



Nemaha County Ag Line

April 2021
Volume 17 Issue 2



N EXTENSION

By: Gary Lesoing, Nemaha County Extension Educator

If you are interested in receiving this newsletter via email, rather than receiving a hard copy, just contact us at (402) 274-4755 or email me at: glesoing2@unl.edu and we will gladly send you an electronic copy instead. Thanks,

Gary Lesoing, Extension Educator

YOU CAN SAVE MONEY WITH LOWER SOYBEAN SEEDING RATES

With the high cost of soybean seed, the cost of seed is a significant input for soybean farmers. While seeding rates for corn have been increasing, what about soybeans? In previous articles, we have reported local observations on area farms in southeast Nebraska and on-farm research in Nebraska have indicated lower soybean planting populations may be comparable in yield to higher planting populations that have been used for several years. Over 10 years ago I reported on research conducted in south central Nebraska with the Greater Quad County Research Group that conducted on-farm trials under irrigation and dryland. They reported 65.9 bu/ac for a 90,000 planted population compared to 68.6 bu/ac for the 180,000 planted population in a Fillmore County irrigated study. Back in 2007, the Quad County Research Group conducted 7 trials in 5 counties (Fillmore, Seward, Hamilton Clay and York), with planting rates of 90,000, 120,000, 150,000 and 180,000 seeds per acre. In 5 irrigated fields, yields ranged from 59.4 bu/acre at a seeding rate of 90,000 seeds per acre to 60.2 bu/acre at a seeding rate of 180,000 seeds per acre. In 2007 there were no significant differences in soybean yields in plots planted at 90,000, 120,000, 150,000 and 180,000 seeds per acre. The past few years in the Nemaha County area, several area farmers have cut their seeding rates down to 140,000 seeds/ac and as low as 130,000 seeds/ac with consistently excellent soybean yields.

In recent years the Nebraska On-Farm Research Network has continued to conduct research on soybean planting populations under both dryland and irrigated conditions. Results are very consistent in showing soybean yields are similar for planting populations of about 120,000 to 180,000 seeds/acre. With similar yields, profitability is numerically higher, sometimes significantly higher for the lower planting populations. In reviewing the results from previous years' On-Farm Research Network, soybean planting populations have been contrasted and compared from planting populations as low as 80,000 to 180,000

seeds/acre, with consistently similar yields within 2-3 bu/ac and marginal net returns trending higher for the lower planting populations. In data from 2016 in Saunders County, for planting populations of 90, 120, 150 and 180 thousand seeds/ac, soybeans yields ranged from 71-72 bu/ac for irrigated soybeans and 66-67 bu/ac for dryland or rainfed soybeans respectively. In a non-irrigated experiment in Richardson County in 2016, soybeans yielded 66, 67, 68 and 68 bu/ac for 116,130, 160 and 185 thousands seeds/ac planting populations. In 2018 an irrigated field in Saunders County reported 65, 64, 62 and 63 bu/ac for planting populations of 100,000, 125,000, 150,000 and 175,000 seeds/ac respectively.

A summary of 14 irrigated soybean trials and 4 non-irrigated trials from 2006-2017 show yields averaged 67.7, 68.4, 68.7 and 69 bu/ac for 90, 120, 150 and 180 thousand planted seeds/ac. In 2019 there were at least 10 experiments that evaluated soybean planting rates through on-farm research. One project, which is a part of a multi-state project involved 6 sites across Nebraska in Cass, Saunders, Hamilton, Adams, Dawson and Lancaster Counties. Planting populations evaluated in this project were 80,000, 110,000, 140,000 and 170,000 seeds/ac. Yields were generally non-significantly different on most sites and soybean yields were usually highest at either the 80,000 or 110,000 seeds/ac planting rate. This experiment was repeated in 2020 and consistently the lower seeding rates of 80,000 or 110,000 seeds/ac yielded similar to the higher seeding rates of 140,000 or 170,000 seeds/ac with similar or sometimes significantly higher marginal net returns. On other experiments in 2019, the 90,000 and 120,000 seeding rates/ac have yielded comparable to the higher seeding rates of 150,000 or 160,000 seeds/ac. A research project evaluating lower soybean planting rates and other improved management practices indicated higher yields for soybeans planted at rates of 99,000 and 110,000 seeds/ac. in Richardson County. This data shows that producers can save money by reducing soybean populations without affecting soybean yields.

