

5-Acre Corn Clubs

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Agronomist, brought the participants up-to-date on the new soil test interpretations and the use of sewage sludge as a fertilizer supplement

Willis 'Bill' McClellan, another Penn State Extension Agronomist, spoke to the group about herbicides. One word of caution he delivered was certain herbicides can be potential bombs if not handled properly.

"If your spraying with Roundup in a galvanized tank, the chemicals react to produce hydrogen — an explosive. That would be one heck of a thing to be carrying around under your arm. So be sure to use a stainless steel or plastic tank if your using this herbicide," he warned.

McClellan also advised the group to maintain soil pH's above 6.0 with proper liming when using triazine herbicides in order to get optimum results. He recommended applying one ton of lime every other year if cultivation methods are no-till or minimum tillage.

Two new herbicides approved for soybeans, McClellan noted, are Blazer, a post-emergent manufactured by Rohm & Haas, and Hoelon, another post-emergent made by BASF

Howe also mentioned these herbicides are "emergency materials" with expensive price tags. It's best to control the weeds before they emerge, he said

McClellan also shared with the group the fact he's seen a lot of winter annual weeds, such as chickweed and pepperweed, in alfalfa stands this year. He recommended spraying with one pint per acre of Paraquat before the alfalfa breaks dormancy for control.

Dave Cote, of Chevron Chemical Company, reviewed his firm's experiences with no-till soybean trial plots in Lebanon and Lancaster Counties.

"We no-tilled about 100 acres of double crop soybeans following barley or wheat last summer. Our yields ranged anywhere from 22 to 34 bushels per acre, where conventionally tilled beans were yielding between 5 and 10 bushels per acre due to soil moisture evaporation."

Cote emphasized no-tilling beans saves fuel, soil, and moisture. And on wetter fields, he noted, no-tilling beans allows harvesting without rutting the fields.

"The organic matter on top of the ground acts like a buoy for harvesting equipment," he said

Whether a farmer tries no-till beans depends primarily on planter availability, Cote explained. His company used a Lilliston 710, the only one of its kind in the U.S., for last summer's plots. To keep the planting and data consistent, the company hired one person to do all the planting and used the same tractor to pull their planter in every plot.

Seeding was done at the rate of 80 pounds per acre, although Cote confessed he would have preferred 100 pounds per acre seeding rate. The variety of soybeans was chosen by each producer, he noted.

Cote explained the beans were planted in 7 inch rows — the planter put down 18 at a time. This narrow plant row spacing gives maximum weed control with the maximum number of plants for maximum yield, he said.

No-till corn planters can be used instead of a no-till soybean planter, Cote said.

"Because these planters are set for 30 inch rows, farmers are planting one sweep and then doubling back to plant between the rows. But, the 15 inch rows seem to be too wide for shading and good weed control."

In their trials, Cote said they used two soil tests to be sure the soil pH was high enough. They sprayed the small grain fields with Paraquat "in place of plowing", he noted, and went with the higher

recommended rate of residual herbicides for best weed control.

For area farmers interested in trying some no-till soybeans, Cote announced two planters are available in the area.

"A Moore Drill is available for rent from Heisey Equipment and Evergreen Tractor Company has a Tye Drill for sale. Both these firms are in Lebanon County. The Tye distributor in the area is Hamilton equipment in Ephrata," Cote concluded.

Roland Freund, Farm Management Specialist from Penn State, reviewed methods of budgeting and keeping track of expenses. He emphasized the importance of knowing what fertilizer is still out in the fields

Dauphin farmland map now available

HARRISBURG — "The Dauphin County Important Farmlands Map is now available for public distribution," announced Joel Myers, District Conservationist for the Soil Conservation Service in Dauphin County.

Important Farmlands Maps identify prime lands as well as other important farmlands within a county.

Myers explained the maps are produced by SCS to provide landowners and local units of

from last year.

"The \$3 spent on a soil test kit can be made up in savings on one acre of corn," he said. "And you can save some bucks on herbicides by putting a few more dollars in lime."

John Weidman of Pioneer Seed Company cautioned the group on overplanting in relation to fertility, soil fertility imbalances, problems with late plantings, and difficulties arising from planting either too deep or too shallow.

"In the future, we'll be seeing taller corn with more upright leaves in the area which will be planted thicker," he concluded. "But we won't be seeing varieties in our area, necessarily, with more than one ear." —SM

governments with information for making land use decisions.

The map has farmlands divided into three categories, prime farmlands, which include 118,740 acres or 36 percent of the total land area of Dauphin County; lands of statewide importance, productive soils with some limitations covering 58,870 acres or 18 percent and lands of local importance which include 16,920 acres or 3 percent of the county.



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