

# Fumigating Tobacco Soils Effective if Done Properly

A pest that annually costs North Carolina tobacco growers millions of dollars is being given the "gas treatment."

Tar heel producers are using fumigation in an effort to rid their tobacco soils of destructive nematodes.

These microscopic pests last year reduced the value of the North Carolina flue-cured tobacco crop by an estimated \$6 million.

Crop rotation, plowing out stubbs after harvest and fumigation are three anti-nematode measures being followed by producers.

"Fumigation can be one of the most effective measures a farmer can use in reducing the nematode population in his fields," comments Furney Todd, extension plant pathology specialist added. "Unless a farmer is willing to follow directions carefully and do the best job

possible, fumigating soils may be of no benefit to him and could actually do a certain degree of harm."

Todd listed several suggestions for the producer who plans to use fumigants in tobacco soils this spring.

First, the farmer should select the right material from the relatively large number of fumigants available. "The level of nematode infestation, the kinds of nematodes present and the crop rotation that has been followed help determine which fumigant to use," said Todd.

Among the materials recommended are D-D, Telone, EDB-85, Doralone, Fieldfume and Penphone.

Penphone has been used in research and demonstration tests for the past three years and is making its debut on the market. Tests have shown it to be effective

against root knot nematode, according to Todd.

The specialist continued by suggesting that farmers obtain from their county extension agent a table of application rates.

"The rate of application is very important," said Todd. "Under application will only result in added cost of production that won't pay off. Over application can damage the tobacco plants and reduce crop value."

Farmers should take extra precautions in calibrating equipment and checking it at least twice a day. "There is no room for guesswork here," Todd warned.

Continuing, Todd said the fumigant should be applied at least eight inches below soil level "The fumigant changes into a gas once it is in the soil," he explained. "It is the gas that does the job. There-

fore, depth of application is important."

If the row method of application is used, the fumigant should be applied about 14 inches from the top of a high, wide bed.

A seal should be provided immediately after application. This can be done with row method of application by throwing a large bed with a turning plow or four discs on a tractor with a large sweep behind the tractor running middles.

After the fumigant is applied, the farmer should wait at least two weeks before transplanting. "The best plan to follow is to apply the fumigant at the earliest date possible after soil temperature reaches 50 degrees," said Todd.

If heavy rains occur after application, the bed should be opened for aeration and then rebedded before transplanting.

## LIBRARY WEEK

Continued from page 6

Frank Slaughter and the Glass-Blowers by Daphne Du Maurier.

I urge each person to make complete use of our library because I feel as Henry David Thoreau did when he said, "How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book. The book exists for us perchance which will explain our miracles and reveal new ones. The at present unutterable things we may find somewhere uttered. These same questions that disturb and puzzle and confound us have in their turn occurred to all the wise men; not one has been omitted; and each has answered them according to his ability, by his work, and by his life."

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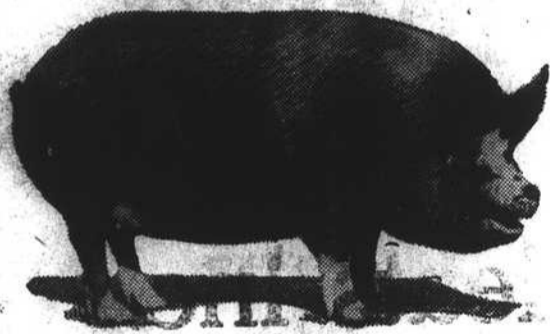
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