

Virginia Cooperative Extension



FARM NOTES

November 2012

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Jim Gerrish of American GrazingLands Services to Speak at the 2013 Winter Forage Conferences

Kicking the Hay Habit: Increasing the Profitability of Virginia's Ruminant Livestock Operations is the theme for the Virginia Forage and Grassland Council (VFGC) and Virginia Cooperative Extension Winter Forage Conferences. Hay costs purchased or homegrown are at record highs driven by high input costs. Producers will have an ideal opportunity to gain an understanding and the details needed to determine if a "kicking the hay" habit and year round grazing system make cents for their livestock operations.

See Gerrish, Page 5

Upcoming Meetings

2012

- November 28, 1:00-4:00 p.m. - **Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training**, Alson H. Smith Jr. Agricultural Research and Extension Center
- December 5 and 6 - **Virginia Farm to Table Conference**, Blue Ridge Community College's Plecker Workforce Center, <http://conference.virginiafarmtotable.org>
- December 5, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. - **VFGC Corn Silage Meeting**, Woodmen of the World, Dayton
- December 6, 6:00-9:00 p.m. - **Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training**, Warren County Government Building
- December 11, 1:00-4:00 p.m. - **Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training**, Page County Extension Office
- December 13, 6:00-9:00 p.m. - **Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training**, Shenandoah County Government Center.
- December 17, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. - **Meeting to Review Cornfield Aerial Imagery and Cornstalk Nitrate Test Results**, Shenandoah County Extension Office
- December 19, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. - **Meeting to Review Cornfield Aerial Imagery and Cornstalk Nitrate Test Results**, Page County Extension Office

2013

- January 9, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. - **Commercial Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training**, Northern Virginia 4-H Educational Center, Front Royal
- January 22 and 23 - **Jim Gerrish of American GrazingLands Services to speak at the 2013 VFGC Winter Forage Conferences**, Warren County Community Center in Front Royal and Weyers Cave Community Center
- February 12 - **Virginia No-Till Alliance Annual Meeting**, Rockingham County Fairgrounds

Summary of 2012 Slug Management Program

In terms of slug management in corn and soybean, 2012 will probably be remembered as “One for the Record Books.” I have yet to talk to a farmer who can remember a more problematic year. It was fortunate that I was focused on slug management during 2012 (my dad would probably say “even a blind hog can find an acorn sometimes”). Needless to say, a lot of farmers gained experience with slugs and slug management strategies this past year. The following is a summary of the results from the 2012 Scouting Season:

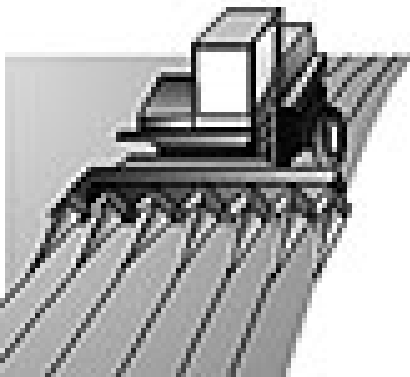
The important number from this table is that 35% of all pre-enrolled acres likely needed slug control. This includes pre-enrolled acres that did not receive slug bait but needed to be re-planted. In 2011, 3,102 acres were scouted with 244 acres needing treatment. This is about 8% of the no-till corn and soybean land. Most farmers felt 2011 was a year with relatively low slug pressure.

So what is the prediction for 2013 and how do farmers use the information gained this past year? Here are some of my thoughts:

First and foremost, we have no way to predict what 2013 will bring.

Broadcast application of slug bait cost about \$35 per acre (\$27 for bait plus \$8 for application cost). If we need to treat 35% of our acreage (and re-treat 20% of the areas we treat because it rains on the bait) then our cost per acre over all acres is \$14.70 per acre.

One farmer used the insecticide hopper on his corn planter to apply slug bait directly behind the planter (dribbled on top of the ground in an area about four to six inches wide directly over the row). His rate was about four pounds per acre. This appeared to work well but we need to try it a few times more. A key concept is that this will not help if the slugs are not active or if it rains shortly after planting. Most years the slugs do not hatch and become active until about May 3-5.