To evaluate the On-Farm Research Results go to: <https://cropwatch.unl.edu/farmresearch/resultshome> . The latest results from 2020 are also available. Check out the 2020 soybean population yield results for yourself at: https://cropwatch.unl.edu/OnFarmResearch/2020_NEOnFarmResearchBook_WebEdition.pdf . You can also check with your local Extension Educator if you are interested in a hard copy of the 2020 On-Farm Research Report. I have a

few at the Nemaha County Extension Office at 1824 'N' St. in the courthouse in Auburn, NE. Demonstrations by seed companies have also confirmed the results of this research by several universities. If you have questions about any of this research, you can contact me at (402) 274-4755 (402) 274-9639 or glesoing2@unl.edu.

SAMPLE FIELDS FOR SCN THIS SPRING

With the weather warming up, you may want to consider getting your fields sampled for soybean cyst nematode (SCN) this spring if you have never sampled them or if it has been a while; especially if yields may be lower than expected or if you have areas in fields that have spots that yielded poorly. These could be hot spots for SCN. It would be good to definitely sample these areas of the field. Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS), a disease that lives in the soil also showed up in some fields this past year. There is a very close relationship between SDS and SCN. Many times if you have SDS, you also may have SCN. You may want to sample areas in a field where SDS was present for SCN.

We have been emphasizing the importance of sampling your fields for SCN the past several years. Loren Giesler, former UNL Extension Plant Pathologist, and John Wilson, Extension Educator, have conducted several workshops over the years, about the importance of managing for SCN and that soybean cyst nematode is the most important pest of soybean in the world. It can reduce soybean yields 30% without showing any visible symptoms. It can cause significant yield loss if not kept under control. It has been moving west from the Missouri River. This pest has been identified as a common problem in Missouri and Iowa and it is being identified in more fields each year in Nebraska as well. In Nebraska, 59 counties have confirmed presence of SCN mostly in eastern Nebraska, with these counties producing over 92% of Nebraska's soybeans. Every county that borders the Missouri River in Nebraska is infected with SCN. Soybean cyst nematodes live in the soil and once they infest your soil, you will have them forever. Most of the soybean growing regions of the United States are infested with SCN. If you have never sampled for SCN or haven't sampled for several years it may be a good time to soil test fields for SCN with all the flooding in recent years, especially if fields will be going into soybeans in 2021.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has conducted SCN research in Nemaha County and other locations in southeast Nebraska as well. Nebraska Extension and the Nebraska Soybean Board continue to have a program that will pay for a soil analysis for SCN. If you are interested in sampling some fields, UNL Extension in Nemaha County has instructions on sampling for SCN, a soil probe available for use, and sample bags in our office. I am also available to sample fields in southeast Nebraska this spring. All the counties in southeast Nebraska have fields that have tested positive for SCN. Feel free to call (402) 274-4755 or stop by our office in the Nemaha County courthouse in Auburn if you are interested in participating in this program.

So if you sample your fields, what should you do if you find SCN? Soybean cyst nematodes can be controlled by best

management practices and their impact on soybean production will be reduced significantly. If you do have SCN, plant a resistant variety, rotate to non-host crops, such as corn and wheat, and plant soybean varieties with different sources of resistance. This year there is soybean variety that has been released with another source of resistance that can be used to reduce the impact of SCN, PI 89772 (recently available from Golden Harvest). For SCN infested fields, you also may want to consider planting these fields last and/or cleaning any tillage or planting equipment before moving on to a different field. Check with your seed dealer to determine the best soybean varieties to meet the requirements of resistance for SCN. If you have any questions about SCN, feel free to contact me at (402) 274-4755, (402) 274-9639 (cell) or glesoing2@unl.edu.

