This newsletter is intended for people interested in commercial fruit and vegetable production, business planning and North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service meetings throughout North Carolina. For back issues of this newsletter please go to the Jones County Extension website and click on the Commercial Horticulture, Nursery & Turf menu option on the left side of the website. The website address is: http://jones.ces.ncsu.edu

Mark Seitz
Extension Area Specialized Agent
Agriculture - Commercial Horticulture
(252) 448-9621 or Mark_Seitz@ncsu.edu

Upcoming Workshops, Tours & Meetings

April 10-11, 2008. SPANISH PESTICIDE SCHOOL. 8:00 AM – 5 PM each day, Smithfield, NC, Pesticide School. TAUGHT ONLY IN SPANISH, Johnston County Agricultural Center, Smithfield, NC. Pre-Registration is required by calling Johana Furr with NCDA&CS Pesticide Section at (919) 733-3556.

April 10, 2008. Basic Procedures with Small Farm Equipment. Center for Environmental Farming Systems, Goldsboro, NC. 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM. Leader: Grace Summers (NCA&T State University) Workshop Registration Fee: $20 (includes lunch).

This workshop will provide an introduction to issues relating to small farm equipment use by beginning farmers and those just thinking about it. We will cover the basics of starting and handling a small garden tractor, rototiller and other equipment. Safety questions related to PTO's, pressure and gasoline engine equipment.

May 1, 2008. Romaine Lettuce Production Field Day. 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Tull Hill Farm & Cunningham Research Farm, Kinston, NC. Leaders: Mark Seitz, NC Cooperative Extension, and Bill Jester, NC State University Horticulture Science Department. Contact Mark Seitz at the Jones County Extension Center, (252) 448-9621 for more information.


Participants will be introduced to food safety and safe food handling as they relate to Good Agricultural Practices. Topics will be addressed with modules being developed for training of growers and others selling into the local food market.

Business Planning & Management:

“Business as we know it is disappearing. Companies aren’t selling products; they’re selling experience. There are no longer competitors, just better solutions and more choices that can be put together in more ways.”
Another Boring Business Management Article

Great!! Your Commercial Horticulture agent is at it again, writing another business article quoting Peter Drucker. Mr. Drucker is a man with a huge reputation in the business world, and while I cannot say this with any certainty, based on what I’ve read about him, I doubt he has ever spent much time on a farm. So why am I writing about him?

I have used this article attempting to share with you some of today’s business philosophies, along with facts and theories about how to do a better job of managing your business. Hopefully, there has been at least one thing I have written in the last four years that made sense, made you go, “Mmmm…I can do that”, or made you stop and do a little more research on your own on a particular subject.

Peter Drucker is one of those people I have discovered that has made me stop and go “Mmm….”. It is for this and many other reasons I feel Mr. Drucker’s message is just as important and valuable to you as a farm manager as it is to any other CEO or business manager in another industry.

You all know how difficult, challenging, competitive, and demanding the produce industry is. Planting season is tough as you work around Mother Nature’s annual curve balls. Harvest is a never ending race to provide your customers the quality products, quantities and timely deliveries they want. In addition you face competition and price pressure from retailers, restaurants, food processors, roadside marketers and other growers…the usual business stuff.

Mr. Drucker’s view that business is changing, is an important one. Collaboration, cooperation and knowledge offer you, as a manager, the chance to make better choices. Collaboration, cooperation and knowledge are the most valuable products you have. The old days of growing a product and hoping someone will come buy it - long gone.

Since collaboration, cooperation and knowledge are the most valuable assets you own, you have to consider branching out, exploring and/or building new partnerships throughout the community and across all kinds of business. Nothing is off limits when it comes to finding new markets or new partners.

If you are looking to expand or develop a business, there is a myriad of opportunities to explore. Hospitals, law offices, fitness centers, schools, and countless other outlets are out there to explore. The challenge for you as a business owner and farm manager is find the innovators, build the relationship with these people and realize as Mr. Drucker says, “There are no longer competitors, just better solutions and more choices that can be put together in more ways.”

Think about this as you begin planting in 2008. Are there ways to collaborate with a fruit grower in the region to sell extra vegetables? Are there a ways to cooperate with a local trucking company on transportation – either going to or picking up produce at a distant market? Are there ways to partner up with a food processor or a cooperative that has processing facilities to process your excess produce? Can you create markets with community groups in the area by using specialized packaging or home delivery? If so, who are the people you need to contact to make it happen?

Take the time before planting and harvest season kicks into full gear to sit with your spouse, your staff or a close friend, to brainstorm about the possibilities that are out there. Schedule a 20 minute session with possible business partners and explore the possibilities of creating a new partnership. With high fuel prices and a rapidly changing market place, this might be the best business decision you have ever made.

To quote Mr. Drucker one more time, “An enterprise’s purpose begins on the outside with the customer...it is the customer who determines what a business is, what it produces and whether it will prosper.”

Crop Production

Pecan Fertilization - Zinc

Many people in eastern NC have pecan trees in their backyards and a few have enough trees to qualify for

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orchard status. Pecans, as with any crop, need proper fertilization to sustain and strengthen the longevity of the trees and increases yield potential. Frost, insect pressure and disease affect yield but without proper soil nutrition a lot of problems are hidden or masked over a period of time.

A question came into a NC Cooperative Extension office recently that prompted this article. The client asked, “How much zinc fertilizer can you put around the trunk (leaf drip line) of a pecan tree?” Since spring is the best time to fertilize, I thought it would be a good topic to address in this newsletter. Why would anyone be concerned about zinc in a pecan orchard? Why is zinc such a critical element in pecan production? Zinc deficiencies affect many growth factors in pecan trees. Zinc deficiencies lead to poor nut fill, small leaves, short internodes and less cold tolerant trees. Zinc levels in leaves should be between 50 and 150 ppm in order to be present to support the production of enzymes that are needed for flower production. It is also involved with leaf expansion and shoot elongation and therefore must be available to the tree at specific times.

