Till, Vertical Tillage or No-Till On Farm Demonstration

Wednesday, April 24, 2013
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Hickory Environmental Education Center
604 Pride Pkwy
Accident, MD

Rising fertilizer costs make the maximum utilization of “free” nutrients from manure an economic necessity. Incorporating manure is an effective management strategy for keeping these nutrients in the field. This program will offer practical strategies for manure incorporation and give farmers an opportunity to visit with equipment dealers and view demonstrations of the latest technology in vertical tillage equipment.

Morning Program (10-12pm) (Lunch 12-12:45pm)
University of Maryland Extension and Maryland Department of Agriculture experts will discuss the latest innovations in: Manure application methods that maximize nutrient utilization Economic benefits of conserving nitrogen on dairy farms Technology demonstrations using GPS systems and GIS Systems Updates on New Nutrient Management Regulations

Afternoon Program (12:45-2 pm)
Panel Discussion with MD Secretary of Agriculture Earl Hance, Assistant Secretary Royden Powell, NRCS, UM Extension and Garrett County Farmers. Field Demonstrations include no-till manure injection, minimum disturbance manure incorporation equipment and traditional incorporation. Ammonia loss management.

This program is FREE and includes complimentary lunch for all with pre-registration. Please RSVP by April 15, 2013. Contact Carrie Colebank, Garrett Soil Conservation District, 301-334-6951 so we may have an accurate count for lunch.

Continuing Education Participants receive continuing education credits from the Maryland Nutrient Management Program, number to be determined.

For more information contact Willie Lantz, University of Maryland Extension, Garrett County at (301) 334-6960
Online Classes for Nutrient Management Voucher & Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification

Thanks to Dave Myers, Extension Educator in Anne Arundel County, producers will have one last chance to renew their Nutrient Management Voucher or Private Pesticide Applicator License. To make this even better, it can be done without travelling and from the comfort of your own home or office. Producers must register with the Anne Arundel office prior to the online class. High speed internet is required; if you do not have access to high speed internet, contact your local public library or UME office.

Live On-Line Session
Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification
April 19, 2013
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

The session will focus on pesticide use and related topics for all field crops, fruits and vegetables. This Adobe Connect recertification session will be live via the internet directly from the University of Maryland.

To participate in a live Adobe Connect session a high speed cable or satellite internet connection is required. Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification credit will be awarded for full 2-hour session participation. Registration by April 17th is required in order to receive Adobe Connect login instructions.

To register for this on-line event contact the Anne Arundel County Extension Office at 410-222-6759.

Ten keys to a profitable forage program

Forages typically account for over half the cost of production of forage-consuming animals and provide most of their nutrition. Thus, it has a major impact on both expenses and income. The basic commodity is forage and animals are the harvesters or consumers. Efficient forage production and utilization are essential to a profitable operation. Below are ten keys to a profitable forage program:

- Know your animal’s nutritional needs and the forage options available to you.
- Establishment of forages is critical; use good quality seed.
- Test your soil prior to planting; fertilize and lime according to soil test results.
- Consider on a field-by-field basis what advantages legumes offer your operation.
- Emphasize forage quality; match forage quality to animals' nutritional needs.
- Prevent or minimize pests and plant-related disorders that reduce quality and quantity of production.
- Improve pasture utilization; match stocking rates with forage production.
- Minimize stored feed requirements by extending the grazing season. This can be done by stockpiling forages, grazing crop residues, incorporating additional species of cool and warm season grasses and legumes into your operation.
- Reduce storage and feeding losses. Research shows that 30% or greater losses can occur with big round bales of hay stored outside, and feeding losses can easily exceed this level or be higher when unrolling big round bales of hay.
- Results require investments. The best and most profitable forage programs usually have had the most thought and effort put into them. Investments include thought, time, effort, money and management.

~Source: Jim Humphrey, Livestock Specialist, University of Missouri Extension
University of Maryland Extension has developed a comprehensive 5-session course to grazing and pasture management. This course is geared not only to the full-time livestock producer but to the small part time and backyard farmer as well.

Participants will receive two highly recognized texts: Weeds of the Northeast, and Southern Forages as well as an informational workbook for enrolling in the course. Class sessions will be a combination of classroom and hands-on learning.

Cost of the course is $25 Per person. Please make checks payable to Washington County EAC.


Topics to be Covered:

- Soils
- Fertilizer and Fertility
- Weeds and Control
- Basic Forages
- Grazing Systems

Class Dates - Tuesdays
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

- April 30, 2013
- May 28, 2013
- June 4, 2013
- June 11, 2013

If you have a disability that requires special assistance for your participation in this program, please let us know when you register.
Double check ground corn to boost milk production

What if you could stretch your corn supplies a bit further or increase milk production just by re-evaluating how fine your corn is ground? Dr. Dave LaCount, dairy nutritionist with Purina Animal Nutrition, says that if corn is not ground properly, your herd could be losing milk performance potential.

