

County Agent News
“All Around the Farm”
Dan Folske
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For the first time in several years I am starting to hear producers hoping we get some of the rain forecast during spring seeding. Planting has started much earlier and is progressing much faster because of the drier conditions. Soil temperatures may be a little cool for some crops but are about ten degrees warmer than this time last year.

Just like field crops gardens are going in sooner this year. It may be a little early for warm season, frost sensitive vegetables like tomatoes, squash, and pumpkins but if you are prepared to protect them in case of frost you may be able to get fresh produce several weeks earlier this year.

I transplanted about sixty red and green cabbage plants yesterday and I have two straw bale gardens on pallets with everything planted. Actually one pallet has straw bales and one has hay bales. I covered them last night but if we get a real cold snap I will pick up the pallets and move them into my shop. Part of the claims about straw bale gardens is that the composting process going on in the bales creates heat which helps speed plant growth and helps protect from frost. The hay bales are heating up nicely but the straw bales are too porous and don't seem to want to get going. The book about straw bale gardening insists that straw bales are much better than hay bales because straw bales are weed seed free and hay bales are full of weed seeds which will become a problem. My own experience with using straw or hay for mulch is the opposite. Straw almost always has at least some unthreshed heads or kernels remaining in some heads which grow and become weed problems. Hay which is put up late in the season will have grass or alfalfa seeds which will do the same or the hay may come from a weed patch instead of a good field. However if the hay was put up early (which it should be for maximum nutrition) in a clean field it will be seed free because the grass and alfalfa will not have developed seed when cut.



Ruby Red Cabbage April 2nd

Some cattlemen are reporting higher than normal levels of “over eating” in their young calves this year. “Over eating” disease is an acute gut infection caused by *clostridium perfringens*. It often occurs when something prevents nursing at normal intervals and the calves then consume more milk than normal when they do eat. It can also happen when cow nutrition goes up resulting in more milk production. When a calf over eats it creates ideal conditions in the stomach and gut for the *C. perfringens* bacteria to reproduce at high rates. According to Glenn Songer, Iowa State University Department of Microbiology and Preventative Medicine, producers have done a good job of vaccinating cow herds and calves for *C. perfringens*, types C & D which have historically been the major causes of “over eating”. Today type A has become the prominent type and type E is on the rise. Songer recommends complete diagnostic work including a bacterial culture and genotyping of the bacteria to determine which Type of *C. perfringens* you are dealing with. Robert Callan, a Colorado State University DVM,, recommends that veterinarians and producers consider adding *C. perfringens*, Type A to their vaccination programs but says there is no vaccine for Type E which is becoming a bigger problem.

