

# Virginia BCIA Announces Plans For Test Station Program

CULPEPER, Va. — Rules and regulations for the 2003-04 Virginia Central Bull Tests and Sales are now available through the Virginia Beef Cattle Improvement Association. This will be the 46th year for the Central Bull Test Stations in Virginia. A total of four tests will be conducted at the two test stations located in Culpeper and Wytheville.

The Culpeper station at Glenmary Farm in Rapidan will test two sets of bulls. Senior bulls

(born August 15 to December 15, 2002) will be delivered July 15 and tested for 112 days with eligible bulls selling December 13. The junior test group (bulls born December 16, 2002 to March 31, 2003) will be taken in at the station November 4, tested for 112 days, and sold April 2, 2004.

The Southwest Bull Test Station in Wytheville will test two age groups of bulls — senior bulls born October 1 to December 31, 2002 and junior bulls born Janu-

ary 1 to March 31, 2003. Both sets of bulls are scheduled to arrive at the station September 30. Senior bulls will be tested for 112 days, and junior bulls for 133 days. Eligible bulls in both test groups will be sold on March 20, 2004.

In addition to the traditional tests, the opportunity exists for breeders to custom feed bulls through the BCIA program so that contemporary groups may be maintained. Additionally, pro-

visions to the program have been added to allow breeders more flexibility in developing both sale-eligible and custom tests bulls.

Registered bulls of any recognized beef breed, or recorded percentage bulls of breeds which have an open herd book are eligible for the central tests. All bulls must be recorded in their respective breed association, and have a complete performance record (including EPDs). Bulls must also meet breed-specific minimum

YW EPD requirements, individual performance specifications, as well as pre-delivery health and management protocol to be eligible for the tests.

Breeders in Virginia and bordering states who are members of Virginia BCIA are eligible to consign bulls. For copies of the rules and regulations as well as entry information regarding the 2003-04 central bull tests, contact the Virginia BCIA office at (540) 231-9163 or visit <http://bcia.apsc.vt.edu>.

# Tree Fruit Expert Predicts Big Crop, Despite Wet Spring

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Cool, wet, foggy and windy — this spring has been bad news across Pennsylvania — unless you are a plant.

Fruit trees, in particular, seem to be growing extremely well, according to an expert in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, who predicts a bumper crop this summer and fall.

As miserable as the weather

has been for people, there have been no late frosts and conditions have been just warm and dry enough for fruit crops to get a good start. The only factor that may hold back fruit yields this year will be last year's drought, according to horticulture professor Robert Crassweller.

"We have seen some effects of drought last year — we haven't had the dense 'snowball' blooms we get occasionally," he said.

"But we have had medium to moderate blooms across the state, which indicate we'll have lots of fruit."

Crassweller noted this has been an unusual spring. "It stayed so cold for so long there was little difference north to south — normally there is a 10-day difference as the early growing season progresses," he said. "But once it got warmer, things progressed rapidly. Cher-

ries, peaches, and apples were all in bloom at the same time. Normally one dies out by the time another starts to bloom. This is the first time in 25 years I have seen them all bloom together."

The past five years brought drought conditions, but this spring has been almost too wet, bringing growers concerns about disease. "We came into spring in pretty good shape across most of the state with moist soils. But all

the rain we have had in May might cause an increase in diseases such as apple scab, peach scab, peach leaf curl, brown rot, and fire blight.

"Fruit growers are never happy with the weather, but they will take what they can get," said Crassweller. "It's ironic that after so much drought, we are getting too much rain. But despite wet conditions, there is potential this year for a really good crop."

# PASS Reveals Vegetable Contract Intentions

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Processors in Pennsylvania intend to contract 7,300 acres of snap beans in 2003, 4 percent less than the 7,600 acres contracted in 2002, according to the Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service (PASS).

Sweet corn processors intend to contract 1,000 acres, down 29 percent from the 1,400 contracted in 2002. Tomato processor data is not published for Pennsylvania in an effort not to disclose individual operations.

U.S. processors plan to contract 1.28 million acres of vegetables in 2003 for the nation's five major vegetable crops (snap beans, sweet corn, cucumbers for pickles,

green peas, and tomatoes), unchanged from 2002.

Acreage for freezing at 411,300 acres is down 2 percent, while acreage for canning forecast at 873,100 acres is up 1 percent from 2002. Increased acreage for cucumbers for pickles, green peas, and tomatoes offsets decreased acreage for snap beans and sweet corn.

U.S. snap bean processors intend to contract 194,400 acres, down 12 percent from last year. Contracted acres for freezing are at 59,800, down 8 percent from 2002. Contracted acreage for canning, at 134,600 acres, is down 13 percent from 2002.


Sweet corn processors intend to contract 438,600 acres, down 1 percent from the previous year.

Contracted acreage for freezing at 216,400 acres is 3 percent less than last year's total, and contracted acreage for canning, at 222,200 acres is 1 percent more than last year.


Tomato processors plan to contract 312,600 acres in 2003, up less than 1 percent from last year. Contract production at 11.49 million tons is 1 percent above 2002.

U.S. green pea processors intend to contract 243,200 acres, up 6 percent from last year. Contracted acreage for freezing, at 135,100 acres is 4 percent more than last year's total, and contracted acreage for canning at 108,100 acres is 10 percent above last year.

Quality hay production is the focus of the July 12 edition of the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council's *Foraging Around* newsletter in *Lancaster Farming*. Also scheduled: Project Grass youth contest coverage, conservation updates, reports on forage preservation, and a calendar of events.



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