

Sulfur affects yields on Delmarva peninsula

NEWARK, DEL. — Sulfur deficiency in the soil may be limiting crop yields on the Delmarva peninsula.

For a long time, substantial amounts of sulfur were added to

the soil as impurities in fertilizers in the form of ammonium sulfate and ordinary 16-18 percent sulfur phosphate.

But fertilizers now in use are much more highly refined, con-

taining little or no sulfur. This is especially true of liquid fertilizers, says University of Delaware extension soil specialist Leo Cotnoir. These new fertilizers are much less bulky and cheaper to transport. This is an advantage to the user, even if it means losing the sulfur.

Recent attempts to reduce sulfur in the atmosphere through better pollution control could also affect plants, says Cotnoir.

Some 20 to 30 pounds of sulfur is added to the soil through rainfall each year. This is the "acid rain" that has recently aroused so much concern. Yet this acid rain may produce benefits to plants by adding sulfur to the soil. As efforts to reduce air pollution succeed, less sulfur will reach the ground from this source.

Soils with well-developed subsoils that contain clay are usually

well supplied with sulfur, which moves down in the soil and is effectively retained in the clay. Soils with high organic matter content or soils to which manures have been added will probably contain adequate sulfur.

The sandy, low organic matter soils, which account for a substantial acreage in southern Delaware, are generally low in sulfur, however. Many of these soils are irrigated, which results in leaching of this minor nutrient. Addition of sulfur to these soils may be needed for optimum yields.

Sulfur is readily and cheaply applied, says the specialist. Gypsum (calcium sulfate) is a common industrial by-product. It is a cheap and very good source of sulfur. Some ammonium sulfate is also available locally. As a source of nitrogen, it is slightly more expensive than urea or ammonium

nitrate. But where sulfur deficiencies are suspected, it's an excellent source of both nitrogen and sulfur. Very fine (300 mesh) elemental sulfur or ammonium thiosulfate may be added to liquid fertilizers to increase their sulfur content.

It is unlikely that widespread sulfur deficiencies exist in Delaware. It is equally unlikely that additional sulfur will be profitable at yield levels of 100-125 bushels of corn or 35 bushels of soybeans.

But when other limiting factors, especially water, have been removed and 175 to 200 bushels of corn or more appear possible, sulfur may become important.

Available information is currently very limited. It will be important during the next few years to look at the role of sulfur in crop production, says Cotnoir.



Lime-Valley Lightning, bred by James High, Lancaster, has been added to proven sire list of Atlantic Breeders Cooperative.

Lancaster bull proven at Atlantic

LANCASTER — A registered Holstein bull from a Lancaster County breeder is one of the new genetic leaders for high milk production at Atlantic Breeders Cooperative, according to Harry Roth, operations director.

The bull, 15H242 Lime-Valley Lightning, bred by James High, Lancaster, is among three sires added to Atlantic's selection of well-proven bulls now available for extensive artificial insemination service.

Roth explains that based on a January, 1981 summary compiled by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Lightning had 26 daughters in 24 different dairy herds which yielded average

production of 18,089 pounds of milk with 3.6% butterfat.

The bull originally joined the Atlantic stud four years ago for random-mating to approximately 600 Holstein cows in herds owned by Atlantic members. Specially selected for Atlantic's breeding program through his bloodlines, Lightning's sire is Romandale Dividend Performer, a former member of the Cooperative's stud that received the Gold Medal Sire award from the Holstein Association. Lightning's dam, Lime-Valley Sylvia, is scored "Very Good-88" in body conformation and completed several good production records in High's herd.

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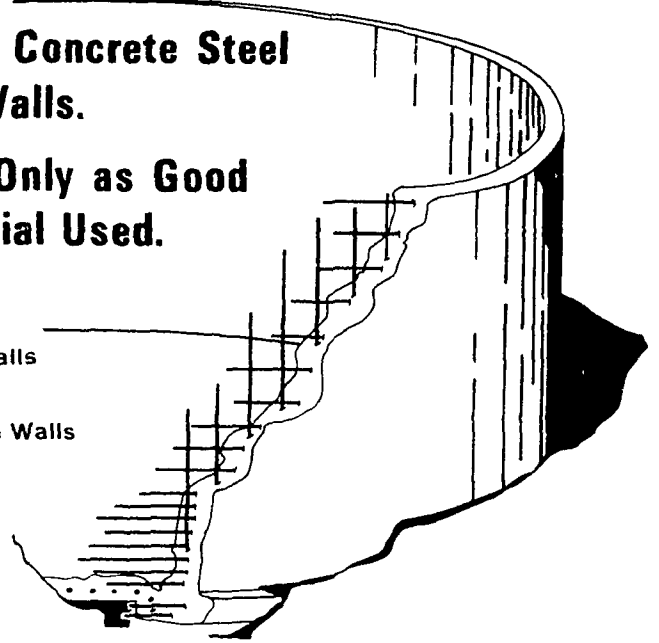
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