

# Virginia Farm Show A Success

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On the other hand, there was a hairdresser from Orange County making a first-time ever visit to the farm show. The outing with her husband, who is a small-scale farmer, was delightful.

Another group of three males of varying ages was lured by the tractor exhibits in Expo Hall. One of them was intrigued that an 8-horsepower import model could boast a price tag of less than \$30,000.

"I'm droolin'," the young farmer confided, replacing a panel that covered the engine after he had fully examined the components.

Some 140 exhibitors had displays and demonstrations.



An import tractor has caught the attention of one visitor to the Va. Farm Show that was held Jan. 21, 22 at Augusta Expo Land. With the panel aside he can better inspect the mechanics of the engine. Later, he commented that he was "droolin'" for the machine because he learned the 8-horsepower piece was being marketed for under \$30,000.



Joe Farmer, left, Stafford, keeps four Percheron horses and oxen. That's why he is checking out the horse trailers exhibited at the Virginia Farm Show, Fishersville. Farmer here is talking with exhibitor Chris Branham from Maupin Trailer Sales.

## Transition Cow Management Workshops

PORTERSVILLE (Butler Co.) and GREENSBURG (Westmoreland Co.) — Transition cow management workshops are scheduled for southwest Pennsylvania on Tuesday, Feb. 25, at Brown's Country Kitchen Restaurant in Portersville, and Thursday, Feb. 27, at the Westmoreland County Extension Office (Donohoe Center) in Greensburg. Each workshop will start at 10:30 a.m. and conclude at 2:30 p.m.

Why is the Transition Cow Management Program so important? A recent article in Dairy Herd Management magazine cited a Journal of Dairy Science research study which detailed that fresh cows with milk fever were 23.6 times more likely to have ketosis, 7.2 times more likely to have dystocia problems, 4 times more likely to retain fetal membranes, and 5.4 times more likely to have clinical mastitis. Consequently, many of these cows start off very sluggish and this has a great impact on milk production for that lactation and consequently affects profitability. Many of these problems can be avoided if producers follow a transition Cow Management Program. Nutrition is one important area where changes may need to be made. However, many times cow comfort, feed bunk space, and water quantity and quality have a significant impact.

Speakers for the event include Dr. Bob Van Saun, Penn State extension veterinarian and John Tyson, Penn State extension agricultural engineer. They will outline the management steps and protocols that should be followed to help minimize problems.

Cost of attending the workshop is \$15 per person with a registration deadline of Friday, Feb. 21.

For additional information, and registration details, contact Eugene Schurman at (724) 465-3880.

## Varying Soil Conditions Can Impact Nutrient Levels

WOOSTER, Ohio — This growing season's topsy-turvy weather may have impacted more than crop performance and subsequent yields.

Maurice Watson, an Ohio State University Extension soil specialist with the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC), said that the wet spring followed by a summer-drought may have also affected soil nutrient concentrations.

As a result, growers should test their soil for nutrient availability following harvest to determine whether or not fertilizer is required before spring planting.

"Most growers test their fields to determine nutrient concentrations. We recommend testing every three years, so that growers over time get a feel for the natural variation of nutrient levels in the soil," said Watson. "This year is just more of a concern because of the extreme wet and dry conditions we encountered."

Watson said that varying soil conditions affect a plant's ability to uptake nutrients effectively. Under extreme wet conditions, the oxygen supply to the roots is limited, affecting the uptake of nutrients, even though the nutrients are present in sufficient concentrations. Under drought conditions, plants are unable to take up nutrients because of the lack of water flow to the roots and the lack of growth or slow growth of the plant.

"Because of this year's drought, it is possible not as much fertilizer will be needed by next year's crop on a field that was sufficiently fertilized this year. In addition, it is possible that not enough fertilizer was applied this year because of the very wet spring," Watson said. "Despite either condition, a soil

test will determine whether or not nutrients are at their optimum levels."

Watson said growers should mainly test for phosphorus and potassium, the two main elements that can impact a plant's performance if they are in deficient levels.

"In a nutrient-deficient situation, the biochemical reactions are not going to be what they should be under normal conditions. You may get a reduction in protein formation, which is the main building block of the plant," said Watson. "A plant will tend to take some nutrient elements from the older leaf tissue and put it toward the younger leaves to compensate, particularly in the case of nitrogen or potassium deficiencies. As a result, you don't get the normal development of the plant and yield is then reduced."

Plants may also run into a nutrient imbalance if nutrient levels are too high in the soil.

Nutrient levels are also impacted by soil type (sandy soils have less of a reservoir for nutrients than clay or silt loam soils), as well as the type of crop being planted. For example, corn silage and alfalfa remove more potassium from the soil than grain crops.

Guidelines for choosing a quality soil-testing laboratory can be found online at <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hygfact/1000/1133.html>. More information on fertilizer and lime recommendations for corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa is available in the Tri-State Bulletin E-2567, which can be obtained from local county Extension offices or online at <http://ohioline.osu.edu/e2567/>.

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