

CASWELL TOBACCO EXTENSION NOTES Summer 2017 Season

Hello again with the tobacco growing season moving right along, I have some information that may be helpful to each of you during this growing season.



Sucker Control Considerations for Residue Free and Organic Tobacco Producers

A large portion of the current tobacco crop is quickly approaching first contact application. Some of the crop that was transplanted early has already received a second and third application at the time of this email. As we transition to this portion of the growing season, I've received a few comments and questions regarding sucker control in PRC, ELI (Japan Tobacco's version of pesticide residue free tobacco), and organic

systems. For the purpose of this email all three of these systems can be lumped together because systemic suckercides are prohibited in their production. Below are a few considerations that growers should keep in mind.

1.) Be extremely proactive when making the first contact application. The conventional rule of thumb is that the first application should begin at the 50% button stage. I have suggested that producers consider starting this application before 50% button is reached, possibly at the 40% button stage. Beginning slightly earlier should allow for sufficient control of suckers growing in some of the larger, more advanced plants. There is certainly the possibility that chemical topping might occur in smaller plants; however, it should not be enough to amount to anything at the end of the season. In addition, I'd argue that the small leaves most affected by early contact application are likely to be removed at topping anyway.

2.) Producers should recognize that hand suckering will likely be necessary. Contact materials approved for use in residue free and organic programs will provide excellent control, but they do have their limitations much like conventional contact products. Any sucker in excess of 1.0 to 1.5 inches in length is going to be difficult to control. For this reason, it is advisable to hand sucker a field if the first contact application is delayed much beyond the 50% button stage (scouting fields will aide in this decision), or if more than 5 days has passed between contact applications. Simply stated, hand suckering will help ensure that acceptable sucker control is achieved by final harvest. As growers approach the third or fourth contact application, it is possible that the window between applications might expand by one or two days. Should a grower consider lengthening time between applications, proper scouting of fields should occur to ensure that sucker growth allows for this.

3.) Producers should spray early (point one) and spray often. We typically suggest a 5-7 spray rotation for contact followed by contact; or, contact followed by flumetalin and/or MH in conventional programs. It's likely that this window should be no greater than 5 days to ensure that sucker growth between applications does not surpass the 1.0 to 1.5 inch maximum. Additionally, there is no "one size fits all" program that will provide insight as to how many times contact should be applied. Some producers have been successful with four to five applications, while others have found it necessary to increase the number of applications to as many as eight or nine. The major issue associated with over-application of contact is leaf drop (where leaves simply fall off the plant). Leaf drop is promoted by a number of factors, such as environmental conditions, nitrogen application, and disease. Generally speaking, the deeper the contact burn is into the leaf axil, the weaker the leaf axil will be. The weakening of the leaf axil is promoted when leaves are heavy (primarily from excessive nitrogen) and/or when a disease such as Erwinia is present. The presence of Erwinia will be promoted by wet weather, much like we are currently experiencing. The bottomline regarding how many times contact can be applied is that producers will have to treat each field on a case by case basis and practice what they feel comfortable with.

2017 North Carolina Tobacco Tour

The 2017 NCSU Tobacco Tour will be held from July 24th-26th. Please register for each event at the following link at the NC State Tobacco Growers Portal. I am planning on attending, if anyone wants to ride with me in the state van just let me know.

A tentative agenda is below:

Monday, July 24th:

3:30 pm – 4:30 pm: Precision MH application and tray steaming demo
-Triple B Farms, Bentonville, NC
Welcome Reception and Dinner to Follow

Tuesday, July 25th:

Oxford Tobacco Research Station

7:45 am – 8:30 am: Breakfast at Research Station

8:30 am – 11:00 am: Field Tour

11:00 am – 12:30 pm: Lunch at Research Station

12:30 pm Depart for Upper Coastal Plain Research Station in Rocky Mount, NC

5:30 pm Conclude Tour

Wednesday, July 26th:

Lower Coastal Plain Research Station

7:45 am – 8:30 am: Breakfast at Research Station

8:30 am – 11:00 am: Field Tour

11:00 am – 12:30 pm: Lunch at Research Station and Tour Conclusion

Upcoming Organic Field Day and Tobacco Tour Information

Below is information pertaining to an organic grain crop, peanut, and tobacco field day at the Upper Coastal Plain Research Station on July 21st. We hope that you can attend and also ask that you share this opportunity with your organic tobacco producers. To my knowledge this is the first organic field day hosted by Cooperative Extension that has an emphasis on tobacco. A big push is being made to include tobacco producers because this will be a great time for them to learn more about some of the cropping rotation options that might be considered.

The field day will begin at 8:30 and conclude at 1:00 (lunch will be provided). Additional information will be released as we get closer to the event. Registration is required (follow the blue hyperlink below). Please encourage producers to attend.

Organic Grain Field Day

July 21, 2017

Upper Coastal Research Station (2811 Nobles Mill Pond Road)

Rocky Mount, NC

This field day will cover a variety of techniques for organic corn, soybean, tobacco, and peanut production. We will be in the field, visiting research plots and learning about, and seeing the results of, the most recent research on organic weed control methods, crop breeding, and pest management. Important fertility, disease, and insect pest management research and results for organic tobacco and peanuts will be discussed at research plots for these crops.

Lunch is provided, but you must register at <https://goo.gl/forms/dqXpCMfPkP0pJaGy1>

1.5 hours NC Pesticide Credits for sub-classes N,O,D,X offered

3 hours CCA CEU (2 for CM, 1 for Sust.)

2017 Annual Tobacco Research and Extension Field Day

Virginia Tech

Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research & Extension Center

2375 Darvills Road,

Blackstone, VA

July 27, 2017

Registration begins at 5:00 p.m.

Dinner: 5:30 p.m.

Field research tour to

begin at 6:00 p.m.

Field Tour Topics:

- Flue, burley, and dark-fired tobacco variety evaluations
- Black shank fungicide tests
- Nematode and disease control
- Tobacco leaf spot fungicide evaluation
- Agronomic management studies including comparison of transplant starter fertilizer, foliar fertilizers, sidedress fertilizer sources and de-lugging treatments
- Use of an Ag drone in tobacco research and production
- Tobacco sucker control and MH residue management
- Organic tobacco fertilization and sucker control
- Insect pest management
- Tobacco curing efficiency research

Please RSVP by emailing makenny@vt.edu or call 434-292-5331 and ask for Margaret Kenny.

Feel free to continue contacting me at 336-694-4158 (office) or 434-728-5980 (cell) for research-based information and Extension recommendations. Hope this information will be of value to you.

Sincerely,

Joey E. Knight, III

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Caswell County Extension Director

