

PROCLAMATION

The people of Decatur are dependent for their livelihoods upon our natural resources—soils, water, forests, grasslands, minerals and wildlife. These contribute in hundreds of ways to the growth and development of the state's industry, commerce, and agriculture. We also recognize the need for open spaces—the wilderness and scenic areas, fields, forests, grasslands, waters and shorelines—that are so vitally important to the physical and mental well-being of the ever-increasing numbers of citizens who find pleasure and relaxation in the outdoors.

The week of March 20 through 26 will be observed across the nation as National Wildlife Week. This is a time set aside for people to give special attention to the problem of providing proper care for the lands and waters upon which all of us depend. The 1960 Wildlife Week program focuses attention on the growing need for protecting our depleted water supplies that play such an essential role in almost every phase of our daily lives—in our homes, businesses, industries, and in providing us with wholesome recreation.

Water—is one of our most precious natural assets—has suffered severely from Man's neglect. Pollution, drainage, burning and mistreatment of forests, abuse of farmlands, and other wasteful practices have led to critical shortage which are faced today by many communities within our state and throughout the nation. To restore our water supplies and to provide for growing populations, people must study our water needs and contribute actively to plans for sound, long-range water conservation programs.

This is a responsibility that must be shared by citizens of Decatur. I, therefore, proclaim that National Wildlife Week will be observed in Decatur, March 20-26, 1960, as an occasion for creating public awareness of our nation's growing water problems, and I urge the people of our city to study and support those programs that will provide protection for this most important resource.

Donald F. Gage, Mayor

Of This And That

By Lois M. Folk
Home Demonstration Agent

If you would visit our office now, you would not only find us busy with winter activities, but planning for Spring and Summer. At present we, along with many 4-H leaders, are beginning another 4-H club year. National 4-H club week begins March 7 and enrollment ends in Adams County on March 15. To you this means that your sons and daughters will be needing your opinion on what to take and you will be signing enrollment cards. If you don't know who your local 4-H leaders are, let us know.

"Scoopy Party for Young Homemakers

Last Monday evening, fifty girls enrolled for the series of classes for Young Homemakers. The group will meet in two sessions, one will meet in Berne Monday evenings beginning February 29; and the other group will meet in

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Fertilization Program Should Be Tailored To Fit Each Farm

Efficiency in the use of fertilizer should be the key word for every farmer.

This has been borne out by the experience of several farmers in Virginia who have found that they can reduce their per-unit costs by implementing a sound fertilization program tailored to their individual farms. In most cases, this has meant an increase in the use of fertilizer on each acre already under production, along with other good management practices.

In outlining such a fertilization program, each farm must be analyzed to determine the fertilizer practices best suited for the farmer's individual farming operation. By utilizing research information and utilizing fertilizer most efficiently, the farm operator can help solve the question of how to trim his per-unit costs.

Fertilizer continues to be one of the best "buys" the farmer can make. A price comparison for the last 20 to 25 years shows that the price of fertilizer has not increased as much as have other goods and services that a farmer buys. While fertilizer prices (on a tonnage basis) increased more than 50 percent during this period, other fixed costs have risen much higher.

Fertilizer prices in terms of plant food content, are only slightly higher than they were in 1939. Prices of all items farmers buy have advanced 146 percent in the same period. In 1939, the plant food content of an average ton of fertilizer was 20.3 percent. Today, it averages 30.2 percent. This increase in plant food content has practically offset the 51 percent increase in the average price per ton of fertilizer. Thus, on the basis of what actually is in the bag, the cost of fertilizer today is less than 2 percent more than it was in 1939.

Wage rates have risen 369 percent; farm machinery, 136 percent; and farm supplies, 110 percent. This means that fertilizer, when used properly, can be substituted profitably for additional land, labor, and supplies.

In other words, a farmer in most instances should try to attain the high production potential of the land that he is presently farming, thus increase the efficiency of his operation. However, this does not mean that additional land could not be incorporated into the present operation.

