

DORCHESTER COUNTY • P.O. BOX 299 • CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND 21613 • (410) 228-8800

## AG PROFIT

Dear Friends,

Since we live in a geo-politically and environmentally sensitive area, it has always been a battle for our farmers to satisfy environmental activism based interest. During 2011 we saw the introduction of the Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) which is part of a 3-phased planning process to achieve nutrient and sediment clean-up goals for the Chesapeake Bay. The key element of this is organizing local teams, organized at the county level, will include representation of entities with responsibility and authority to control nutrient and sediment loads like county and municipal governments, soil conservation districts, federal and State agencies among others. It gives responsibilities to a wide range of sectors including septic, ag, and waste water treatment plants to implement Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) of pollutants entering the bay. Although the model that requires these new standards need to be fixed for accuracy, including a broad sector of stakeholders underline the fact that farm conservation and stewardship of the land by farmers alone is not adequate to reaching the bay cleanup efforts. I believe in a way it is a very positive recognition of the farm community who have been doing many practices to maintain and achieve good water quality standards. I would encourage everyone to pay attention to this and get involved in this process. It is important that the general public and decision makers understand the ways and means farmers care for their land and the environment.

Let's talk about the forecast for Ag for next year? According to Rabobank's 2012 Agricultural Outlook released on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, the slow economic growth will lead to fall in historically high grain prices but the long term bull-run in Ag commodity will remain strong. Corn is expected to average \$6.10 a bushel during the first quarter of 2012 and \$6.45 during the second quarter, down from an estimated average of \$6.20 in the current quarter, Rabobank said. European Union's debit crisis will also put weak demand for the US commodities. Unless there is going to be a change in the economic prospects of EU and US and China's import needs it may trigger a dip in the prices. However, many analysts believe that the Ag commodity demand should remain robust for 2012. US corn stockpile numbers and oil prices will be a key driver of future corn prices.

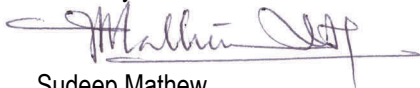
The year 2012 is going to be the farm bill year. It's going to be an uphill battle to produce the farm bill during the calendar year. Realistically there is a chance that it might be stretched to a 2013 bill. You can expect across the board budget cutting to reduce the federal deficit, expected heavily on conservation and crop insurance programs.

If your Pesticide Applicators license or Nutrient Management license expire or need continuing education credits make sure you attend the re-certification sessions listed in the upcoming events section of the newsletter.

Let's hope that we will have a great year ahead that will harness our faith and abilities in what we do best, feeding our country.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Sincerely,



Sudeep Mathew  
 Extension Educator – Agricultural Sciences

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## Comparing Apples and Apples or Limes and Limes

Mark Sultenfuss, Program Manager – Field Crops Research

One of the most important soil amendments we buy regularly is lime. We add lime to the soil, from time to time to adjust the soil pH (an indexing method to express the relative level of soil acidity) and to add calcium and magnesium. We adjust the pH of the soil to make the soil acidity most hospitable for the plant roots of the species we are growing as well as managing soil pH for optimum nutrient availability. Different crop nutrients are most available at a certain soil pH, and we strive to maintain soil pH at the “sweet spot” so that we maximize available soil fertility. As well, some soil bacteria, necessary for the conversion of nitrogen in the air to plant available forms are sensitive to acid soils and prefer a soil pH between 6.0 and 7.0.

We frequently satisfy our perceived liming needs by telling the salesman to apply a ton of lime per acre, or we ask him to quote his price for a ton of lime and then compare his price (sometimes) to that of his competitor. When we make these rather arbitrary comparisons, we are assuming we know the characteristics and effectiveness of the products that we are comparing. Often, however, a ton of lime from one supplier is not the same as a ton of lime from another supplier. Thus the title of this article: Comparing Limes to Limes. We need to be sure that we are comparing proverbial equals.

Like fertilizer, lime must have a label, stating the chemical and physical characteristics of the product. These labels are available from the lime quarry or from the retail dealer. You should obtain a copy of the lime label from vendors that you use so that you can accurately determine how much

lime is necessary and what available nutrients you are getting from a ton. By referring to the label, you can use vendors’ prices to accurately compare the liming and nutrient value of different products. Then, and only then, can you be sure that you are comparing products fairly. One liming product may cost more per ton, but may be a more effective liming material, requiring less product per acre to obtain the same effect as a less expensive, but less effective product.