It is imperative that corn is adequately ground in order to ensure adequate energy availabilities and full utilization of corn.

Research shows that, when evaluating cracked versus ground corn, there is up to a 6.1 pound milk production advantage to feeding finely ground corn over cracked corn. The response on the farm will be dependent on how coarse the current corn being fed is. On farm responses to grinding corn more finely are commonly 3 to 5 pounds of milk.

Whether you’re purchasing corn from a vendor or storing it on farm, make sure it is ground fine enough prior to feeding.

When evaluating corn, the goal is to shoot for an optimum average particle size of 750 to 850 microns. Microns or particle size of the corn can easily be measured on the farm.

To evaluate whether corn is ground fine enough, purchase a hand-crank flour sifter. Weigh-out 10 ounces of ground corn and sift the sample until it appears that all particles and fines that can get through the screen have done so. Weigh out the remaining particles on the screen. Compare the weight of the material that remains on the screen with the following information and evaluate your grinding process accordingly:

- 1 ounce = 750 microns = excellent
- 2 ounces = 800 microns = excellent
- 3 ounces = 900 microns = good
- 4 ounces = 1,000 microns = fair
- 5 ounces = 1,200 microns = very poor
- >5 ounces = >1,200 microns = disaster

Any corn below 22 percent moisture should be 600 to 700 microns. Samples of ground corn can also be submitted to a laboratory for more precise evaluation.

[1] Cooperative Research Farm, Technical Bulletin; Research update: Effects of corn and grain processing on production and intake; 1997

Prepare for upcoming forage season

Forages are an important part of dairy diets and it is time to prepare for the upcoming forage season.

Evaluating the wellbeing of the forage crop is critical to a successful dairy, here are several recommendations:

Scout hay acreage weekly.

- Avoid grazing forage plants to a height of less than 4 inches.
- As you scout fields, monitor weeds, insects and disease concerns.
- If herbicides are used to control weeds, be aware of harvest restrictions and crop production intervals.
- Monitor insect populations to determine if their numbers warrant control measures.
- Fungicide use is typically not a best-management practice for forages. Select varieties with resistance to disease instead.

~Source: Keith Johnson; Purdue University Agronomist
Get ready for summer heat stress now

Hot summer weather isn’t far off. Kansas State dairy specialist Mike Brouk says there are several things dairy producers can do now to help avoid summer slump in milk production. He covers several actions that can be taken before the summer heat arrives in the recent "Milk Lines" podcast, “Prepare for Summer Now.”

Consider these questions as you make your summer heat-abatement plan:

- Are fans cleaned?
- Are fans operational?
- Are repairs needed in the cooling system?
- Are curtains operating properly on curtain-sided barns?
- Have you started putting portable shades or shade cloth in place?
- Are feedline soakers in need of repair, or do they need to be upgraded?
- Are supplemental water tanks in place around the farm?
- Do you have heat-abatement systems for dry and transition cows?
- Have you thought about fly control? Have you started a feed-through product or have you chosen an insecticide for use later?
- Have you thought about your summer feeding strategy?
- Are you going to increase silo-face management to reduce secondary heating?
- Do you have changes in mind for minerals and feed additives?
- Have you cleaned and checked milk-cooling equipment?

6 steps to reduce lameness

Lameness in dairy cattle is a subject that continues to come under scrutiny in the dairy industry. Despite progress, it is still an area that many dairy producers can make improvements. Lameness impacts the cow in many ways including how much she eats and how much time she rests – both of which impact her milk production potential.

“Welfare concerns will only increase in the coming years and the dairy industry must act now to reduce the impact of this costly problem,” says Nigel Cook, associate professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The good news is it is possible to maintain very low levels of lameness in high producing dairy herds, if focus is placed on the following 6 areas.

1. Bed stalls with sand. Sand creates more secure footing in alleys and promotes long lying bouts and fewer bouts per day. It also improves the ability for lame cows to rise and lie down.
2. Provide adequate time for resting. The target should be 12 hours per day as a minimum for lying time per day.
3. Have excellent hoof health management, which includes preventative routine hoof trimming and the early identification and treatment of lame cows.
4. Have an effective footbath program to assist in the control of infectious hoof disease.
5. Provide good flooring to avoid the risk of slipping, wear and trauma.
6. Provide adequate heat abatement.

Cook shared these 6 steps at the 2013 Western Dairy Management Conference in Reno, N.V.

~Source: Purina Animal Nutrition Herd Smart e-Newsletter, Apr. 3, 2013
Ag Calendar

April 19:  Online Nutrient Management Voucher & Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification

April 24:  Till, Vertical Tillage or No-Till Farm Demonstration
           Hickory Environmental Education Center

April 30:  Master Grazing Course
           Extension Office

** Reminder**
Please contact Amy Simmons at (301) 791-1304 if you would like to receive timely news updates by email as well as an electronic version of the Washington County Ag Newsletter.

Visit us on the web at:
www.washington.umd.edu