Farmers and I spread multiple fields that were 30 to 50 acres in size using a spreader mounted on a four wheeler. We were able to get the job done in three to four hours (which likely averaged 10-15 acres per hour). This does not include time driving to the field.

Total Pre-Enrolled Acres (acres we planned to scout prior to the planting season)

Corn 3,420 acres

Soybean 1,420 acres

Pre-Enrolled Acres Approved for Slug Bait (acres where slug damage appeared significant enough to warrant control)

Corn 1,200 acres

(35% of total pre-enrolled acres)

Soybean 500 acres

(35% of total pre-enrolled acres)

Post-Enrolled Acres Approved for Slug Bait

Corn 312 acres

Soybean 0 acres

Number of Farmers Who Participated in Cost Share Program (both pre- and post-enrolled acres)

15 farmers received \$18,368 cost share dollars in 2012.

Number of Acres that Received Slug Control

This includes both pre- and post- enrolled acres = 1,141 acres.

Soil Nitrate Data from 2012

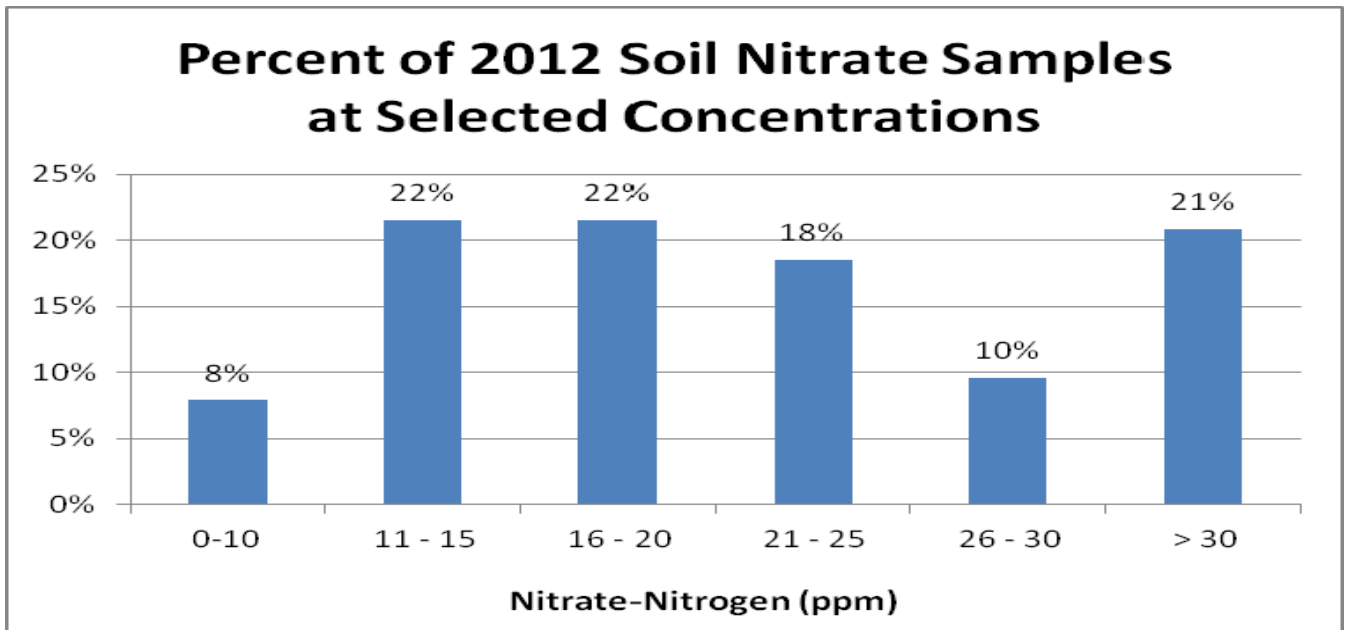
In 2012, there were 292 soil nitrate samples collected in the Northern Shenandoah Valley. The median concentration in 2012 was 20 ppm nitrate-N whereas the median in 2011 was 15 ppm. Recommendations for sidedress N applications are as follows: (1) soil nitrate levels of 0-10 ppm apply a full rate of sidedress N; (2) soil nitrate levels of 10-20 ppm apply a half rate of sidedress N; and (3) soil nitrate readings above 20 ppm no additional N is needed.

