

MODERN TOBACCO GROWER

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Welcome to *Modern Tobacco Grower*, an email newsletter covering the tobacco industry from the grower's point of view. If you haven't been receive this newsletter regularly, get on the list by emailing me at chrisbickers@gmail.com. Write "Subscribe" and include the tobacco type you grow or other tobacco affiliation, along with your name and mailing address. Or call me at 919 / 789-4631. If you have an opinion on any of the issues raised in this issue, feel free to write or call. Until our next issue, check www.modtob.blogspot.com for news updates. And thanks as always to our sponsor, Fair Products Inc.

Chris Bickers, Editor

A new sprayer hood improves sucker control



A sprayer hood for applying sucker control materials is now available from Strickland Bros. Enterprises of Spring Hope, N.C. "It creates a 'drench' effect and results in more product coming in contact with the leaf axils and stalk," says Henry Knight, Strickland Bros. engineer. The hood (shown at left held by Terry Strickland) is 26 inches long and 15 inches tall and tapers from 4.5 inches at the top to 1.5 inches at the bottom. It is made of 20-gauge galvanized steel. "You install it yourself," says Knight. "It straddles on top of existing three-nozzle spray cluster. Farmers who used the hoods have told us that they got better sucker control." Greg Manning of Nashville, N.C., used the Strickland Bros. sprayer hood in 2010 in his MH-free program

to apply six applications of a contact to his flue-cured tobacco followed by Prime+. "We got excellent results," he says. "The hood turns the solution into a waterfall, and it thoroughly drenches the stalk of the plant. We got good control." He adds that thanks to the hood, he was able to increase his application speed considerably and wound up using less solution in the process. "We covered more acres faster with the solution we had and got good sucker control," he says. "We will be using this piece of equipment again." But he says he is not sure how well it would work if you didn't spray right over the row. "You should spray the rows you set. If you set four, spray four. If you set eight, spray eight." The benefit of the sprayer hood is that it conveys more of the solution to the center of the top of the plant, says W.K. "Bill" Collins, N.C. tobacco specialist. "It enhances the delivery. This is very beneficial for good control with contact chemicals though less important with systemics or contact-systemics." He believes that you might be able to go through the field faster with the spray hood, but you probably wouldn't want to do that except under good spray conditions such as very level fields. You might also get by with less spray material, Collins says. Collins will still recommend that you use low pressure for best results and not spray wilted plants to avoid injury. For more information, go to www.stricklandbros.com via the Internet or call Strickland Bros. at (252) 478-3058. Loren Fisher, Tobacco Extension Specialist at NCSU, says this about the sprayer hood. "It will only be as good or better than existing nozzle arrangements if you stay over the center of the plant. If it is not over the center of the plant, it will not be as good as the three-nozzle arrangement we use now."

Careful about concentrations

For best sucker control with contact sucker control chemicals, Collins says, there must be enough of the solution to run all the way to the soil line. Usually this requires 50 gallons per acre, but with the spray hood you might get by with less spray solution, he says. The concentration of the contact spray solution should be 4% for the first application and 5% for all other applications to kill the two to three sucker buds in every leaf axil. A 4% solution is two gallons in 48 gallons of water and a 5% solution is 2.5 gallons of product in 47.5 gallons of water.

Will competition for acres restore leaf profitability?

Let's hope so, said Craig West, president of the Tobacco Growers Association of N.C., at the group's annual meeting at the Southern Farm Show. "For the first time in a long time, 2011 might result in a scenario of greater demand than supply."

Maybe, but Brazil isn't cooperating

Brazilian farmers apparently have produced far more than their original target for the crop they just brought to market. The original target was about 600 million kilos, said speakers at the recent Tobacco Associates meeting in Wilson, N.C., but reports now suggest it could be 700 million kilos or even 750 million kilos. The "overage" in Brazil may turn out to be nearly the size of the 2010 U.S. crop, said George Scott, executive of Universal Leaf at the TA meeting, and we can be sure that all of it will find its way into the market.

Zimbabwe ups flue-cured production too

Zimbabwe will produce an estimated 160 million kilos from the current crop, now coming to market. But its leaf may not compete well with U.S. flue-cured because the quality is not up to traditional levels, said Blake Brown, N.C. Extension agricultural economist, at the Wilson meeting. Chinese companies have become the major buyers of Zimbabwean tobacco, according to a Reuters news agency report, and will purchase at least half of the current crop.

Market chaos in Canada

A new leaf company caused considerable disruption in the market for Canadian tobacco this season when it failed to pay for much of the 20% it contracted from the 50-million-pound 2010 crop. True Blend Tobacco of Tillsonburg, Ontario, had incurred a debt to farmers estimated earlier in the year at CAN\$6.6 million. It paid about 10% of that amount the last week of February, according to the *Tillsonburg News*, and the owner promised further payment, but growers were understandably skeptical. Much of the unbought tobacco is still on farm.