Soils in the southeast US are typically low in pH and in calcium and magnesium concentrations. For this reason, an application of 5 to 10 pounds of 36 percent zinc sulfate per tree, depending on tree size and the severity of the zinc deficiency, every three to five years, can effectively prevent, and over a period of years correct, a zinc deficiency. Zinc oxide can also be used to make this correction.

Soil testing is normally the first place to start to determine the availability of nutrients for the crop you are trying to grow. In the case of pecan trees – and other perennial crops soil tests are not always the most reliable way to assess the availability of zinc. Soil test levels may indicate a need for zinc fertilizer but it may take two or more years for the application to have an impact. It is for this reason that leaf tissue analysis is a better indicator of how the tree (or bush) is utilizing the zinc and other micronutrients in the soil.

Like phosphorus, zinc moves slowly in soil. Zinc concentrations in soils may range from 10 to 300 ppm (20 to 600 lbs per acre) but their availability depends on soil pH, phosphorus levels and the extent to which zinc is tied up by clay particles. Zinc is more available to trees at low pH, or acid soils. If your trees are in clay soils, soil pH may be high and zinc concentrations in the soil test may be high but zinc may be completely unavailable to the tree and a zinc deficiency can occur.

If you are interested in or are already in the commercial pecan production business, there is a wealth of very good information in the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Alabama A & M and Auburn University publication titled Pecan Production in the Southeast: A Guide for Growers. It is a very good, in-depth publication that covers everything from planting to harvest.

**Vegetable Herbicide Label Changes**

This month I asked NC State University Horticulture Science professors Drs. David Monks and Katie Jennings to share some of the latest news available on label changes for herbicides in vegetables. They graciously agreed to provide information on this topic, which I hope helps you make better weed management choices this spring. Below are their thoughts and comments on changes in 2007.

Caution: At the time this information was prepared, the entries were believed to be useful and accurate. However, labels change rapidly and errors are possible, so the user must follow all directions on the pesticide label. Read the label. Do not exceed maximum number of applications on label. Do not exceed maximum limit of herbicide per acre per application or per year as stated on the label. See label for rotational crops. In all cases, follow directions on label.

There have been some changes with Aim herbicide in vegetable crops. The following information covers these changes.

**Pumpkin, Beets, Cole Crops, Celery, Garlic, Greens, Lettuce, Onions:**

1) Aim herbicide can no longer be used preplant.

**Cucurbits and Tomato:**

1) Aim herbicide can only be applied preplant prior to transplanting cucurbits. DO NOT use preplant if seeding crop.

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5 Ibid. (1996).
Cucumber, Cantaloupe, Watermelon:
1) Chemtura will no longer be marketing Alanap herbicide once existing supplies are gone. Alanap stocks still in supply can be purchased and used.

New registrations

The following information covers recent registrations. The user must use all pesticides according to label instructions. Therefore read and follow the label before purchase and again before application.

Tomato and Pepper:
1) Prowl H₂O herbicide (BASF) applied preemergence to row middles between crop rows.

Asparagus:
1) Prowl H₂O herbicide applied PRE to the soil surface at least 14 days before the first harvest. Application must be made prior to spear emergence or remove emerged spears prior to making the application. Do not apply postemergence over the top of emerged spears as severe injury may occur.
2) Seeded asparagus and new crown plantings - Select Max herbicide (VALENT) at 9 to 16 oz/A applied POST for annual and perennial grasses. For Select Max, add 2 pt/A nonionic surfactant per 100 gal spray mixture.
3) Established asparagus – Select Max herbicide applied 9 to 16 oz/A. Add nonionic surfactant at 2 pt/A per 100 gallon spray mixture. DO NOT apply within 1 day of harvest.
4) Sandea herbicide (Gowan) applied at 0.75 to 1.0 oz/A to nursery, transplanted crowns, and established asparagus. DO NOT use a surfactant or crop oil or unacceptable injury may occur. Refer to label for more information.

Dry and snap beans:
1) Select Max herbicide at 9 to 16 oz/A for dry or snap beans. Add nonionic surfactant at 2 pt/A per 100 gal spray mixture. DO NOT apply within 21 days of harvest.

Green Peas:
1) Select Max herbicide at 9 to 16 oz/A for green peas. Add nonionic surfactant at 2 pt/A per 100 gal spray mixture. Apply before bloom. DO NOT apply Select Max within 21 days of harvest.

Southern Peas:
1) Select Max herbicide at 9 to 16 oz/A. Add nonionic surfactant at 2 pt/A per 100 gal spray mixture. Apply before bloom. DO NOT apply Select Max within 21 and 30 days of harvest for succulent and dry peas, respectively.

Broccoli, Chinese broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, Chinese mustard cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi:
1) Prowl H₂O herbicide applied up to 2.1 pt/A as a broadcast postemergence foliar spray or as a postemergence-directed spray between vegetable rows. Apply to 2 to 4-leaf vegetable transplants at 1 to 3 days after transplanting or to the 2 to 4-leaf stage of direct-seeded vegetable plants.

Carrots:
1) Prowl H₂O herbicide applied preemergence as a post plant treatment prior to emergence of the crop and before weed emergence. Apply as a preemergence treatment within 2 days after planting. Prowl H₂O may also be applied as a layby application (at the last mechanical cultivation) at 2.0 pt/A as a directed spray to the soil between rows.

If you have questions about any of the information, upcoming meetings, business strategies, or crop production management issues, please call me at the Jones County Extension Center at (252) 448-9621. I can also be reached by email at: Mark_Seitz@ncsu.edu