

Excessive springtime rains may lead to soil fertility problems

RALEIGH—Delays in planting crops across the Coastal Plain of North Carolina due to excessive rainfall will most likely be followed by fertility problems for nutrient elements such as sulfur which leach very readily. The soils on which sulfur leaching is most prevalent are the well drained, sandy and textured. They are low in organic matter and have a low nutrient holding capacity.

Agronomically, sulfur has been classified as a secondary nutrient element and in most cases has been considered of secondary importance in plant nutrition.

According to Dr. Ray Tucker, plant agronomist, N. C. Dept. of Agriculture, although sulfur is not considered one of the major nutrient elements like nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, its absence in the soil

can result in severe crop losses. Sulfur is an integral component in conversion of nitrogen to proteins within the plant. It ranks in importance with nitrogen and phosphorus in this metabolic

process. "Sulfur is also an integral part of the vitamins and enzymes in plants," Tucker said. "Sulfur is essential in the formation of chlorophyll (green color) in plants without which plants cannot function."

Plants deficient in sulfur are pale green in color which resemble, and in many cases are mistaken for, a nitrogen deficiency. Unlike a nitrogen deficiency, sulfur deficient plants show yellowing of the young leaves first. Under severe sulfur conditions, however, the entire plant

may become yellow and stunted. The ultimate effect under these conditions is a marked reduction in the quantity and quality of crop yields.

"In past years, when low-analysis phosphate fertilizers were commonly used, sulfur deficiencies were rarely observed because sulfur was present as a by-product of most phosphate materials. With the introduction of high-analysis fertilizers, however, this by-product sulfur is no longer present," the plant agronomist said. "On soils where the native sulfur content is low, omission of annual sulfur applications has resulted in sulfur deficiencies for a number of crops. Therefore, in areas which are deficient or potentially deficient in sulfur, this element must be supplied

separately or in combination with other fertilizer materials."

A number of sulfur containing fertilizer materials are available. Some of the most commonly available sources are potassium sulfate, magnesium sulfate, elemental sulfur, and a mixture of potassium and magnesium sulfate (K-Mag). Any one of the above materials should be suitable for supplying sulfur. A rate of at least 20 pounds of sulfur per acre should be adequate for most crops.

Tucker explained that sulfur deficiencies are most prevalent following seasons of excessive rainfall such as we have experienced during this past winter and spring. If the soils on which crops are to be planted are very sandy, the chances

of sulfur deficiency occurring is very high. To offset this potential problem, include sulfur in the fertilizer program at rates suggested above. Another means of checking this problem is by plant tissue analysis after the crop is growing.

Information and supplies for taking plant samples can be obtained from local agriculture advisers or at

the Agronomic Division in Raleigh. There is a fee of \$3.00 per sample for plant tissue analysis.

"It would be wise to collect corresponding soil samples to make certain other fertility factors are not included in the overall problem," Tucker said. "Production costs and risks are too high to take the chance."

Livestock referendum slated for April 25th

Producers of pork and beef will have an opportunity on April 25th to vote on assessment proposals for funding on their respective commodity associations for the next six years.

hogs for slaughter or feeder pigs and all other persons (including family members), who receive income from such sales are eligible to vote in this referendum.

Beef producers will be voting on a 30 cents per head assessment on all cattle sold through auction markets, handlers, or processors. All persons who sell cattle or receive income from the sale of cattle may vote (including family members).

Funds that are collected are used by the commodity organizations to promote their products and support research and education. Each of the programs is voluntary in that money collected can be refunded to farmers upon written request.

Polling places in Perquimans County are as follows:

- Charles Layden's Supermarket-Belvidere
- R. W. Turner's Store-New Hope
- Broughton Dail's Warehouse-Hertford



Support for constitutional amendment

RALEIGH—Support for a proposed farm finance amendment was voiced here Friday by state officials and agricultural leaders during a news conference in the Capitol.

Passage of the constitutional amendment, to be voted on in May 8 primary, would permit the state to establish an agency to issue agricultural revenue bonds. Funds from the sale of the bonds would be used for loans to farmers and farmer-owned cooperatives.

Prime participants in the conference were Governor James B. Hunt, Jr.; State Representative Bobby R. Etheridge (D-Harnett); Edmund Aycock, Executive Vice-

President, N. C. Agribusiness Council and State Agriculture Commissioner, James A. Graham.

Speaking for the amendment Hunt said: "We know huge federal deficits have a stranglehold on America's future. Those sky-high deficits are swallowing up more and more of our available credit—credit our farmers need if they are to maintain, improve and modernize their operations."

"This amendment, which will finance good farmers and well-managed farm operations, will offer the funds our farmers need to make North Carolina agriculture more productive and efficient. That is good news for all North Carolina families."

