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## Potato stocks up 16 percent

HARRISBURG — Total stocks of potatoes stored in Pennsylvania on March 1, 1985, were 1,560,000 hundredweight, 16 percent more than a year ago, according to the Pennsylvania Crop and Livestock Reporting Service.

Of this amount, 715,000 cwt. was stored in the processors' facilities.

This represents 46 percent of the total stocks compared with 61 percent last year.

Stocks are defined as the quantity remaining in storage for all purposes and uses, including seed, shrinkage and waste, and other losses that occur after the date of each report.

## Is it time to cut fertilizer costs?

In this lean budget crop year, corn growers need to look closely at their soil fertility programs to obtain maximum benefit from all the lime and fertilizer used.

"It is essential to determine if reductions can be made in lime and fertilizer use, but equally important to ensure that maximum economic yields are not

jeopardized," says University of Delaware soil scientist Leo Cotnoir. He offers these suggestions for cutting fertilizer costs:

\*Are fertilizers being applied to marginal land? Consider not planting acres that don't produce adequate yields. For example, the risk of growing corn on poor land without irrigation is too great to

justify the cost of fertilizer and other planting costs. Don't plant high-risk acreage.

\*Examine the yield history of each field. Don't base expectations on the one year in 10 when yields were above or below average. Be guided by past yields over a period of time.

\*Gauge lime needs carefully. Corn yields are not increased by

raising pH over 5.5. Look not only at the present pH, but also at pH trends over the past three or four years as well as past liming history. Liming can be delayed on fields with a pH of 5.5 or over.

\*Match nitrogen rates to yield expectations. Allow 1 pound of nitrogen per bushel of anticipated yield. "Nitrogen will not replace water," Cotnoir stresses. "Using more than 1 pound per expected bushel won't increase yields if there's not enough water. On the other hand, most well managed Delaware fields contain enough reserve nitrogen to support a yield greater than 1 bushel per added pound in a year of above average rainfall."

\*Time nitrogen fertilizer applications for maximum efficiency. This means putting on no more than one-fourth of the total nitrogen at planting, and sidedressing the balance. Don't apply nitrogen before planting. When calculating nitrogen rates, give adequate credit for the nitrogen supplied by a legume crop.

\*Avoid unnecessary phosphorus applications. Over three-fourths of Delaware's fields have phosphorus levels in the high and very high range. Little if any yield response results from adding phosphorus to these soils, Cotnoir says. Band any needed phosphorus at planting, as this is three to four times more efficient than broadcasting it.

\*Use micronutrients only if there is evidence of need. "It is unlikely that you will see responses from micronutrient applications where deficiencies have not been observed in the past," the soil specialist says. "If micronutrients are needed, foliar applications are more efficient than banded or broadcast ones."

"Most soils in this area have been well limed and heavily fertilized over the last decade and have excellent fertility levels. This is the year to cash in on these past investments," Cotnoir says. "Delayed liming and reduced fertilization may not be ideal for long term fertility management, but they could be essential strategies for this year. Soil fertility levels don't fall rapidly after a year or two of reduced lime or fertilizer rates, and future yields will not be jeopardized."

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