Several characteristics are taken into account to determine the Effective Neutralizing Value (ENV) of a liming material. They are total oxide content and fineness. In Maryland, both of these values should be listed on the lime label. Fineness is listed as the percentage of the product that passes through wire mesh screens of various sizes, such as 20, 60 or 100 wires per inch. Therefore, the ENV takes into account the total oxide content and the fineness in an equation to standardize the quality of a lime product so that different materials can be compared.

University of Maryland Extension’s Soil Fertility Management publication SFM-5 has all of this information pertaining to calculating Effective Neutralizing Value, as well as recommended application rate tables of total oxides necessary to adjust soil pH from the current value to a target value. These tables are specific to certain crops and locations throughout the state. For example, if we are growing the typical corn, soybean, wheat rotation in an Eastern Shore field with a silt loam soil and the pH is 5.8, Table 2 from the SFM-5 publication tells us to apply 1,500 pounds of total oxides per acre. Then we compare two lime products:

Product A has a labeled ENV of 80, thus we would recommend an application of 1,500/0.8, or 1,875 pounds of this lime product per acre. Product



B has an ENV of 70, thus we would recommend an application of 1,500/0.7, or 2,142 pounds of Product B per acre. Now let’s say that Product A has a price of \$41 per ton and Product B has a price of \$38 per ton. You can compare actual cost per acre to obtain the same liming effect. Using Product A will cost you \$38.44 per acre (1,875/2,000 X \$41), while using Product B will cost you \$40.70 per acre (2,142/2,000 X \$38). Now you can see that product B, while less expensive by the ton, actually costs you more per acre than the “expensive” Product A, to get the same liming effect. This \$2 per acre cost over several hundred acres, adds up to a significant amount of money.

I know that this discussion may have been terribly confusing, and I have left out some minor points in writing it. But just remember not to judge limes until you know what you are comparing. They are not always the same. I suggest that you obtain a copy of University of Maryland Extension publication SFM-5, written by Dr. Frank Coale at the Extension Office or online at the following link: <http://anmp.umd.edu/files/SFM-5.pdf>. Don’t hesitate to call your Ag Extension agent, consultant or myself if you have questions about comparing liming products and per acre costs associated with them.

## Announcements

### 2011 Corn Hybrid Test

University of Maryland Extension 2011 Maryland Corn Hybrid Performance Tests is available online. This report includes agronomic performance information of 103 hybrids grown at five Maryland locations. This report can be accessed at [www.mdcrops.umd.edu](http://www.mdcrops.umd.edu). For those of you who don't have access to internet, a print copy can be requested from the extension office at 410-228-8800.



the many aspects of farm management and is designed to empower women in overall farm decision making and to build local networks throughout the state. The target audience is farm women with a passion for business, agriculture and involvement in the farm operation. Topics for the sessions cover the five areas of Risk Management: Production, Marketing, Financial, Legal Risk, Human Resources. This course is open to anyone interested in farm management practices.

The course will be 8 sessions held at a variety of sites in Maryland and Delaware. Locations include: Carroll Community College Westminster MD, Cecil County Main Library Elkton MD, Chesapeake College Wye Mills MD, HEAT Center Aberdeen MD, Prince George's County Extension Clinton MD, University of Delaware Research and Education Center Georgetown DE, Washington County Extension Office Boonsboro MD\*, Wor-Wic Community

College Salisbury MD. Classes will begin on January 25th.

The cost of the course including meals and materials is \$75. Please register by January 18th - space is limited. For more information visit the website [www.anniesproject.umd.edu](http://www.anniesproject.umd.edu) or call 410-758-0166. If you require special assistance to attend the classes please contact the site at least two weeks prior.

Annie's Project has been approved for FSA Borrower Training. If you require training through the FSA loan process you can attend Annie's Project and complete a follow up workbook for your training requirement. There will be an additional \$100.00 fee for the FSA Borrower Training. For more information, please contact your FSA loan officer.



### Annie Project 2012: Farm Management Classes for Women

The University of Maryland Extension and Delaware Cooperative Extension will conduct Annie's Project during the winter of 2012 at sites in Maryland and Delaware. Annie's Project focuses on

## Upcoming Meetings

### Future Harvest – Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture 2011 Annual Conference: January 13-14

The future Harvest – CASA Annual Conference will be held at National Conference Center, Landsdowne, VA. Learn about local food systems, effective sustainable farming techniques, sustainable fruits and vegetables, grass-based systems and marketing farm products profitably. Anthony Flaccaven, Founder, Appalachian Sustainable Development and SCALE and Michael Curtin CEO, DC Central Kitchen will be the keynote speakers. For more information and

registration details visit [www.futureharvestcasa.org](http://www.futureharvestcasa.org) or call 443-243-2998 or 410-549-7878.