Year	Median Nitrate-N Concentration
2006	30
2007	27
2008	25
2009	18
2010	25
2011	15
2012	20

Why were soil nitrate levels in 2012 slightly elevated from 2011? In my opinion there are two primary reasons. First, cornfields did not utilize all of the nitrogen applied in 2011 due to the

severe drought (because the drought suppressed yield in most fields). Second, the spring of 2012 was dryer than the spring of 2011. More specifically early spring 2011 started dry followed by a severe rainy period. Many farmers applied poultry litter or fertilizer during the dry weather and the ensuing rain likely leached or denitrified the nitrogen. This phenomena did not occur (at least did not occur to the same magnitude) in 2012. Refer to the article about 2011 samples for more perspective:

http://offices.ext.vt.edu/shenandoah/programs/anr/Farm_Notes_February_2012.pdf.



Slugs, Continued from Page 2

It is real important to get seed covered at planting to prevent slugs from feeding on seedlings. Slug bait does not appear to stop the slugs from killing plants when the row is not closed well. Heavy disking or two passes with vertical tillage machines likely begin to damage the benefits of long term no-till.

In 2011, Lannate appeared to give promising results. Thus, we tried a little in 2012. It is unclear if it killed any slugs or if there were simply too many slugs (i.e. maybe the Lannate killed 50% of the slugs but the remaining 50% were too many for the crop).

In fields extremely heavily infested with slugs I question that a rate of 10 pounds slug bait per acre was adequate. Whether or not a farmer increases their rate might depend on the weather forecast (how soon is it going to rain) and how easy it is to apply more slug bait.

At this time there is some question as to whether or not it will be legal to use slug bait on corn or soybean in 2012. This is something I learned in late September 2012. I hope to know more about this situation by Christmas.

Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training Classes

Wednesday, November 28, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Alson H. Smith Jr. Research Agricultural Research and Extension Center (Fruit Lab), Frederick County

Thursday, December 6, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Warren County Government Building

Topics to be covered at this meeting include:

- An Overview of GAP Training
- Update on Emerald Ash Borer and New Statewide Quarantine
- New Small Fruit Pests
- Agronomy Pest Update
- Legal Update on Pesticides
- A Demonstration of Proper Pesticide Storage.

Tuesday, December 11, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Page County Extension Office

Thursday, December 13, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Shenandoah County Government Center

Topics to be covered at this meeting include:

- An Overview of GAP Training
- A Farmers Experience with Spraying His Own Crops
- Weed Control in Pastures, What is the Benefit?,
Blox Daughtery, Dow AgroScience
- Legal Update on Pesticides
- A Demonstration of Proper Pesticide Storage.

VFGC 2012

Making Your Corn Silage Count

December 5, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Dayton, VA, Woodmen of the World

(There are also meetings on December 6 and 7)

Topics/Speakers:

- Hybrid Selection and Forage Analysis
Dr. Wade Thomason, Virginia Tech
- Hot Topics in the World of Silages
Dr. Limin Kung, University of Delaware
- Cropping Strategies to Improve Cash Flow
Dr. Virginia Ishler, Penn State University
- Harvest Management and Feed Preservation
Dr. Limin Kung, University of Delaware
- Real-World Rations with \$8.00 Corn
Nutritionist Panel

\$15 registration fee

Please send checks to:

Margaret J. Kenny
3599 Indian Oak Road
Crewe, VA 23930

For More Information:

<http://vaforages.org/>

Shenandoah County Office 600 North Main Street, Suite 100, Woodstock, Virginia 22664-1855
540-459-6140 FAX: 540-459-6147 raclark@vt.edu

