

AG NEWS

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
 Extension

Courthouse, 300 Main Street, P.O. Box 497 • Hillsboro, MO 63050 • (636) 797-5391 • Fax: (636) 797-5059

Soils and Crops - March 18th

You want it, you love it, and you can't live without it! The 82nd Annual Jefferson County and Crops Conference, the Jefferson County Social Event of the Year, will be Saturday, March 18th at 6:00 pm at Hillsboro High School in Hillsboro. Early highlights include a presentation on New Zealand dairies and their efforts to move to Missouri by Joe Horner, State Dairy and Beef Specialist, QSA Certification for cattle, Timber Stand Improvement, rental payments for marginal cropland for wildlife, and horticultural questions and answers. Tentative presentations are scrap booking, (the girls tell me programs to build ponds and preliminary work by Storm Water Department-Creek Watershed Project. your suggestions for minicall. Robbie's Catering food this year and those experienced Robbie's that it is pretty special. And as in the past, if you have your blood pressure checked by the Jefferson County Health Department at the Conference, you could win a BRAND NEW CHAINSAW!



Soils



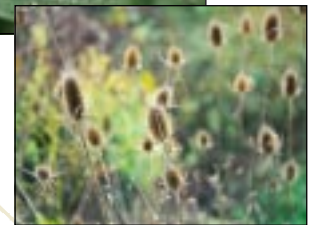
View of mini-sessions 2005

its BIG!), cost-share in Jefferson County, the Jefferson County ment on the Belew's There is still time for sessions, so give me a will be providing the of you that have cooking will testify

**So rest up for the Social Event of the Year,
the 82nd Annual Soils and Crops Conference on March 18th!**

Pest Management Workshop Offered

For those of you who are raising crops, you have two opportunities to attend a special pest management meeting. The first meeting is on Monday, February 13th, 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Memorial Auditorium in Union. The meeting will be repeated on February 15th at the St. Charles County Extension Center in St. Peters. The program will concentrate on scouting and treating for insects, plant diseases, and weeds. Speakers include Scott Killpack, Extension Agronomy Specialist, Laura Sweets, State Plant Disease Specialist, and Matt Herring, Extension Agronomy Specialist. NRCS staff will explain cost-share opportunities and requirements for the EQIP program.



To register, call toll free, 1-800-538-3584.

Fertilizer On Pastures – A Case of Sticker Shock

I woke up in a cold sweat! I dreamed that legions of farmers had attacked the courthouse with pitchforks and torches waving their fertilizer bills in the air and screaming, “What are you going to do about the price of fertilizer?” No more Ben and Jerry’s chunky, monkey ice cream at bedtime!



The obvious conclusion is that there is no good answer to the dilemma created by the high price of fertilizer. In other words, no short term fixes. So with that in mind, let’s look at five suggestions that should help you maintain production in the face of higher fertilizer costs.

1) **Soil Testing** – Would you take medicine without a diagnosis? It is the same with soil testing. A soil test report can target the areas that really are hurting production and the report will let you tailor your application to your greatest need. Here are two examples: Many fields near the barn or lot are adequate or high for phosphorus and potassium. These are likely fields that have had manure applied in years past. You can save dollars spent on P and K and put that extra money toward nitrogen. Another example is that as a rule, phosphorus is very low in Jefferson County soils. However, in pasture situations, we often find that potassium is medium to high. Therefore, you may want to apply a fertilizer analysis that is higher in phosphorus and lower in potassium in an effort to save money. This is true to a lesser extent in hay fields as the harvest of hay is a heavy user of potassium. At any rate, using your soil test results can help you efficiently spend your fertilizer dollar. And soil tests are still just \$8.50 a sample.

2) **Soil pH** – Your soil test report will tell you your soil pH and if limestone should be applied to correct it. Soil nutrients are most available to most plants when the pH is about 6.5. Therefore, if you want to get the most out of your fertilizer, make sure that the soil pH is adequate. Freight has made the application of limestone expensive, however, once you have applied the amount suggested on your soil test, you shouldn’t need to make additional applications for several years. Call and ask for G9102, “Liming Missouri Soils”.

3) **Overseed clover** – Years ago, I wrote a newsletter article on getting you wife clover seed for Valentine’s Day. The girls didn’t think it was near as funny as I did! But it does seem that maybe in the last few years we have kind of gotten away from annual seeding of clover. We know that the addition of clover to a pasture improves the nutritional value and can fix nitrogen for the grass. Norman Valle of De Soto applies 3 to 5 lbs of red clover each year to his pasture and he has perhaps the best pastures in the county! Fertility certainly plays an important role in the successful establishment of clover. Make a plan to overseed clover. It should be a yearly event, just like buying your sweetie that Valentine gift. For more information, check out G4651, “Renovating Grass Sodds with Legumes”

4) **Rotate pastures** – Fertilizer can cure a lot of grazing mistakes. Did you graze a field too short? Give it a shot of fertilizer and you are back in business. With all the talk about management intensive grazing, grazing plans, paddock size and such, it really is just about giving pastures rest. Consider developing a plan to allow pastures to rest about 30 days between grazings. You will be surprised at the amount of forage you can produce.

5) **Divide fertilizer applications between spring and fall** – When is grass in the shortest supply? Usually grass grows well in the spring and by fall more forage is needed. Rob Kallenbach is the MU State Forage Specialist. He has done quite a lot of research on fall fertilization of fescue. His research makes a case for perhaps more fall fertilization and less in the spring. By cutting back on spring applications and applying fertilizer in August, the grass growth is used more efficiently. One of the big drawbacks to fall fertilization has always been the threat of dry weather. Rob’s research has shown that there appears to be much less loss of nitrogen than originally thought during dry fall weather.