REMEMBER FARM AND HIGHWAY SAFETY

With warm weather scheduled to arrive soon and fields drying out, farmers will be getting full swing into spring field work; especially fertilizer and pesticide application and planting corn and soybeans. It is important for safety to be an important focus for farmers and others in our rural communities during this busy time of the year. With farmers working to complete field operations so crops can be planted in a timely manner, risk of farm accidents can increase. When people get in a hurry, they tend to forget to check everything and are not as careful. Agriculture is the second most dangerous industry in the United States. Approximately 100 children and youth die in farm work accidents annually in the United States. In the spring of 2010 there were five farm fatalities in Nebraska in a matter of a few weeks. There have been a number of ATV injuries and fatalities to youth on farms in Nebraska and other states in recent years as well. It is extremely important to be aware of farm hazards to prevent potential farm accidents and even fatalities on the farm. It is important for farmers and travelers alike to be aware of the dangers of equipment being transported on the highways and country roads. We will need to be careful and drive defensively at all times. Be careful when moving equipment on the highway! There have been a number of accidents on highways in recent years.

Sometimes it is very difficult to see, especially around dusk or dawn when the sun sometimes blinds you as you drive toward it. Country roads can be dusty, making driving particularly hazardous when equipment is moving from field to field. While these conditions call for cautious driving for the traveler, farmers need to have the proper SMV (Slow Moving Vehicle) signs on their equipment. It is also important that farm tractors and sprayers have functioning hazard-warning lights. Operating headlights and hazard-warning lights provide advance warning for other drivers on highways and country roads. When traveling at night, make sure all the hazard lights and headlights are working properly and be extremely careful watching out for traffic on the highway and county roads.

Safety at the farmstead and in the field must not be overlooked either. Always be aware of any power lines that equipment could come in contact with. Equipment, tractor, and truck operators must always be aware of other people in the area, particularly young children and elderly people. When entering the farmyard, especially at night, be alert to pedestrians. If you are starting up and will be moving

equipment, check to make sure everything is clear and there isn't anyone playing or looking around the equipment. Many times young children may be playing in and around equipment and are difficult to see. Sometimes people may be looking at equipment and they do not hear it being started up and may end up in the way and at risk of getting injured. Always protect yourself, use caution, and practice safety first! Also do not forget safety in and around grain handling facilities, especially grain bins and grain handling equipment. There have been way too many tragic accidents in the area and in Nebraska the past couple of years involving grain handling!! **PLEASE BE CAREFUL!!**

Safety in the field must not be overlooked either. While you may be very careful when you're on the road or at the farmstead when other people are involved, **don't forget safety in the field**. We must not ignore safety when we're in the field. **Always** be sure to follow all safety guidelines listed in the manufacturer's operator manual and **always** have shields in place, and support equipment properly when working under it. The bottom line is "**JUST BE CAREFUL!**"

Finally, we must not forget the continued threat of COVID-19. While many people have been vaccinated and hopefully most people that want the vaccination will get it, there is still the potential of infection from the virus or variant strains of COVID-19. Many people have suffered and lost family members and friends this past year due to the virus.

TORNADO SEASON IS NEAR!

We can never be surprised at the weather we may have in Nebraska this time of year. A couple of days ago it was 75 degrees and this morning it was in the 20s. The forecast is for temperatures in the 80s for next week. Two years ago in March the Bomb Cyclone hit, resulting in devastating flooding which continues to impact us here along the Missouri River corridor. These are just examples that show how extreme the weather can be in Nebraska. Four years ago we had a couple of tornadoes right here in southeast Nebraska. A little over a week ago several people were killed from severe tornadoes in Alabama and other southeastern states. Last winter we had extreme weather conditions, warm temperatures some days, the coldest temperatures since the mid-1970s and record snowfalls since the 1960s. The variable temperatures we recently had can potentially develop into severe weather, and even spawn tornadoes. Each year is different, and 2021 is no exception. Over the last seventeen years, southeastern Nebraska has been hit hard by a number of tornadoes, with some of them devastating communities! Tornadoes in other regions of the state have taken their toll as well. Remembering this, the last thing you want to hear is that tornado season is near! Unfortunately, it is. The climate continues to be ever changing, and the weather is extremely unpredictable, so we should be prepared to expect any type of weather this spring and summer. Temperatures continue to fluctuate from day to day this spring, which can be very conducive to severe weather, including tornadoes.

Are you ready for a tornado? Do you know what to do if a tornado is headed your way? With severe weather beginning, it's time to be prepared for tornadoes. What are some things we should do to be prepared for a possible

tornado? You need to have a place in your **home** where family members can gather if a tornado is headed your way. It could be in your basement or else in a center hallway, bathroom or closet on the lowest floor if there is no basement. If you are in a high-rise building, go to a place in a hallway in the center of the building, you may not have time to go to the lowest floor. Your place of work should also have a tornado plan. If you are unaware of it, find out what it is.

