

Virginia Cooperative Extension



FARM NOTES

March 2013

Cost Share for Slug Management in 2013

Virginia Cooperative Extension will implement year three of a pilot cost share program related to cost share for slug management in no-till corn and soybean. This program is being paid through a Grant provided by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). All acres must be located in Shenandoah, Page, Clarke, Frederick, or Warren Counties.



Approval for cost share will be based on actual feeding pressure in the field during the growing season. All fields must be no-till planted. Farmers must document that slug bait was actually applied to be eligible for cost share payment. Receipts for the purchase of slug bait and custom application charges (if appropriate) will serve as documentation.

Funds are limited for 2013. The maximum payment will not exceed 50% of the cost of slug bait and application to acreage approved for cost share. If funds are limited, the actual dollars paid will be pro-rated across all acres approved for cost share (which means actual payment may be slightly less than 50% of the cost of slug bait and application).

Farmers must plan to scout their own corn/soybean fields and call the Shenandoah County Office of Virginia Cooperative Extension to request cost share. The Extension Agent will verify and approve (or not approve) fields for cost share based on actual feeding pressure in the field during the growing season. **Call 540/459-6140 or 540/333-3227. In order to receive cost share for this program farmers must be eligible to participate in the USDA EQIP programs. Thus, farmers must sign a statement certifying they are eligible to participate in EQIP programs.**

Go to the Link Below to See Recordings from the 2013 Virginia No-Till Alliance Meetings:

[http://offices.ext.vt.edu/shenandoah/programs/anr/CropandSoilEnvironmentalSciences/Presentations at the 2013 VANTAGE Meetings Harrisonburg Chatham and Fredericksburg Colonial Heights VA.html](http://offices.ext.vt.edu/shenandoah/programs/anr/CropandSoilEnvironmentalSciences/Presentations%20at%20the%202013%20VANTAGE%20Meetings%20Harrisonburg%20Chatham%20and%20Fredericksburg%20Colonial%20Heights%20VA.html).

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Soybean Marketing Update

In early February, we held a work session to discuss soybean marketing. Most of the focus was on transportation logistics with the remainder on getting the best price. Mr. Charlie Stubbs with Perdue Grain Marketing and Dick Atkinson with the Virginia State Soybean Association was in attendance. Both of these gentlemen gave brief presentations and answered a tremendous number of questions.



The biggest “news” from this meeting was that Mr. Stubbs announced Perdue is planning to build a crush facility in Marietta, Pennsylvania. Their goal is to have the facility running by the Fall of 2014. The facility is designed to crush 60 tons per day (17.5 million bushels annually). What does this mean for farmers in the Northern Shenandoah Valley? According to MapQuest, Marietta, PA, is 150 miles from Strasburg, VA, whereas Norfolk, VA, is 223 miles. Hopefully, Northern Shenandoah Valley farmers will be able to realize price and transportation logistics advantages to having a crusher closer to us.

There were other ideas discussed during the meeting, including: the possibility of loading soybeans on rail for shipment to market; hauling soybeans to Norfolk and backhauling corn from Eastern Virginia to the Valley; constructing some type of crush facility in the Valley; and a few more. However, the new crush facility will likely be a “game changer” for marketing Northern Shenandoah Valley soybeans. This may make some of these ideas less appealing than they would have been otherwise. Hopefully, this new crush facility will make soybean marketing better for Northern Shenandoah Valley farmers.

A few other noteworthy concepts discussed by the entire group included the following:

- It is recommended that if a farmer is getting a tractor trailer to come to their farm to transport soybeans to market, they should have the entire load harvested prior to the truck arrival (preferably prior to telling the trucking company the soybeans are ready to load).
- When loading trucks from grain bins, farmers who are willing to load soybeans any time (day or night) will likely have better access to trucks. It is real helpful to have a well-lit area and good roads for easy access.
- Farmers who get their soybeans custom harvested need to consider the logistics of marketing. It is very beneficial to have a grain bin large enough to hold your entire crop (preferably with some drying capability). Farmers who do not have any storage need to coordinate harvest/storage/transport logistics with their custom harvester. Machinery and equipment that custom harvesters need to temporarily store grain includes gravity wagons, extra trailers, extra trucks, and grain bin capacity.
- The average cost of combining soybeans in the 2012 Custom Rate Guide Survey is \$35 per acre. This does not include any cost for temporary storage discussed above.

http://offices.ext.vt.edu/page/programs/anr/custom_work_rate_pdf/custom_work_rate_2012.pdf

**2013 Pest Management Guides are Now Available
to Order or to View at the Following Two Websites:**

<https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/pmgstore.html>

<http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/category/pesticide-education.html>.

