WINTER MEETING SCHEDULE SET

Take advantage of the following opportunities to learn the latest information regarding production and pick up the credits you need to keep your pesticide license up to date.

February 6 – “Should I Consider Burley Tobacco?” - 10:00 a.m. - This meeting will deal with aspects of burley tobacco production and provide information on the latest mechanization – Pitt County Extension Center kitchen - Call 902-1709 to pre-register.

February 14 – Swine Producers Workshop – Pitt County Agricultural Center Auditorium – 5:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. – Call 902-1709 to pre-register.

February 15 – 2007 Peanut Production Meeting - 6:00 p.m. - Pitt County Agriculture Center Auditorium – A courtesy, sponsored meal will be provided so please call 902-1709 to pre-register.

February 19 - "Women in the Woods" – This seminar is a great opportunity for women landowners to learn more about the forestland they own, how they can better manage the resources they have, and where to find information and assistance for forest management issues. It is sponsored by Extension and NC Woodlands. This seminar will last from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 pm

February 20 – Pesticide RE-Certification Training – 10:00 a.m. -noon and 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.


February 26 – Pitt County Corn and Soybean Production Meeting – 10:00 a.m. – Pitt County Agriculture Center – A courtesy, sponsored meal will be provided so please call 902-1709 to pre-register.

February 28th – Regional Tobacco Curing Efficiency Conference – Wilson County Extension Center – 9:00 a.m. - Wilson, NC - A courtesy, sponsored meal will be provided so please call 902-1702 by February 26th to pre-register - (see meeting description below)

February 28 - “Local Foods Workshop” - Fayetteville, NC – Growers interested in year-round vegetable production to supply restaurants and food services are urged to attend.
HIGH INTEREST IN AUTOMATED CURING

The benefits of automated tobacco curing were discussed by Grant Ellington, NCSU Extension Engineer, during our 2007 winter meeting which was held on January 5th. Based on on-farm tests which were held in Pitt County last summer, having a barn’s ventilation continuously monitored during curing was found to save up to 100 gallons per barn. With the high cost of fuel, this is an area of production which should receive serious attention.

Growers who wish to learn more about the available products on the market for automated curing are urged to attend the Regional Tobacco Curing Efficiency Conference which is set to be held in Wilson on February 28. This conference will provide information on production aspects such as efficient curing and handling in tobacco production. Topics to be discussed include automated curing systems, curing with wood, and installing a bulk LP tank.

EFFICIENCY GRANTS BEING CONSIDERED

A grant is currently being considered by USDA Rural Development which could fund up to 25% of farm projects to address the area of improved farm efficiency. Section 9006 – Renewal Energy and Energy Efficiency Program, through USDA – Rural Development offers grants, guaranteed loans, and combination grant/guaranteed loans to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses purchase and install renewable energy systems and make energy improvements in rural areas. To qualify, agricultural producers (individual or entity) directly engaged in the production of agricultural products must obtain at least 50% or greater of their gross income from agriculture. An announcement on this program will be made during February. More information regarding the Section 9006 program can be found at www.rurdev.gov/rbs/farmbill/.

CALIBRATING YOUR GREENHOUSE BOOM

One goal of the Pitt County Extension Center for this spring is to focus on greenhouse sprayer boom calibration. Although the growing conditions that we experienced last spring likely contributed to some reports of phytotoxicity in the field, using a simple calibration method will allow more effective use of pesticides in the greenhouse. We already have calibration plans available for those who would like to begin planning for this process. Call 902-1702 to receive your free copy.

ADMIRE PRO FOR 2007?

We have known for a long time that systemic insecticides can cause phytotoxicity under the certain conditions but last spring proved it. For Admire Pro, this was a problem which was believed to based not on its new formulation but was rather the result of dry growing conditions. It is likely that the same effect would have been seen even with the former Admire 2F formulation. For 2007, we offer the following recommendations when using Admire Pro.
1) Use the recommended rate – 80% of Pitt County tobacco growers used the .8 ounce rate due to the threat of Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus.
2) Make sure that plants which are treated with Admire Pro are transplanted within 7 days of treatment (3 days are preferred and one is absolutely essential!) 
3) When using Admire Pro, use no other systemic insecticides at transplanting
4) Apply Admire Pro with a calibrated sprayer boom

TRAY MANAGEMENT
Fumigation with methyl bromide or sanitation by steam remains our best early season disease control options. Tray styrofoam serves as a site for the overwintering of disease hosts and these two methods have been found to be the most effective in reaching such isolated areas. Other forms of sanitation such as bleach or cleaning solutions have been found to be only second best.

