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GAP Training for Tobacco Growers

GAP stands for Good Agricultural Practices and is required by ALL TOBACCO companies for 2014. If you plan to produce and sell tobacco in 2014, and have not been through GAP training in the past couple of months you probably need it. Go to <http://gapconnections.com> to begin the process.

We had four sessions in March in Adams and Brown Counties and in Gallia County this Monday. There are no plans to do any training sessions after this one, so please spread the word to those who may need training. You need to call Pam at the Adams Co. Extension Office (544-2339) to register for the upcoming GAP training. The date will be Tuesday, April 22 at 7:00 p.m. The GAP training will be held at the Frisch's in West Union. Please arrive by 6:30 so you can be finished eating prior to the beginning of the program. Dinner is on your own.

Grass Tetany Risks

Coming out of a pretty hard winter, with snow flying on April 15, cows and farmers have had enough to deal with. Grass tetany is something that can be avoided. This appears in the Beef Blog this week and it addresses prevention of this potential deadly disease.

The risk factors for grass tetany are greater with spring-calving cows. Grass tetany results from low magnesium levels in the bloodstream. Cool-season grasses, or winter annuals, tend to have lower levels of magnesium in winter and early spring under lush growing conditions.

Grass tetany is most common in mature cows in early stages of lactation. Heavy milkers are at greater risk since magnesium and calcium requirements of lactating cattle are far greater than those of dry cattle.

Most cases of grass tetany I have seen have been on pastures with unbalanced soil nutrients. The soils tended to be low in pH, deficient in magnesium and phosphorus, and high in potassium. In many cases, the cattle had access to high-magnesium, or hi-mag, minerals, yet still developed tetany. Soil testing is often overlooked as a key to preventing grass tetany. Legumes are another element producers can add to help, since they are high in magnesium.

In most cases, a well-balanced mineral fed all year long will provide adequate magnesium. In some high-risk pastures, or in cases where a herd has a history of grass tetany, hi-mag minerals often are needed in late winter and spring.

Remember that magnesium is not palatable. So even if the herd seems to be consuming adequate amounts of a hi-mag mineral, individuals still may be at risk. Carefully observe cows to be sure all of them are eating the mineral.

Armyworm Flight in Kentucky

Insects like Armyworm move north throughout the season. Kentucky does have traps out for insects that can damage crops throughout the year. We can monitor the situation in Kentucky and be ready to act here in Southern Ohio. The following is from the Kentucky Pest News and Doug Johnson. At this point we need to be scouting in small grains like wheat.

Armyworm caterpillars are greenish brown with a narrow mid-dorsal strip and two orange strips on each side. The yellowish head is honeycombed with dark lines. These caterpillars are about 1 ½” long when full grown.

In wheat, scout weekly, first checking lodge grain and field edges. If Armyworm caterpillars are found, then begin sampling in the standing grain. Pick sample spots randomly. Look at the leaves for signs of chewing damage. Armyworm feed from the edge of the leaf towards the midrib. It is best to scout early in the morning or late in the afternoon. Armyworm caterpillars are adverse to direct light and prefer moving and feeding in indirect light. Count the number of caterpillars present in 4 square foot. If on average, 16 larvae (½” to ¾”) are found, an insecticide treatment should be considered.

Dates to Remember

- April 22 GAP Training for tobacco producers at 7:00 p.m. Register with Pam at the OSU Extension Office at 544-2339.
- April 30 Farm to School Workshop at Mt. Orab Elementary School from 3:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. with a registration deadline of April 20. For details go to my archived articles on the county extension webpage or call Sue Basta at 937-378-4171. County webpage is the (name of the county).osu.edu
- May 12 Pesticide Testing at the Old Y Restaurant at noon. Register with Ohio Dept. of Ag at 800-282-1955 or go to <http://pested.osu.edu>. This is for private and commercial applicators.

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