### Dorchester Agronomy Meeting is on Tuesday, January 31st

The 2011 Dorchester County Agronomy Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 31, 8.30 – 3.00 pm at English Hall – Eastern Shore Hospital Center 5262 Woods Rd, Cambridge, MD 21613. Pesticide Re-Certification, Nutrient Management Voucher and CCA credits will be awarded. If your pesticide applicators certification expires by December 31, 2011 you must attend this meeting to re-certify your license.

It's free to attend, however registration is required. Please contact 410-228-8800 to register.

### 36th Annual Eastern Shore Vegetable Meeting is set for Tuesday, February 21st

36th Annual Eastern Shore Vegetable Meeting is set for Tuesday, February 21, 8.30 am -3 pm at English Hall – Eastern Shore Hospital Center 5262 Woods Rd, Cambridge, MD 21613.



Learn about what's new in vegetable production, stink bug management, control strategies for various diseases, insects and weeds. Credits: Pesticide Re-Certification, Nutrient Management Voucher and CCA. It's free to attend, however registration is required. Please contact 410-228-8800 to register.

**Dorchester/Caroline/Talbot Private Pesticide Applicator Exam Review (New Applicator Training)**

New private pesticide applicator exam training will be held Wednesday, February 29, 7 pm – 9 pm at Caroline County 4H Park, 8230 Detour Rd.,

Denton, MD. Free training manual for private pesticide applicators are available at the University of Maryland Extension office. Collect your materials from the office before the training meeting to get familiar with the subject. For more information and registration contact 410-228-8800.

**Dorchester/Caroline/Talbot Private Pesticide Applicator Exam (New Applicator)**

Private pesticide applicators exam will be held Wednesday, March 7, 7 pm – 9 pm at Caroline County 4H Park, 8230 Detour Rd., Denton, MD. Pencils will be

provided and you can bring your calculators. No cell phones or any other electronic devices are allowed.



**Other meetings in the region/state – Please plan to attend**

**January 17, 2012  
TIMBER TAX  
WORKSHOP.**

Time: 6:30 - 9 p.m.  
Registration deadline is Friday, January 13.  
Location: Wye Research &



Education Center, 124 Wye Narrows Drive, Queenstown, MD 21658. Cost: \$10 Details: This program will focus on record keeping, how to handle cost share payments on practices such as reforestation, rental payments for federal programs such as CRP, how to report timber sales and capital gains and ways to treat casualty losses on your forest lands. Copies of the University of Maryland Extension's updated Forest Management Account Book will be available to all participants. Additional information will be presented on valuable web resources to assist you when doing your federal taxes. This program is

guaranteed to save you money by properly reporting your timber sales and cost share payments on your federal and state income tax forms. Contact: Registration, contact Bob Tjaden, rtjaden@umd.edu, 410-827-8056

**January 20-22nd BEEKEEPING**

**101 2012 SESSION**, 9 a.m.-Noon, Wye Research & Ed Center, Queenstown, MD. Registration deadline: January 13 by contacting Jean Hopkins, 410-827-8056 X114 or jhopkin2@umd.edu



**January 24th & February 6th FARMER TRAINING & CROP OPERATIONS USING MANURE AND FERTILIZER** - Learn how to write a nutrient management plan for your operation. 9:30 a.m. - 4:40 p.m.,

University of Maryland Wye Research and Education Center, Queenstown, MD, Contact: MDA 410-841-5959.

**January 25th LOWER SHORE AGRONOMY DAY.** Time: Daytime. Location: TBA. Register: 410-651-1350 or jnotting@umd.edu

**February 15th  
2012 BAY  
AREA FRUIT  
MEETING -**

Preregistration is required. Time: 8:30-3:30. Location: University of MD, Wye Research & Ed. Ctr., Queenstown, MD. Contact: Michael Newell 410-827-7388



**Did You Know**

Consumers spend \$547 billion for food originating on U.S. farms and ranches. Of each dollar spent on food, the farmer's share is approximately 23 cents.