If there are storm warnings issued for your area, listen to your local radio and TV stations for updated storm information. You need to know the difference between a tornado WATCH and WARNING. A tornado **WATCH** means a tornado is possible in your area. A tornado **WARNING** means a tornado has been sighted and may be headed for your area. Go to safety immediately. If a tornado WATCH is issued, listen to your radio and TV and be alert to changing weather conditions. Environmental clues that indicate a tornado may be developing include: a dark, often greenish sky, a wall cloud approaching and large hail. Blowing debris may also be a sign of an approaching tornado. People say a tornado sounds like a freight train. If a tornado WARNING is issued go to the safe place you picked to protect yourself from glass and flying objects. If you are outside, hurry to the basement of a nearby sturdy building or lie flat in a ditch or low-lying area. If you are in a car or mobile home, get out immediately and head for safety as described above. After the tornado passes, watch out for fallen power lines and listen to the radio for information and instructions. Use a flashlight to inspect the damage, never use candles! A gas line may have ruptured, leaving highly combustible natural gas or propane in the area.

The most important thing is to be prepared for a tornado and don't take the threat of a tornado lightly. The destruction and devastation from tornadoes can be unbelievable.

MOTHS MONITORED IN SOUTHEAST NEBRASKA

This year Nebraska Extension in Nemaha County will be in its sixth year in southeast Nebraska with a pheromone trapping network to monitor black cutworm, variegated cutworm and true armyworm moths in southeast Nebraska. This is a local network of traps in southeast Nebraska during the 2021 planting season. Traps have been placed into service March 28th – April 1st in southeast Nebraska.

Gary Lesoing, Extension Educator in Nemaha County has recruited people in Nemaha, Richardson, Otoe and Lancaster County to monitor the pheromone traps. We have 2 sites for traps in Nemaha County; at the courthouse in Auburn and in Johnson. There is a specific trap and pheromone lure for each kind of moth.

Black cutworms and true armyworms migrate from southern states each year. Many times they blow in when storms come up from the south. Variegated cutworms overwinter in Nebraska. They are generally climbers and feed on leaves. Many times they are a problem in garden crops, even asparagus. When there are very high numbers, they can defoliate crops, such as soybeans and alfalfa. The

variegated cutworm is not a pest every year, but with high infestations may require treatment with a pesticide. Sometimes alfalfa that has been harvested does not grow back due to feeding by variegated cutworms on the foliage. Under these circumstances it may require treatment. Infestations of the variegated cutworm are very sporadic.

True armyworms are usually a pest of pasture grasses or cereal crops, such as wheat or cereal cover crops like barley or rye. They could become a pest in seedling corn if at high numbers in a cover crop and corn is planted into it.

Black cutworms can be a potential pest in corn and even sometimes soybeans. Monitoring of the black cutworm moths has been conducted for several years in Missouri. There is a model that has been developed to determine when farmers can expect the first cutting by black cutworm larvae, depending upon growing degree days following the first intense capture of the black cutworm moth. In 2017 armyworms caused problems in some areas of Nebraska, so it was decided to monitor them as well since then.

Nebraska Extension in Nemaha County will be summarizing moth trap count numbers and will try to keep crop advisors and farmers abreast of potential pest problems later this spring. Check on our website in early April for information about the moth traps at: <https://extension.unl.edu/statewide/nemaha/agricultural-resources/>. This data collected will provide information to help determine when and if there may be a problem with these types of cutworms or armyworms in Nebraska in 2021. We are also planning to monitor for the brown marmorated stink bug this summer. It is an invasive pest in a number of crops, especially in states to the east of us. It has been found in some locations in southeast Nebraska, but not at levels to cause concern. If you have questions about this program you can contact me at the Nemaha County Extension office at (402) 274-4755, (402) 274-9639 (cell) or glesoing2@unl.edu.