NEW VARIETIES FOR 2007
Listed below are the new tobacco varieties for your consideration.

RG 118 – This one was actually a new one for 2006. It was tried by several Pitt County growers this past year. Call 902-1702 if you would like some first-hand information.

NC 196 – This variety is similar to NC 71 in quality with a little better yield per acre. It also has the Ph gene for black shank resistance. It's downfall may be that it has similar Granville wilt resistance to K 326.

Speight 234 – This variety is a moderate yielding variety similar to Speight 168. It has a black shank disease rating of 13 and a Granville wilt disease rating of 14.

Speight 225 - This variety is a moderate yielding variety similar to Speight 168 and Speight 234. It has a black shank and Granville wilt disease rating of 8.

Speight 227 - This variety is a moderate yielding variety. It has a black shank disease rating of 4 and a Granville wilt disease rating of 11.

Note: Cross Creek Seed Company will market Speight seeds for 2007.

OUR COUNTY VARIETY PICTURE
In Pitt County, K326 was our top variety at 21% of seed sales followed by K346 at 20 percent in 2006. NC 71 and Speight 168 were tied for third at 15% and GL 350 was 4th at 8%.

CC 27 was the most popular new variety for Pitt County tobacco growers in 2006 representing 6% of seed sales. This variety has excellent disease resistance and will yield similar to K326 if it is harvested at the right time.

NC 471 was also very popular for Pitt County in 2006. In the N.C. State Official Variety Test, it led in black shank and Granville wilt resistance. It is classified as a highly resistant variety with moderate yields. NC 471 holds like NC 810 which is not the best.

GREENHOUSE TEMPERATURES
For the first 7 to 10 days during germination, temperatures for most varieties are recommended to be kept at 86 degrees F during the day and 68 degrees F at night. After germination, maintaining a minimum night-time temperature of 55 degrees F at night can reduce fuel costs.

WATER SAMPLE INTERPRETATION
As you receive the results of your tobacco greenhouse water samples, listed below is some information which can
assist in the management of various nutrients.

**Boron** – Water sources should range from .5 ppm to 3 ppm. If the sample report expresses concern over the higher level present, choose a fertilizer which contains no boron. Contact our office for more information.

**Calcium** – For low sources, gypsum can be applied at the rate of 2 ounces per 100 gallons of water bed volume.  

(OR)

Calcium nitrate can also be substituted for the second fertilizer application at four weeks.

**Sulfur** – Epsom salts can be applied at the rate of 4 ounces per 100 gallons of water bed volume. NOTE: If battery acid is used, no additional sulfur is necessary.

**OVER-THE-TOP WATERING**

Salts injury is a major greenhouse concern during the early season. To offset this problem, more Pitt County tobacco farmers are realizing the benefits of making an over-the-top application of water to reduce salts injury. On average, it is a good practice to water lightly over-the-top of plants at the 10-14 day period. However, when outside temperatures exceed 80 degrees F, it may be helpful to water over-the-top twice per week to push salts lower into the tray cells.

In terms of water volume, trays should be misted early in the season using 1/3-1/2 gallons per linear foot of greenhouse. Nozzle sizes such as 8004s work well at the 10-14 day period with larger nozzles being needed later in the spring.

Watering over-the-top is not necessary after plant roots reach the water bed.

### Tobacco Plant Populations at Various Row and Plant Spacings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row widths</th>
<th>18”</th>
<th>20”</th>
<th>22”</th>
<th>24”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42”</td>
<td>8297</td>
<td>7467</td>
<td>6789</td>
<td>6223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44”</td>
<td>7920</td>
<td>7128</td>
<td>6480</td>
<td>5940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46”</td>
<td>7575</td>
<td>6818</td>
<td>6198</td>
<td>5682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48”</td>
<td>7260</td>
<td>6534</td>
<td>5940</td>
<td>5445</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lugnotes**

What is the best tobacco variety to plant in Pitt County? This is a common question that we receive at the Extension Office. Dr. David Smith, NCSU Crop Science Specialist, addressed this question during 2006 Tobacco Day on December 7th. According to Dr. Smith, the best tobacco variety “is the one which best fits your situation.”

In Pitt County, the emphasis in 2007 will be on yield per acre. We have reached a stage in our production where our input costs can only be reduced so much but we can make better decisions which will enable us to increase our yields. Of course, a certain level of quality must be maintained, but whenever we can increase our yields, we reduce our cost of production.

**Mitch Smith**

County Extension Director

2/2/07

**Disclaimer**: The use of brand names in this publication does not imply endorsement of the products or services named or criticism of similar ones not mentioned.