Gerrish, Continued from Page 1

This year's keynote speaker is Jim Gerrish of American GrazingLands Services LLC, an international national known expert on forage-livestock systems. Participants will also hear from Dr. Greg Halich, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Agricultural Economics, University of Kentucky, and J.B. Daniel, Forage & Grassland Agronomist, USDA-NRCS. Dr. Halich will provide famers with knowledge of profitability differences of grazing systems including spring versus fall calving and the cost of grazing versus making and feeding haying. Mr. Daniel will help farmers understand how to plan and develop farm infrastructure to support grazing systems and learn the details of NRCS/costs-share programs. This year, VFGC will also feature local livestock producers at each workshop site to discuss "How I've extended the grazing season on my farm." These producers will provide conference participants with real insight on the challenges and benefits of implementing grazing systems that reduce the need for conserved forage.

The daylong conference will be repeated at four locations:

- Tuesday, January 22, Warren County Community Center, Front Royal
- Wednesday, January 23, Weyers Cave Community Center, Weyers Cave
- Thursday, January 24, Wytheville Meeting Center, Wytheville
- Friday, January 25, Southern Piedmont AREC, Blackstone.

<http://vaforages.org/>

Meeting to Review Cornfield Aerial Imagery and Cornstalk Nitrate Test Results

There will be two meetings to review aerial images and cornstalk nitrate results. The dates and locations are listed below. During 2012, aerial images were collected on about 80 different fields in Shenandoah and Page Counties. In addition, about 160 stalk nitrate samples were collected from these fields. During the meeting we will be looking at some of these images and discussing results of both soil and stalk nitrate testing. There is no need to register in advance for these meetings.

December 17	10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Shenandoah County Extension Office	
December 19	10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Page County Extension Office	



Robert A. Clark
Senior Extension Agent
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Certified Professional Agronomist

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If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services, or other accommodations to participate in these activities, please contact Robert A. Clark, Senior Extension Agent, Agriculture and Natural Resources, at the Shenandoah County Office of Virginia Cooperative Extension at 540/459-6140 during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations five days prior to the event.

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VIRGINIA Farm to Table CONFERENCE | 2012

COLLABORATION · CONSERVATION · COMMUNITY

“Food & Farming at a Profitable & Sustainable Scale”


Wednesday, Dec. 5 & Thursday, Dec. 6, 2012

Blue Ridge Community College • Plecker Workforce Center • Weyers Cave, VA

Starting at 9:00 a.m. each day

Everyone is interested in strengthening the economy. This conference aims to build the economy from the ground up through local agriculture and greater community involvement. Learn more and register at CONFERENCE.VIRGINIAFARMTOTABLE.ORG or by calling 540-432-6029 ext. 107.

This two-day conference will be of interest to anyone who cares about the local economy and produces or buys food, including farmers, buyers, local economic development directors, legislators, hospital and school nutrition directors, community members and YOU!



On the evening of December 5 starting at 4:30 p.m., there will be a Buy Fresh Buy Local Mixer to encourage business conversation among Virginia producers and buyers. Producers, food service providers, and retail and wholesale buyers are encouraged to attend and bring information about their services and samples of their products. Michael Shuman will speak about his recent book, *“Local Dollars, Local Sense: A Community Resilience Guide.”* His presentation will be preceded by music from a local band. Light refreshments will be provided. For more information about the Buy Fresh Buy Local Networking Mixer and how you can be involved, please contact 540-432-6029, ext. 107.



Elizabeth U, “Finance for Food”



Michael Shuman, “Local Dollars, Local Sense”



Brett Beidler, Beidler Family Farm



Francis Thicke, Radiance Dairy



Ray Archuleta, Conservation Agronomist, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)



Fred Kirschenmann, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture

MORE DETAILS AT
CONFERENCE.VIRGINIAFARMTOTABLE.ORG
OR CALL 540-432-6029, EXT. 107.



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