Good Hay Storage is a Key Component in the Economics of Extending the Grazing Season

A key component to extending the grazing season is having a good hay storage system. It may seem backwards to discuss hay storage when the goal is to extend the grazing season. However, here is a scenario that I often see: A farmer who normally feeds hay from December 15 through April 15 (let's estimate 121 bales for 121 days) decides to try to extend their grazing season using stockpiled fescue. He fertilizes all his fescue fields in early August and he experiences abundant fall rain. He strip grazes the stockpiled fescue to get maximum utilization. By the end of the winter he only needed to feed hay for 50 days (which means he has 71 bales remaining that he can carry over until the next year). The problem is that this farmer has all his hay stored on the ground with no cover. This surplus hay will likely continue to deteriorate until the next winter.

Likely the most difficult thing to estimate is the dry matter and quality losses from different storage systems. The table shown below contains data of storage losses from a few different storage systems.

Table 2. Dry matter and digestibility losses in large round hay bales during various storage methods over a seven-month period.

Study	Dry Matter Loss (%)				
	Ground Stored	Elevated on Pallets	Elevated on Pallets and Covered with a Tarp	Covered with a Tarp Only	Barn Stored
Ely (1984)	65	38	14	—	4
Collins et al. (1987)	50	32	14	—	4
Hoveland et al. (1997)	30	—	—	10	0

From: Extension Publication 442-760. Planning for a Farm Storage Building. S. Gay and R. Grisso. http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/442/442-760/442-760_pdf.pdf.

Let's go back to our farm scenario above. This farmer has 71 bales of hay sitting on their farm in April that will likely continue deteriorating for an additional eight months (April to December) prior to feeding. Based on data from the table above he will have likely lost at least half of this hay to decomposition. On the other hand, if these 70 bales were preserved in a good storage system (such as a barn) the farmer would realize some new management options:

- Bale less hay the following summer (which should reduce grazing pressure on some fields).
- Bale the same amount of hay but sell some surplus hay.
- Bale the same amount of hay but be better prepared for a drought.
- Apply less fertilizer to reduce input costs.
- Purchase less hay the following year.

The University of Wisconsin has a "Hay Storage Calculator" (the link is shown below) to estimate the cost of using different storage systems. This calculator compares six different storage scenarios. The user can easily adjust estimated dry matter losses, storage time, labor requirements, building costs, etc. Feel free to try out this calculator or call me and we can put together some estimates together.

Calculator link: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/crops/uwforage/storage.htm>.

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Will Feral Hogs Be a Major Problem in the Shenandoah Valley?

Dr. Jam Parkhurst, Extension Wildlife Specialist, has been making special efforts to educate farmers and citizens across Virginia about concerns that feral hogs may become a significant problem across all of Virginia. There have been several webinars on wild hogs. These have been posted to the eXtension web site and all materials are open and accessible to the public. You can access the site by using the following link, which lists all four of the presentations, <https://learn.extension.org/events/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=feral+hogs&commit=Search>. For example, the first program in the series, the one on basic biology and history, is located at <https://learn.extension.org/events/640>.



Photo from MSU Extension

Educational Meeting: Making Irrigation Count March 26

11:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M., TINA'S FAMILY RESTAURANT

148 NORTH MAIN STREET, TIMBERVILLE

6:00-8:30 P.M., CAVE VIEW FARM SHOP

135 CAVE VIEW LANE, WEYERS CAVE

PLEASE CONTACT THE ROCKINGHAM COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE
AT 540-564-3080 TO REGISTER.

**Speakers include Dr. Ron Heiniger, Crop Science and Cropping Systems Specialist,
at North Carolina State University and James Adkins,
Bioresources Engineering, with University of Delaware.**

Robert A. Clark
Senior Extension Agent
Agriculture and Natural Resources

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert A. Clark".

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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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