Etheridge, who authored the

legislation, said: "Passage of the amendment is essential to the scheme of agricultural growth in North Carolina. Revenue bonds have been a successful tool for industry and we simply want to provide the same tools for our farmers. Neighboring states have done it and we want to be competitive with them."

Graham said that credit-worthy farmers have had trouble securing loans for capital improvements as funds earmarked for agriculture had been diverted to other industries.

"If this amendment passes, it will give the state authority to sell bonds which will be insured at no cost or risk to taxpayers," he said.

The commissioner insisted the proposed amendment is not a bond referendum and should not be confused with those such as general obligation municipal bonds.

In explaining the amendment, the principals said that individual farmers could borrow up to \$500,000 and farmer-owned cooperatives would be eligible for loans up to \$2 million. Farmers' use of the money would be for land purchases, buildings, machinery and equipment. Co-op use would be for agricultural processing facilities.

Aycock also endorsed the amendment saying: "It will make funding available for capital improvements in our agricultural operations."

Farmer's share of market shows decline

By JOHN SLEDGE
N. C. Farm Bureau Federation
During 1983, consumers spent \$312-billion for foods produced on U. S. farms—about four percent more than in 1982. This amount included purchases of farm foods both in foodstores, roughly two-thirds of the total, and at away-from-home eating places.

For several years, statistics showed that farmers got an average of 32 cents out of every dollar we spend in the supermarket or restaurant. That was bad enough when you consider what each individual farmer has invested. However, government data for 1982 indicated that the 32 cents had dropped to only 28 cents. Now,

government statistics for 1983 show that this figure has now slipped to 27 cents.

The remaining \$228-billion—the marketing bill—that we spent on food went to the food industry for handling, processing, and retailing foodstuffs after they left the farm. The marketing bill was up by \$12-billion in 1983, and thus accounted for

virtually all of the year's increase in expenditures for farm food.

About \$6-billion of the \$12-billion rise in the marketing bill can be traced to labor costs. Packaging, transportation and energy added another \$2-billion.

Farm value percentages vary greatly among foods. The farm value contributes more to the retail price of meats, poultry, eggs and dairy products than it does for most other foods.

Put cannas back in the yard

"Plant what?," I hear you cry. "Why, that's the most overplanted, garish perennial I can think of. Every railroad station, post office and cotton mill in the South has a bed of 'em out front."

35201.
Cannas love hot, dry summers, and that's us.

When making planting preparations, no round beds, please, that's been done. Plant groups of one color in a curving mass. Remember that canna leaves are large, offering a bold texture to any landscape. Do not forget color coordination. Yellow canna with bright green leaves against a red brick home would be far more pleasing than pink or red with bronze leaves, for instance.

Cannas are propagated by new rhizomes, or old ones divided and planted in spring. There is a dwarf strain 'Seven Dwarfs' that can be grown from seed, blooming in about six months. Canna indica 'Nana' is a native of South America

Planting beds should contain a lot of organic matter, such as compost, rotted manure and leaf mold, says Southern Living Magazine. Incorporate one-half pound of 10-10-10 fertilizer per 50 square feet. Rhizomes should be set 18 inches apart; planted three or four inches deep. Water thoroughly at planting

time and during periods of drought.

Feed cannas every six weeks during growing period.

As with any other bloomer, cut off flowers as they fade. Large established clumps benefit from removal of a whole stem with leaves after all its flowers have bloomed. This provides more light for any newly developing flower stems.

Cannas over winter quite well in this area if provided three or four inches of mulch. Many gardeners let the frost-killed canes lie on the ground where they fall until spring. This practice gives extra protection.

Some new hybrids include Fay's Orchid, 'Coral Pine', 'Stadt Fellbach' (copper-yellow), 'Flamingo' and 'Golden Banner'.

Come a summer day, make some old-fashioned lemonade, put little delicate pralines on a Sandwich glass server, stroll out to the canna patch. Pull up a wicker chair. Spend a while in that warm silence simply remembering things past.



Not so. First of all, what railroad stations? Gone, torn down they are, by unimaginative political officials who lacked an iota of foresight, throwing away priceless architecture because salvaging them would require time and effort.

What post offices? Most new ones are landscaped with concrete and a loken dwarf youpon, victims of a valid necessity for constant traffic space.

Old cotton mills are now full of clever boutiques and restaurants with a theme. Since all the fun happens inside, the space outside is landscaped in basic black (as in asphalt) relieved by shades of bronzes, blues and maroons, courtesy Ford, GM and Volvo.

You just think Cannas indica is there. (The Latin name refers not to India but the West Indies where these plants originated.)

Put cannas back in the yard where they belong, I say. Put new hybrids into our gardens and parks, I urge. Plants of gorgeous shades of red, salmon, yellow and pink. Look in your catalogues for new beauties ranging in height from two to seven feet. You can even write the Canna Editor, Southern Living Magazine, Box 332, Birmingham, Alabama

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