Tobacco data is outlined

LANCASTER - Lancaster County tobacco growers should be paying attention to a couple of things:

-First, there had better be Ridomil in those seedbeds.

-Second, growing management of this year's crop is going to be more important than eyer.

John Yocum, manager of the Penn State Southeast Research Farm, reports that the Blue Mold Alert has discovered the disease in both Florida and Georgia. In Florida, it's found in both the beds and fields. In Georgia, it's only in the beds.

Thus, if weather conditions permit - mostly cool and wet - and the winds from the south are right, the air-borne spore could be carried into Lancaster County.

The use of Ridomil in the seedbeds as well as fields, which is followed by most growers, is now doubly important. In addition to the protection against Blue Mold, Ridomil also controls one of the

"dampening off" organisms, which are prevalent during these cool, wet times.

The weather will also put bed development a bit behind schedule, just as it may be affecting other field work.

Yocum plans to issue his first tobacco newsletter the beginning of May in time for transplanting. Growers interested in getting the periodic newsletter should get their names and addresses to him or to the Lancaster County Extension Office.

And why will management be all the more important this year?

Well, it's expected that tobacco growing this year will be at least split 50-50 between Pennsylvania chewing tobacco and the smoking leaf.

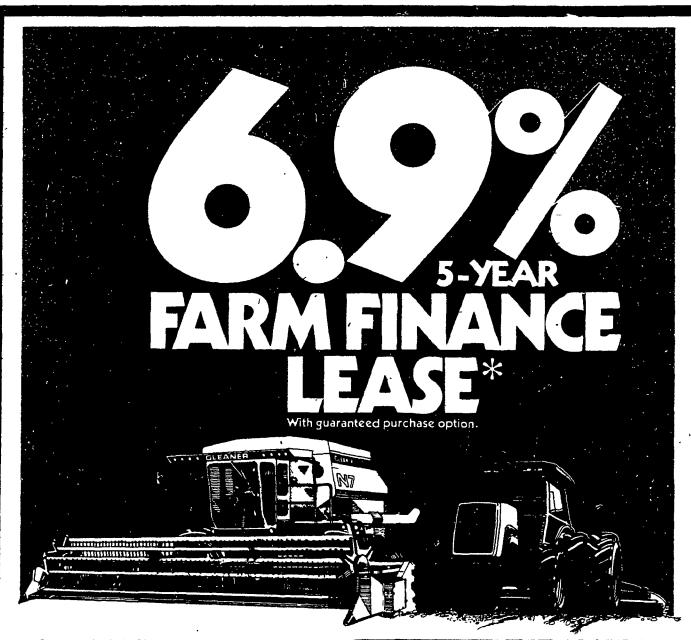
And, the auctions in Maryland this spring have been reflecting lower prices - about 25 cents or so below last year. There's a big crop,

So, good growing management

of this year's smoking leaf in Lancaster County will be vital, according to Yocum.

Buyers are going to be looking for good, quality leaf, he explained. And that means growing it the way smoking leaf should be, as opposed to chewing leaf, and doing things like grading it.

But those things are still a bit off in the future, but not that far. And growers better keep on top of them this year, it was advised.



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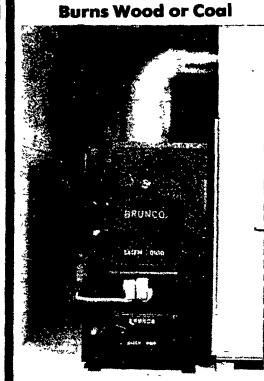
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