ON-FARM RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR SOUTHEAST NEBRASKA FARMERS

I had the opportunity to attend the On-farm Research Reporting sessions last month in Auburn and Nebraska City and they were also available virtually for people to view from home or business as well. There were a number of projects reported on at the meeting. There are usually about 100 on-farm research projects conducted through the Nebraska Extension On-Farm Research Program on a yearly basis. We had a few conducted here in southeast Nebraska. Daryl Obermeyer, a former Nebraska Soybean Board member from Nemaha County, has a cover crop/soil health research project being conducted on his farm east of Auburn in Nemaha County. This study was initiated in 2016. He is planting winter-hardy vs. winter-terminated cover crops and determining their impact on the subsequent corn and soybean yields in his corn-soybean-

wheat crop rotation. In 2020 and in 2019 both corn and soybeans planted following the winter-hardy cover crop and winter-terminated cover crops had similar yields and were not significantly affected by the different cover crop treatments. Corn yields were (208 bu/ac vs 213 bu/ac) in 2020 and (214 bu/ac vs 217 bu/ac) in 2019, respectively, following the winter-hardy and winter-terminated cover crops. Soybean yields were (73 bu/ac vs 76 bu/ac) in 2020 and (86 bu/ac vs 84 bu/ac) in 2019, respectively, following the winter-hardy vs the winter-terminated cover crops. This is different than in 2017 when corn following the winter-hardy cover crop yielded significantly less than the winter-terminated cover crop (168 bu/ac vs 183 bu/ac) and in 2018 when soybeans following the winter-hardy cover crops yielded significantly less than the winter-terminated cover crop (59 bu/ac vs 65 bu/ac). In 2017 soybean yields were similar following winter-hardy and winter-terminated cover crops (61 bu/ac vs 62 bu/ac) respectively. In 2018 corn yields were similar (240 bu/ac vs 243 bu/ac) for the winter-hardy vs the winter-terminated cover crops, respectively. This site is an NRCS Demonstration Farm that will go for at least one more year, or 5 years total. Crop yields will be measured each year of the study. Stephen Kennedy, Resource Conservationist, USDA NRCS and Aaron Hird, Nebraska Soil Health Specialist NRCS collected soil samples for base-line soil data and at the end of the five-year period will collect samples to determine if this cropping system impacted soil health as well.

There have been several studies across Nebraska looking at the impact of nitrogen (N) stabilizers the past couple of years. Results to date indicate very little difference when nitrogen stabilizers have been used compared to the use of no nitrogen stabilizers in 2019 and 2020. It is noted that these studies were conducted on silt loam and silty, clay loam soils and on no sandy sites, where there is a greater opportunity for a response to the nitrogen stabilizers. Also the extreme weather conditions and rainfall patterns of the last couple of years may have also influenced these results. These are just a sample of the many on-farm research projects we have in Nebraska each year. The on-farm research program has been conducted across Nebraska with Nebraska Extension for several years. There are also several N management studies across Nebraska looking at in-season N management with corn and also wheat. The Project Sense is evaluating both irrigated and dryland N in-season management at several locations. A large grant was received this past year to study this issue. Other research projects cover products, practices, and new technologies that impact farm productivity and profitability. There are some projects that will pay farmers to participate and provide products for farmers to evaluate. In 2019 a soybean study was initiated to compare baseline soybean management practices compared to improved soybean management practices. Four studies conducted on-farm in Nebraska in 2019 showed the improved treatment resulted in an **average 8 bu/ac yield increase and \$46/ac profit increase compared to the baseline treatment**. This project was

repeated in 2020 on six farms with the improved treatment resulting in an average **4.5 bu/ac yield increase and \$28/ac profit increase compared to the baseline treatment**. This is part of a larger seven state project in the Midwest. In 2021 they are looking for 20 farmers to participate in this study. To find out more about this project go to; <https://cropwatch.unl.edu/2020/farm-research-study-investigate-practices-increase-soybean-yield> .

If you want to see the 2020 On-Farm Research publication go to:

<https://cropwatch.unl.edu/farmresearch/farm-research-result-publications> . If you want a hard copy, contact your local Extension Educator and they can get you a copy.

To find out more about the on-farm research program go to: <https://cropwatch.unl.edu/on-farm-research> .

If interested in participating in these studies, please contact:

Laura Thompson - 402-245-2224 laura.thompson@unl.edu

Aaron Nygren – 402-352-3821 anygren2@unl.edu

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If interested in conducting on-farm research, feel free to contact me as well, Gary Lesoing, Extension Educator in southeast Nebraska who is a member of the On-Farm Research Network. You can reach me at (402) 274-4755, or glesoing2@unl.edu.

