

New Ways To Control Pests Examined At Vegetable Day

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Lancaster Farming Staff

NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) — About 175 local vegetable producers came out to Yoder's Restaurant Monday to learn about such topics as growing no-till pumpkins, identifying greenhouse insects, growing flowers in high tunnels, and controlling pests.

Sponsored by Eastern Lancaster County (ELANCO) School District and Penn State Cooperative Extension, the 2002 New Holland Vegetable Day updated farmers on a wide range of concerns.

Weed control is an area undergoing significant changes, according to Jeff Stoltzfus of ELANCO's Young Farmer Program and seminar coordinator.

The availability of new, more target-specific herbicides and the disappearance of some older ones demand that growers pay close attention to their program to get the best weed control.

While many of the new herbicides are "friendly to work with, almost natural products," they require more monitoring to insure they get the job done, Stoltzfus said.

Growers are also increasing their use of biological agents such as parasitic wasps to control problem insects, particularly in greenhouses.

These environmentally safe controls especially make sense in the greenhouse because of its closed environment where workers and children are often present, according to Stoltzfus.

Cathy Thomas of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture showed picture slides of a variety of greenhouse pests and monitoring techniques to help growers better identify and control them.

Being able to recognize insects and their stage of maturity as part of an integrated pest management (IPM) program helps producers "get the most effectiveness" out of their pesticide or biological control, Thomas said.

Three vegetable growers in attendance went to the other side of the microphone as a panel to tell about their experiences raising no-till pumpkins.

Charlie Miller, Gideon Stoltzfus, and David Zook have been fine-tuning their strategies over the last number of years. Persisting after some discouraging attempts, they reported generally positive results, while noting some of challenges that go along with no-tilling pumpkins.

"The longer we no-till, the better it gets," said Miller, who has been no-tilling pumpkins for about eight years in Lackawanna County.

While each grower's program differed in details from the others, each of them followed the basic strategy of planting pumpkins into a cover crop that had been killed — either by spraying, rolling, winter temperatures, or a



Dr. Gerry Ghidui of Rutgers Cooperative Extension presented the latest findings on aphid control at the New Holland Vegetable Day. One recently introduced pesticide works by shutting down the sucking mechanism of aphids and is harmless to other beneficial insects, Ghidui said.

combination of those methods.

Rye and winter-killed oats were named as the main cover crops into which the pumpkins were sown, using adapted no-till vacuum planters.

One of challenges of no-tilling is making sure that the cover crop is thoroughly dried out before planting. Green plant material, wetness, and matting will hinder planting, according to the panel.

"Get it dead, get it down, get it dried out," Miller said.

Another no-till challenge is that the cover crop causes soil to heat up more slowly and can delay planting times.

On the other hand, cover crops hold moisture and build the soil. No-tilling decreases compaction.

A field that previously would have been a "pond" from a heavy rainfall had no water standing in it after switching to no-till, according to Zook, a New Holland area grower.

"That explained to me that with no-till, the ground was open and let the water in," Zook said.

The panel also noted that the residue mulch of the cover crop helped provide cleaner pumpkins at harvest time.

Other sessions addressed weed control in sweet corn, insect control in tomatoes, high tunnel flower production, aphid control, and the latest herbicide labeling changes.

For aphids, one recently introduced product controls these common, disease-spreading pests by shutting down the sucking mechanism they use to draw fluid from plants, according to Dr. Gerry Ghidui of Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

The highly specific action of this "aphicide" makes it generally harmless to other, beneficial insects and relatively safe for humans, Ghidui noted. One drawback is that the chemical acts more slowly than other alternatives.

Part of the advantage of such a target-specific aphicide, however, is that some traditional pesticides — such as those of the pyrethroid class — "increase aphid populations by killing natural predators."

"Timing is crucial" Ghidui said, encouraging growers to monitor for aphids one to two times per week during the growing season, identify aphid types and apply specific controls, rotate aphicides, and avoid overuse of pyrethroids.

Other IPM measures to curb aphid populations include separating fields of crops susceptible to aphids, keeping fields away from hedgerows, and seeding cucurbits on reflective mulch after July 1.

