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### Soil Acidity Affects Plant Growth & Yields

When crops fail to respond to recommended applications of fertilizer, the problem may be soil acidity, notes Dr. William Mitchell, extension agronomist at the University of Delaware.

Although several factors can affect plant uptake of soil nutrients, soil acidity is the most common one affecting the efficiency of fertilizers.

Before fertilizer nutrients can be absorbed by plants, the nutrients must be dissolved by soil water, explains Dr. Mitchell. The solution thus formed is resupplied by dissolving additional nu-

trients in a continuous cycle. Soil acidity, however, is largely responsible for controlling this supplying process. When certain elements formed by soil acidity mix with plant nutrients, a compound may result which does not dissolve in soil water. As a result of this reaction, fertilizer nutrients can't reach the plants.

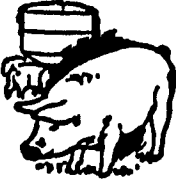
Elements formed by soil acidity not only prevent plants from making the most efficient use of fertilizer nutrients, but they will also effect crop growth, points out Dr. Mitchell. Excess aluminum and iron in the soil will restrict root growth by preventing adequate absorption of water and nutrients. Too much manganese will result in white or dead spots in the leaf tissue, reducing the photosynthetic process.

The concentration of these elements increases as the soil PH is lowered.

Soil acidity is a continuous process, stresses Dr. Mitchell. Plant growth, fertilizers and rainfall are just a few of the processes contributing to its development. With proper liming, however, the conditions that would lead to a reduction in plant growth and lower yields can be eliminated.

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### Wasps Control Alfalfa Weevil

Small wasps, slightly larger than the head of a pin, may be the answer farmers have been waiting for as a means of controlling the alfalfa weevil.

Dr. William Day, entomologist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Biological Control Laboratory, Moores-town, N. J., reports that six species of parasitoids have been established in the East in an effort to keep the weevil populations in check.

During a recent speaking engagement at the University of Delaware, Dr. Day pointed out that the present work aimed at biological control of the alfalfa weevil was started during the late 1950's in France, where the wasps were found to be a natural weevil control. "The decision was then made to introduce all suitable species into the US. It appeared that a combination of at least three species would be necessary to control the weevil, and it would be impossible to predict which species would succeed and which would be adapted to various environments."

Next, live parasites were sent to Moores-town where scientists

### Sale Register

EVERY FRIDAY—Stockers and Feeders—Sherandoah Valley Va. Cattle, Staunton Union Stock Yards, Inc. Staunton, Va.

SAT NOV 15—9 AM Public Sale of Valuable early steam engine parts and steam and traction engines located at Kinzers, Pa., east of Lancaster along Rt. 30. Sale by Kinzer Equipment Co.

SAT NOV 15—12 45 PM Diller and Stoltzfus Registered Holstein Sale located along Rt. 222, 6 mi. S of Lancaster on the Carl Diller farm Sale by Carl Diller and John J. Stoltzfus.

MON NOV. 17—S & W Ranches' Sale, Puidum, Nebraska.

MON NOV 17—At Martin's Sale Stables, Blue Ball, Pa. Dispersal of Arabian Horses for Mrs. D. G. Steeley at 2 pm. Standard-bred consigned horses and ponies hitched at 1 PM. Pack sold at 5 PM. Horses at 7 PM. Terms by Gene Sank and Larry Martin. Phone 717 354 6671.

TUES NOV 18—2 PM Public Sale of 104 acre farm more or less, 24 comfort stalls located 2 1/2 mi N of Churchtown on Rd. leading to Pebble Rock near Zeibe Sisters Nursing Home, Cocalan on Twp., Lancaster Co. Main entrance to farm from Rt. 823, rear entrance from Rt. 888. Inspection of property Sat Nov 8 1 to 3 PM. Terms by Martin and Laura Huvett.

WED NOV 19—Complete Herd Dispersal of 37 head Holstein cows to be sold at the New Holland Sales Stables, Inc. for Glenn Fite. Owner.

THURS NOV 20—2 PM Privately owned grocery and notion store known as Burkholder's County Store located along Rt. 22 in the Village of Groffdale, 1 1/2 mi W of New Holland, Lancaster County, Pa. Inspection permitted during store hours Mon., Tues., Wed. and Sat. 8 AM to 6 PM. Thurs and Fri. 8 A.M. to 9 P.M. Will be sold in two parts with equipment or equipment separately. Terms by Elam K. Burkholder.

THURS NOV 20—8 P.M. Public Dairy Cow Sale located 5 miles North of Rt. 222 along 897, 2 mi N of Reinholds Vernon and Ray Kline Owners.

FRI NOV. 21—10 AM Complete Dispersal of Registered and Grade Holstein Cattle and Farm Equipment located 1 1/2 mi east of Rt. 82 (Loags Corner) 2 mi. southeast of Elveison, along Yoder Rd., Chester County, Pa. Terms by Amos C. Stoltzfus, Elveison RD #2.

either released them in carefully selected alfalfa fields — if numbers were large enough — or reared them in the lab. "Some species cannot be reared efficiently in the lab due to diapause or some other factor, so they had to be released immediately. If we received a stage of the parasite other than the adult, they were held in quarantine to prevent the escape of any hyperparasites present," explained the entomologist.

When released, the small parasites search out the alfalfa weevil larvae where they lay their eggs. After the eggs hatch, the wasp larvae feed on the weevil larvae, killing them and interrupting the life cycle. Although the wasps will not completely eliminate weevil populations, it is hoped they will reduce them to a tolerable level, according to Dr. Day.

The main benefit to farmers will be a tremendous savings from reduced spraying costs. With this biological control program, he emphasized. "Over a 10 year period a rough estimate of the total costs for the parasite-weevil program is around \$1 million. But in the mid Atlantic states in 1969 alone, the savings from less spraying and less crop damage was \$1 1/4 million."

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