CHECK FOR POTENTIAL HERBICIDE IMPACT ON COVER CROPS

If you are using cover crops as part of your cropping system and/or a crop/livestock system, it is important to know the effect of herbicides on different cover crops for termination and for seeding at a future date. In the 2021 Nebraska Extension “Guide for Weed, Disease and Insect Management in Nebraska”, (EC130) there is an all-new section on cover crops (pp. 16-23). There is information discussing cover crops as a tool for weed suppression, cover crop termination, cover crop compatibility with herbicide rotation restrictions and several tables addressing these issues. The guide lists various cover crops and ratings for herbicides to use for termination in both corn and soybeans. Other tables provide replant time restrictions for different pre-emergence and post-emergence herbicides in corn and soybeans for different forage cover crop species. In other words, it lists the number of days or months you must wait before you plant a specific cover crop following application of a specific herbicide if you plan to graze or harvest it for forage. There are a number of other resources available on **CropWatch** at: <https://cropwatch.unl.edu/how-herbicide-labels-restrict-using-cover-crops-forage> , <https://cropwatch.unl.edu/corn-and-soybean-herbicide-options-planting-cover-crops-forage-fall>; and also in the

Midwest Cover Crop Council Field Guide 2nd edition: Herbicide Carryover and Cover Crops (pg 29), Injury Potential of Some Common Corn Herbicides (pg 31), Injury Potential of Some Common Soybean (pg 34). The bottom line is select a herbicide or reliable method for terminating cover crops in the spring, **know** potential damage to cover crops from herbicides and restrictions of using cover crops as a forage following herbicides. If you have questions, feel free to contact me at (402) 274-4755 or (402) 274-9639 (cell).

EARLY SEASON WEED CONTROL IMPORTANT FOR CROPS, PASTURES & LAWNS!

The winter of 2021 was much more challenging than 2020, with record snowfalls and cold temperatures, especially in February. Spring is officially here, temperatures are warming up and weeds are beginning to grow. If fields were not sprayed last fall for control of winter annuals or cover crops planted, the recent rains last month will provide ideal growing conditions for weeds. Weed control will be extremely important this spring, especially where there were previous issues with marestail or other winter annuals. Cover crops, especially cereal rye has been an excellent strategy for suppression of marestail. It is important to control marestail early this spring, prior to the plant bolting (shooting a stem). It will really be challenging controlling marestail if it bolts and is glyphosate-resistant, which the majority of it is. Check the 2021 University of Nebraska Weed Management Guide (**EC130**) for best herbicides to use for control with your weed problems. In pastures, if you were not able to control weeds last fall, check your pastures for musk thistle. As temperatures warm up, musk thistles will begin to grow and you will be able to spray your pastures. The early season treatment of musk thistles in particular is critical for effective control. Musk thistle is a noxious weed in Nebraska, meaning it is unlawful to let it grow on your property without attempting to control it. The best time for controlling musk thistle is when it is just starting to grow, in the rosette stage. Once thistles start to bolt or shoot up a stem or stalk, it is much more difficult to control them. There are several herbicides that work well on musk thistle and other pasture weeds, such as: 2,4-D ester, 2,4-D ester plus Banvel, Grazon P & D, Ally, Transline, Redeem R&P and Overdrive. Another weed we have had issues with the past few years in southeast Nebraska is poison hemlock. I just saw some poison hemlock growing in the rosette stage this past week. I have not seen too much of it yet, but it is key to controlling this weed as it can cause livestock deaths. Finally some of us may have weeds in our lawns or around our yards. Most of these are just getting started to grow or have not yet germinated. You have time to control these weeds

now and in the next few weeks for the warm-season weeds. Information on broadleaf weed control in home lawns can be found online at:

<https://turf.unl.edu/NebGuides/BDLVcontrol2011b.pdf>.

Information on crabgrass control can be found online at:

<https://turf.unl.edu/NebGuides/Crabgrasscontrolhomelawn2010b.pdf>. If you have other questions, feel free to contact me at the Nemaha County Extension office at (402) 274-4755, (402) 274-9639 (cell) or glesoing2@unl.edu.

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