bags or boxes to keep food at a safe temperature, whether cold or hot. Cold food in a paper bag may not be safe to eat by lunchtime. If you plan to send hot food to school for lunch, use insulated containers as well.
- **Keep food at the proper temperature** — Use small freezer packs (or frozen water bottles) to keep sandwiches, yogurt, cheese, eggs, and sliced fruit cold. Provide two cold sources — one on the top and one on the bottom. Freeze juice boxes the night before to double as one of the freezer packs. They will keep food cold, and by lunchtime, the juice will be thawed and ready to drink. If you send hot food like soup or chili, use an insulated container (like a thermos) to keep it hot. Prep the container by warming it up. Fill the container with boiling water and let it sit for a few minutes. Empty the water then fill with hot food.
- **Pack the right amount of food** — Send just enough food for your child to eat at



### FCS CALENDAR

#### FARMERS MARKET

Every Thursday , from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the LaRue County High School Parking Lot. Extended Aug. Market dates: Aug. 7, 14 & 21. The Aug. Market will be at the LaRue County Extension Service.

#### FARMERS MARKET COOKING SHOWCASE

Every Wednesday starting through Aug. 6, noon at the LaRue County Extension Service. Taste farm fresh food, while learning about health benefits and be inspired by what you can purchase the following day at the Farmers Market. Free class. To register call 270-358-3501.

#### SENIOR CITIZEN'S DAY — LARUE CO FAIR

Friday, Aug. 1, 12:30-3:30 p.m. at the LaRue County Extension Service. Mother of the Year Presentation, Entertainment and Refreshments.

#### FRIENDS & FA.M.I.LY HOMEMAKERS

Thursday, Aug. 7, 1 p.m. at the LaRue County Extension Service

#### COOKING THROUGH THE CALENDAR — 'SLOW COOKER ASIAN PORK TACOS'

Friday, Aug. 8, noon at LaRue County Extension Service

#### QUILT CLUB

Wednesday, Aug. 13, 10 a.m. at LaRue County Extension Service

#### FREEZING & DEHYDRATION — FOOD PRESERVATION SERIES

Monday, Aug. 18, 5:30 p.m. at the LaRue County Extension Service. Free class. Call 270-358-3401 to register. Deadline to register is Friday, Aug. 15.

#### SOUTH FORK HOMEMAKERS

Tuesday, Aug. 19, 10:30 a.m. at the LaRue County Extension Service.

#### OPEN SEW

Monday, Aug. 25, 10 a.m. at the LaRue County Extension Service.

lunchtime. That way, there is no problem storing leftovers. After lunch, throw away all the uneaten food, food wrappers, and single-use plastic bags. Do not reuse plastic bags because they could contaminate the next food you put in them.

- **Include shelf-stable food** —

Some foods are safe without being kept cold. Whole fruits and vegetables, peanut butter and jelly, canned meat and fish, jerky, chips, crackers, nuts, cured meats, and pickles do not require a freezer pack.

- **Remember to start with clean hands** — Set a good example by

washing your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before packing lunches. Find more information about packing lunches and food safety information in general at your local Extension office.

Source: Annhall Norris, Food Preservation and Food Safety Extension Specialist

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