What is TSI?

TSI stands for Timber Stand Improvement and is the subject of an informational workshop that is open to anyone on February 23rd. The workshop will be held from 9:00 to 3:00 starting at the Jefferson County Extension Center, Courthouse, 300 Main Street in Hillsboro. An afternoon session will consist of a field demonstration.



Questions to be answered are:

- ✓ When is TSI worth it?
- ✓ What is "highgrading"?
- ✓ What species should I have in my forest?
- ✓ Which trees should be kept?
- ✓ How much are my trees worth?
- ✓ Why spend the time and money on my forest?



To make reservations, call the Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District at 636-583-2303 ext. 3.



Poor quality, less money

Large healthy, more money



Septage Happens!

Another name for septic tank effluent is septage. Think about how many septic tanks there are in Jefferson County and then consider that to protect the drain field, recommendations are that septic tanks be pumped every two years. That's a lot ofuh..... septage! Now consider the price of fertilizer this year. Is there a way that septage could be used as a fertilizer?

To that end, Tim Horton, Matt Herring, and I have applied for a small grant to conduct a demonstration to determine if septage has a use as fertilizer. Both the Environmental Protection Agency and Missouri Department of Natural Resources recommend that septage be applied to crop and forage fields by a licensed pumper after lime stabilization. The addition of hydrated lime raises the pH and stabilizes or kills the pathogens that might be present. At this time, much of the septage produced in Jefferson County is hauled to the St. Louis Metropolitan Sewer District and dumped for a fee.

Brenda Rush, of AA Quick Plumbing and Septic Service, has agreed to participate in this demonstration by

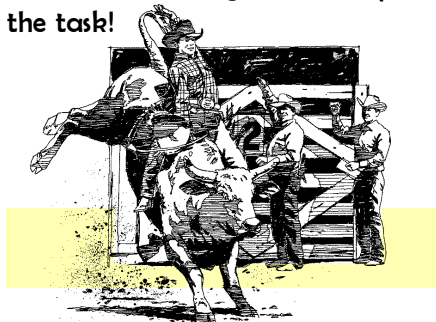
providing hay fields for application. We will be testing the septage, soil testing, and recording the applications on predetermined plots in the field. (Hopefully, Tim or Matt will take the samples of septage!) We then will measure the production. We hope to find out if septage, which is mostly water, can be applied at sufficient rates to increase production. We'll let you know what we find out!





Short Rows

I've got a new scheme to get rich! Patti and I were watching TV the other night and they had a program on about the bucking bulls used in the rodeo. Now rodeo is okay, and I like to watch it, but learning about the bulls was really interesting. Some of those bulls are famous and even make guest appearances at Las Vegas and conventions and such. So.....since son Dallas is into beef reproduction and artificial insemination, I suggested that we breed that old tiger stripe cow to "Bodacious" or "Little Yellow Jacket" or one of those famous bulls and raise us a champion bucking bull. Dallas reminded me that our baling wire fences and lots might not be up to the task!



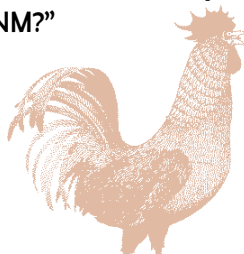
In Jefferson County, Missouri Lime and Materials in Eureka is about the only source for certified ag lime. In the past, the guarantee of the limestone has been about 500. In simple terms, this means that 500 lbs out of every ton of lime is actually neutralizing material. Missouri Lime and Materials has changed its process and now the guarantee is about 770. This is significant, as most of the cost of applying limestone is freight. In other words, a little less does a little more!

I guess somebody else already thought of my scheme. A neighbor was telling me that semen from the late, great bucking bull "Bodacious", is about \$900 a straw!



By the way, Nathan Weber is the new Pioneer Seed dealer for Jefferson County.

Speaking of limestone, there are several quarries in Jefferson County that sell limestone. To legally sell as ag lime, the limestone from the quarry must have a calcium carbonate equivalent (CCE) of at least 65%, which is a measure of purity. It also must meet certain fineness factors for particle size. Many quarries can meet the CCE requirement, but the particle sizes are too coarse to be sold as agricultural limestone. For more information, call the Extension Center and ask for guide G9107, "Missouri Limestone Quality: What is ENM?"



Elver Pardo, 4-H Youth Specialist has set up a meeting on showing poultry for those who wish to show chickens at the fair. It is Thursday, February 16th at 7:00 pm at Arrowhead Sales Facility, Highway B in Cedar Hill. Tony Perryman, from the Missouri Department of

Agriculture will be the speaker. Tony has judged poultry shows all over the state. Everyone is invited.

If you didn't get this newsletter, you're probably not reading it! We updated our mail list last summer and if you didn't respond, you most likely will not receive the newsletter. Don't let someone take your newsletter, tell them to contact us and request their own!



And finally, the farmer and his wife started to town. It wasn't long before the farmer was pulled over by a policeman for speeding. The policeman explained to the farmer that he was going 75 miles per hour in a 55 mile per hour zone. The farmer said, "Why, that can't be right!" "I always follow the speed limit." His wife interrupted, "Now, Honey, you always drive too fast." The officer went on, "Sir, I see that you are not wearing your seat belt." The farmer answered, "Oh, I unfastened my seat belt when I saw your lights because I knew you would want to see my driver's license." The wife interrupted again, "I told you that you should buckle up when we left the house!" The farmer turned to his wife and yelled, "?#?\$, would you shut up!" The officer turned to the wife and asked, "Ma'm does your husband always talk to you this way?" The wife answered, "No, officer, just when he has been drinking.!?!?"

Dean Wilson
Agriculture Specialist