Interest and participation in an educational soils and fertilizer-lime program in Virginia is rapidly growing. It is felt that just as soils are basic in the production of plants, so is an educational soils program essential in assisting farmers to attain the most economic yields from their crops.

The following points are considered fundamental in working out an efficient fertilization and liming program:

1. Know the soil: It has been said that "every soil has its proper use." Because of the different characteristics of soils, their use, management, and potential are quite different. For example, flaked tobacco, alfalfa, and ladino tall grass pastures can be grown successfully on quite different soils.

2. Select the crops to be grown: Different crops and their utilization require different fertilizer and lime programs. Alfalfa and corn are examples of two crops that require different management practices.

3. Know the past history: This is important in making fertilizer and lime recommendations and should include a record of crops, fertilization, liming and other management practices, taking into consideration any unusual conditions.

4. Use the soil test: The soil test can be a valuable aid in determining the fertilizer and lime needs for different soils and crops. It indicates the fertility level of the soil as well as the possible need for lime. The soil test, together with the other information, provides a scientific basis for correct fertilizer and lime usage.

In addition to the four points above, other good farm management practices must be included if the farmer is to attain efficient production.

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Corn Contests Increase Yields, And Efficiency

Washington, D. C.—Corn yield contests, familiar to most "competitive" spirit midwest farmers, have done much to acquaint farmers and agricultural workers with the yield potential of soils in their area and the need for production efficiency to get top profits, University of Minnesota soils specialist, C. J. Overdahl, reports.

Farmers need to consider the effect on the income and expenses for the entire farm of using different amounts of fertilizer. A study was made recently of the effects on net income for a 120-acre farm when fertilizer was applied at the "economic optimum" and at lower rates. It was assumed that a typical crop production for this farm included 30 acres of sugar beets, corn, wheat and alfalfa-brome grass.

The total cost of applying fertilizer at the most profitable rate on this 120-acre farm would be \$3,600. If this farmer reduced his fertilizer expenditures by \$5 per acre, \$600 of his capital would be available for other purposes. However, he could expect to reduce his net income by \$239. This means that by investing this \$600 in fertilizer, he could expect a return on his money of 40 percent.

The \$1,800 required to supply the last \$15 per acre worth of fertilizer needed for most profitable yields would produce a net return on the investment of \$1,470, or 81 percent. This would seem to indicate that only under conditions of limited credit can the farmer afford not to borrow money, if needed, to apply fertilizer at the most profitable rate.

Farmers often suffer even greater losses in net income by not making good use of recommended varieties, improved production practices and suitable technologies. Gross receipts, variable expenses and returns above variable expenses were calculated for the 120-acre farm when average and improved practices were used.

When most economic quantities of fertilizer were applied, sugar beet yields were estimated at 14.8 tons for average practices and 19.4 tons for improved practices. The net gain by using improved rather than average practices was calculated as \$39.74 per acre or \$1,192.20 for the 30 acres. Net gains per acre would be \$13.19 for corn, \$11.61 for wheat and \$13.20 for alfalfa-brome grass for a total of \$2,332 for the 120 acres of crops grown.

In order to attain this high level of yields and returns, it would be necessary for many farmers to make substantial investments in tile drainage and improved machinery.

Other improvements would require less investment but greater annual expenditures for lime, better adapted seed, and spray material for weed and insect control. Practices such as minimum tillage would result in small additional investments but in substantial annual savings in fuel and other operating expenses.

Purdue University entomologists recommend checking of bee hives during warm periods to determine whether the colonies are alive.

Good management can largely prevent pregnancy disease in ewes, Purdue University veterinarians point out. Ewes should get plenty of exercise, and during the last six weeks of pregnancy should receive enough grain to cause a slight, but steady increase in weight.

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In outlining such a fertilization program, each farm must be analyzed to determine the fertilizer practices best suited for the farmer's individual farming operation. By utilizing research information and utilizing fertilizer most efficiently, the farm operator can help solve the question of how to trim his per-unit costs.

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