December 9, 2003

TO: Area Farmers

FROM: Derby Walker, Extension Agent, Agriculture
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SUBJECT: Ag Notes

“Grain Marketing Strategies Conference for Delaware Farmers” will be December 19, 9 to noon at the Paradee Center in Dover. Carl German, Charlie Stubbs, Joe Burton and Robin Talley will be presenting the information on grain outlook, the farm program and marketing materials and tools available on the internet.

Delaware Vegetable Growers meeting – Jan 5, 6, and 7 at the Harrington Fair Grounds. We will be using two buildings at the fair. Exhibit Hall will be used for the meetings and the new Dover Building for lunch and exhibits. There will be a small fee to offset costs of the conferences. See insert!

Jan 5 – Monday evening programs 6 to 9 pm
Track 1 - High profit crops for small acreages in Delaware session is in the Board Room. Crops featured will be raspberries, pole lima beans, strawberries, specialty vegetables, organic production, and crops under high tunnels.
Track 2 – Direct Marketing, Agritourism, and Entertainment Farming Activities session will feature Delaware Farmer markets, promoting your Agritourism, direct marketing of cut flowers and other related topics.

Jan 6 – Tuesday – Fresh Market Vegetable Program
Main Session – 8:45 to noon – Will feature information on the North Carolina Vegetable industry, Phytophthora and other wet season issues.
Track 1 – 1 to 4 p.m. will feature pest control issues, sweet potatoes, produce labeling trends, no-till fresh market vegetables, rotation for soil health and nutrient management.
Track 2 – 1 to 4 p.m. - Marketing Fresh Produce will feature brokers and buyers. Providing information on selling to large grocery chains, Regional and National brokers and mass merchandising
Track 3 – 1 to 4 p.m. - Exhibitor talks and demonstrations in the Dover building exhibitor area.

Jan 7 - Wednesday - 9 to noon – Processing Vegetables, Potatoes & Vine Crops
Track 1 – Will cover pickle issues, lima beans, herbicide update and Biofuels.
Track 2 – Potato Session
*Track 3 – Vine Crop Session 8 to noon, includes pollination, transplants, disease update, pollenized research in watermelons and 1 to 3, Pumpkin Round Table in the Board Room,
* Special program for watermelon producers

Agronomic and Equipment Program – Feb 4 and 5 at the Harrington Fair Grounds.

2004 program will feature hay production on Delmarva on Feb 5. The February 4th program will feature irrigation management, drainage, twin row corn, and pest control. A detailed program will mailed out in early January. There will be a charge for lunch and we will have exhibitors. Also there will be an evening program on the 4th with one session featuring hay and the other on fixing older machinery.

The Women in Agriculture Conference will be held in Dover at the Modern Maturity Center on Feb 6 and 7.

Mailing changes – we will be sending out most of our mail third class bulk which will take longer to reach you. Also we will not be able to send out reminder notices. Our funding has changed, so we will have to tightly manage our postage spending. It is a good news – bad news situation. You will get less mail from us, but you won’t get a second notice about up coming events unless you want an e-mail reminder. Since e-mail is free, I can send you a reminder notice or quick notes. Just drop me an email note, and I will add you to my email list. Some of you have recently changed your e-mail addresses. Please send me your new address so I can put you back on my e-mail list. My e-mail address is derby@udel.edu.

Crop Insurance as a retirement planning tool – food for thought – You may want to look at crop insurance as a tool to protect your assets as you approach retirement. Crop insurance can help protect you from having to dip into your savings or retirement accounts. Insurance does not make you money, but it can help prevent having to borrow money or use your savings to pay your bills. A bad year may take 3 to 5 years to overcome. This was not my idea, a farmer passed this idea along to me and it does have a lot merit.
It is not too late to check for soybean cyst nematodes. We saw several fields with stunted or poor yields. We found high counts of soybean cysts even on soybean cyst resistant varieties. What happened? A race shift from 3 (the most common race) to another race, most likely 1 (it could even be a race 5). If you have beans that did not perform, you need to determine why to correct the problem. We also saw fields with problems from too much water, too many deer, compaction from planting too wet and a couple with pH problems. If it was not one of those issues, pull a nematode test to determine if you need to change your resistance package or cropping system. A small cyst population could explode because last year the soybeans were able to produce lots of roots for them to feed upon.