Burley cooperative gets new leader

Daniel Green has been appointed chief executive officer of Burley Stabilization Corporation (BSC). Green had been chief financial officer of the corporation for several years. He replaces Charlie Finch, who recently retired after leading the relocation of the BSC's main office from its longtime location in Knoxville, Tn., to Springfield, Tn. Finch will stay on for a time as a consultant to BSC, which serves farmers in Tennessee, North Carolina and Virginia.

Senator sounds a warning

Government overspending will affect all tobacco farmers...and everybody else! In an address at the N.C. tobacco growers meeting, Senator Richard Burr (R-N.C.) urged everyone to lobby Congress for a Balanced Budget Amendment. "Unless we change our ways fundamentally, we are dooming our country to a future of high taxes, slow economic growth, and quite possibly, bankruptcy," he said.

From the editor: A personal note

Tobacco growers--and I--lost two good friends in January. W.L. "Billy" Carter of Scotland Neck, N.C., died of injuries suffered in an auto accident, while Jerry West of Fremont, N.C., died of natural causes at home. I met them both during the formation of the Tobacco Growers Association of North Carolina in the early Eighties, and both later served as president of the organization--Billy in 1985 and Jerry in 1993 or 1994, if memory serves. Billy got out of farming some years ago and got involved in cotton commodity work. Jerry farmed right to the end, along with his sons Brad and Craig. He brought them up well--Craig is now the president of TGANC and a frequent source for this newsletter. Billy and Jerry were two good men, and they will be missed.

Now, a message from North Carolina State University

NC growers discover a new crop of business potential: Thanks to NC State University, NC growers can immerse themselves in a new growth opportunity - The opportunity to grow your skills, business potential and career. Specifically designed for professionals in applied technical fields, The TechnicalProfessionals Business Series offers 12 different 4-day courses covering topics from the essentials of business to corporate finance. Participants can choose the course or courses that best fit their needs, with no prerequisites required for any of the courses offered. Learning is project based so you can apply your new skills immediately. And every course is led by one of NC States esteemed MBA educators who will provide you the tools, knowledge and resources you need to become more effective across various functions of business. Space is limited and four of the upcoming courses include:

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Technical Professionals confronted with global supply chain challenges will benefit from understanding the dynamics associated with strategic sourcing, order fulfillment, quality control and vendor relations. Learn proven supply chain strategies that can give your company competitive cost advantages.

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Find out more information about these upcoming courses and the entire Business Series at <http://techpros.mgt.ncsu.edu>. Now is the time to get ahead and improve your business skills by signing up for the Technical Professional Business Series.

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An 80% KMH systemic (60% MH) water soluble powder for the prevention of growth of tobacco suckers.

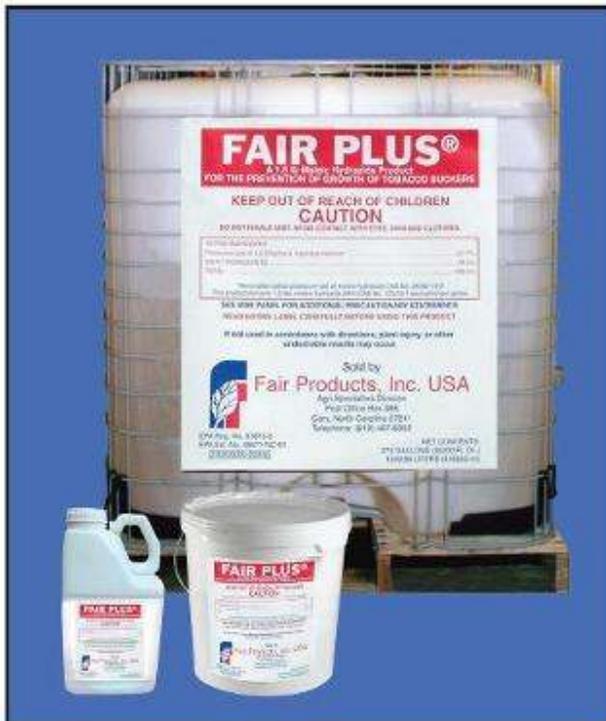
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ANNOUNCEMENT

Tobacco Growers Association of North Carolina Barn Testing Service 2011

- Barn Certification for Nitrosamine issues has become a critical part of the contracting agreements to market tobacco.
- Some companies are now shifting that burden of proof to the tobacco grower.
- Tobacco Growers Association of NC (TGANC) has entered into an agreement with TriTest Laboratory in Raleigh, NC to provide flue-cured tobacco barn testing certification services to companies and growers.
- In 2010, TGANC tested more than 2,000 barns for Philip Morris USA and JTI Leaf Services.
- If you are a grower and you are being required to facilitate your own barn testing to satisfy your tobacco contract company, please feel free to contact TGANC for assistance. Our testing results will be certified and accepted by the tobacco companies using the latest technology and consistent approach.
- The testing fee per barn will be \$48.00 and all growers in all states are eligible to utilize this service.
- To make inquiry or establish an appointment please call TriTest, Inc at 919-834-4984 and refer to the TGANC Tobacco Barn Testing Service. If you should have additional questions you may contact Graham Boyd, Executive Vice President, TGANC at 919-614-0099.

**Thank you for your consideration and we hope this testing service
can be of benefit to you as tobacco grower**

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