Disaster assistance, mosquito control

Most of the agriculture producers already know this, but I thought I would remind them. If you have had any losses as a result of the flooding and rain natural disaster, you need to document your losses and report them to the Farm Service Agency as soon as possible.

If you have dead livestock that were flood victims, take photos and document it. The buzzards clean up carcasses fast, which is good, but you have to have photos to document your losses to the FSA. I know that is not all that practical but it is what they require. If you have lost feed that was stored for later use, document that and take your receipt into the FSA. The County Emergency Manager told me he was told there will be emergency conservation funds to help with preserving fields that have soil erosion, repair ditches, fences, corrals, waterlines – these are usually cost share funds. I know you don’t know the extent of your crop damage yet but you need to report that you have crop damage within 15 days of the disaster for the NAP program.

I have looked at cotton that is yellowing; this is a result of root death and lack of ability of the plant to move nutrients. Most of the cotton was in the green boll stage – that is when cotton is most susceptible to damage from saturated soils. I don’t think it will open if it stays wet very long, so report it as damaged. I hope I am wrong and it opens. Alfalfa will have downy mildew and NMSU Extension has a good publication that goes into more detail than I can here. If the alfalfa is yellowing, report it as a loss. Sorghum was heading out; most of what I looked at had head smut fungus – report it as a loss. Basically get it reported and hope it does not turn into a claim, but if you don’t report it, you can’t claim it. Most of the pinto beans were dead, corn is past harvest for green chop. There will be a lot of disease that we may never see again.

Currently in Eddy County, the local emergency manager/vector control/extension/NMDA are working to address the issue of mass vector control for mosquitoes. Eddy County Vector Control only has one truck and one ATV so they are working on air applications, and I am proud of what they are getting done with so few resources. Just to give you an idea of the extent, there are approximately 600,000 acres in disaster area; if only 10 percent is treated, that is 60,000 acres. Because the pond that we raise mosquito fish in overflowed, that may be good or not so good. That is great news for those residents, but homeowners may want to assist in the process because vector control will be overwhelmed.

Here are some publications that may be useful:


www.nmda.nmsu.edu/uncategorized/nmda-offers-tips-stay-step-ahead-mosquitoes-season

aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_i1102/

Some practical ideas to help: If you have a number of used tires, put some used motor oil in them – this will kill the mosquito larvae. If you have pets, etc., use mineral oil. I know there are lots of lick tubs out and about – gather them up, turn
them upside down, or put a hole in the bottom so they don’t collect water. I put some mineral oil in my sheep water – they push their nose under and drink the water. A real thin layer is all that is needed.

Mosquito-eating fish – if you have some, get a sane and spread them to other water holes. I have caught them with an old pair of panty hose cut off and bailing wire. Light electrocution grids work but put them where you want the mosquito to go, not near the front door, window or livestock pen.

If you are finding lots of dead birds, that is an indication of West Nile. Right now I don’t have any information from the N.M. Department of Health as to if they want to sample them, so keep track of the number, species and location if you know it and email it to me. That will help us ID intense mosquito populations.

Are your horses vaccinated for Eastern, Western and West Nile? If not, they should be ASAP. Mosquitoes may be here until it freezes; there is a lot of water standing that may be here for a long time.

(EDITOR’S NOTE: Woods Houghton is the agriculture extension agent for Eddy County. Contact him at 575-887-6595 or email whoughto@nmsu.edu.)