Brad Majek of Rutgers Cooperative Extension said weed control in sweet corn is becoming a greater challenge because of the changing availability of herbicides and increasing triazine resistance of some weeds.

"It's getting more difficult to control both grasses and broadleaves and allow rotation to another

vegetable (after harvesting sweet corn.)"

Majek outline strategies for using currently labeled pre- and postemergence herbicides in sweet corn, paying particular attention to minimizing crop damage.

One key to crop safety when applying certain postemergence herbicides is to keep the spray from entering the whorl or contacting the top half of the plant, Majek said.

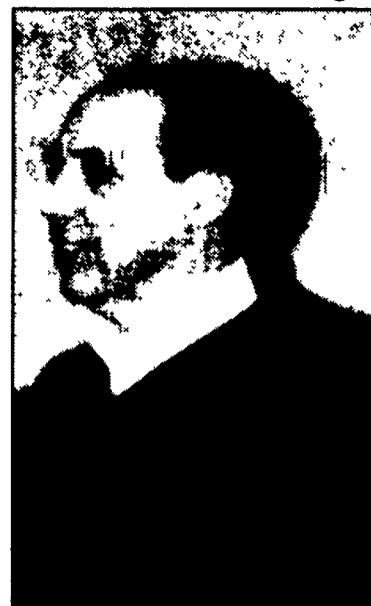
He encouraged growers to rig spray booms according to row spacing in order to reduce crop damage. For bigger corn, one option is to use a "drop nozzle" that passes along the lower parts of the corn plants while spraying.

Growers in attendance earned credits toward pesticide certification for various sessions.

Bill Troxel of the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association (PVGA) provided an update on the state's Vegetable Research Program and promotional activities.

Funded by Pennsylvania growers and backed by the Pa. Department of Agriculture (PDA), the research program is carried out by Penn State and other research institutions.

The PDA also teams with the PVGA in promotional initiatives such as Pennsylvania's "Simply Delicious" program, news re-



Bill Troxel of the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association updated growers on the vegetable research program and promotional activities. One new initiative is the Vegetable Quick Bread Contest conducted for the first time at this year's Farm Show.

leases that feature vegetables for printing in newspapers, and television commercials scheduled to air next year.

Farm Show Scholarship Foundation Benefit Dinner, Silent Auction Set Champion Farm Show Beef On Menu

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The National Civil War Museum will host a benefit dinner and silent auction here Thursday, Jan. 31 to support the Pa. Farm Show Scholarship Foundation.

The Scholarship Foundation offers funds each year to selected youth who are pursuing a post-secondary education. Scholars are chosen based on their academic achievement, 4-H or FFA involvement, school activities, and a history of involvement at the Pa. Farm Show.

This year at the Farm Show, the foundation presented nine youth with \$2,000 scholarships.

The benefit will begin at 6:00 p.m. with hors d'oeuvres and an available cash bar. The museum will also be open at that time.

Dinner will be served at 7:00

p.m., followed by a short program emceed by local television weatherman Chuck Rhodes.

The chef from Sysco of Central Pa. will be preparing aged steaks from the champion and reserve champion 2002 Farm Show steers for the main entree.

For those who want to see the museum, it will remain open until 11:00 pm. Tickets to the museum will be honored until July 31.

Several Harrisburg area companies helped coordinate the ben-

efit to bring together both farm and city people who recognize the importance of education to maintain the strength of agriculture in Pennsylvania and the importance of the Farm Show to the economy of the area.

Several items have been donated for the auction, including original art, meals at local establishments, a quilt signed by Tom Ridge, and others.

Foraging Around, the official publication of the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council, scheduled February 9 in Lancaster Farming, is scheduled to include a feature on rotational grazing for poultry in addition to work by other leading graziers. A preview and schedule of the upcoming Pennsylvania Forage and Grazing Conference is also scheduled, in addition to news and views of the Council.



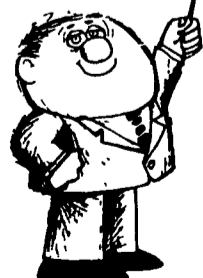
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