



Vintage tractors grace '07 cover

FASCINATION with antique tractors continues full throttle. And with it comes the pride of tractor drives.

The 2007 Classic Farm Tractors Calendar features handsome heirlooms, including some from Maryland and Delaware fairs and calendars. It continues to "feed the fever" of antique-tractor collecting.

On the cover

The cover shows four Case tractors and a Case automobile from Master Farmer Herbert Wessel's collection, Hampstead, Md.

World-class bronze sculptor André Harvey, Rockland, Del., owns a 1953 Farmall Cub, which is March's feature tractor.

Other distinctive tractors featured include:

- A rare 1920 Samson M Cane was built for a sugar plantation in Louisiana in the GM Samson Tractor Division Plant in Janesville, Wis. It's so narrow (40 inches wide) that the driver must tuck his arms against his sides or get hit by the rear wheels.

- The "American Beauty" is in great demand for Fourth of July parades. The 1944 Oliver 70 is painted like Old Glory in red, white and blue with a stars motif.

- A cabbied Minneapolis-Moline R and a 1951 Gibson I are rare machines.

Calendars are available for \$10 each, or three for \$25 plus shipping and handling, from Classic Tractor Fever, Box 437, Rockland, DE 19732. Or you can call (800) 888-8979 for more information.

Know how to balance P



Field Notes

By Bill Pardee

YES, phosphorus is an essential nutrient for growing crops. But it also is a nuisance and pollutant in lakes, rivers and ponds. P, for short, stimulates growth of water weeds and algae — spoiling swimming, boating, aquatic life and fishing.

That's why the Chesapeake Bay Commission "arm twisted" lawn-care fertilizer manufacturers to reduce the P in their products. They're beginning to do so with products manufactured this fall.

Most livestock farms also accumulate P in their fields via animal manure. So, farmers, too, must do a balancing act with this essential crop nutrient. You need to apply enough to grow your crops, without extra P getting into groundwater or surface runoff from fields.

Most of it is bound as phosphate (P_2O_5) in soil particles or manure. But some of it can be dissolved in soil water. Rainfall runoff can carry P-laden materials into waterways, streams and lakes. Fields vary in runoff risk, depending on slope, soil texture and cover. That's why it needs to be calculated and controlled.

Get more profit from phosphorus

CORNELL soil scientists suggest the following guides to gain profits with phosphorus and manure:

- Don't spread manure on high P-indexing fields. Keep manure off steep slopes!
- Limit manure spreading to low P-indexing fields, usually level fields.
- Don't spread manure when soils are frozen or saturated (January through April).
- Incorporate manure directly by

Key Points

- Farmers must balance crop phosphorus needs to reduce pollution risks.
- P-indexing systems developed for your state will help.
- High P fields may need only 25 pounds of starter to grow a corn crop.

To help you

Land-grant college agronomists at most Northeast schools have developed phosphorus indexing systems and software to help monitor runoff risks. They vary some, but are designed for use by producers and nutrient-management planners to manage risks of field P losses.

In the NY P Index, for example, steep-sloping fields tend to have high P-index ratings. Level fields, on the other hand, usually have low runoff potential and low P indexes — and subsequently more management flexibility.

The NY P Index combines two scores for each field: one for field characteristics, the other for planned management practices. Here's a quick peek at what's involved in each:

Field characteristics: They include those that raise risk of P runoff, both as particles carried on soil, in manure and other organic matter or as P dissolved in water. Features of concern include length and steepness of slope, proximity to a stream or ditch, and the

injection or by immediate tillage.

- Don't spread manure close to streams or waterways. Leave a spread-free border.

- Minimize erosion by planting cover crops.

- Use conservation-tillage to leave at least 30% cover on fields.

- Use contour strips to slow surface flows and pick up nutrients.

- Sow grass waterways where runoff waters concentrate.

normal flow pattern of water over and from the field.

Other P-index components include soil-drainage classifications and flooding frequencies (see your soil surveys) and a soil erosion rating estimated with the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation. For RUSLE numbers, check with your Soil and Water Conservation District.

Other features include soil type and potential for P movement in its soil water. Key soil factors include the soil permeability (sand vs. loam vs. clay) and soil drainage (well-drained, moderately drained, poorly drained).

Management factors: They're computed by adding P inputs from the soil (soil test P), from fertilizer P (planned application), and from organic P (estimated with a formula). Other important features include anticipated timing for manure spreading (spring, summer or fall) and your application method (injection, banding or broadcast).

Where savings come easily

Many livestock and poultry farms have fields with high P levels, held over from years of spreading manure. For such fields, all you usually need is manure plus a starter fertilizer with no more than 25 pounds of P_2O_5 through the planter. Fields that test very high for P may not need any starter P.

Wisely used, phosphorus can help crops. Carelessly used, it can waste money and even get you into trouble.

Using your state's soil P-indexing system can help improve your P management and maintain friendly neighbors. Spreadsheets are available to aid in putting these numbers together to develop the P index. For assistance on this, check with your local cooperative Extension educator, your local Soil and Water Conservation District office, or with a private consultant or planner.

For more info, visit Cornell's NY P Index Web site at nmsp.css.cornell.edu/publications/pindex.asp. Click on Cropware: Management Software. Then go to Agronomy Fact Sheets.

charged. Changing that would spark an ag electrical-energy boom. And it's "green energy" that innovative utilities could market at premiums. Vermont is already doing so, as Glenn Rogers, University of Vermont Extension farm management specialist, reports. Two dairies are getting paid the wholesale sale rate plus 4 cents per kilowatt for "green power." Another is coming on line, hoping to get wholesale plus 5 cents.

MFs establish trust fund for \$150,000 for ag scholarships

THIS fall, the Pennsylvania-based Master Farmers Association board of directors approved a \$50,000 Trustee Matching Scholarship Fund at Penn State University. Since then, another \$50,000 was added to it. The association has pledged to "grow" it into \$150,000 within five years.



The monies will provide College of Ag Sciences scholarships at the school. That's the word from Mark Sharer, Penn State's director of development.

The association is also pursuing development of similar programs at University of Maryland, University of Delaware and other land-grant colleges involved in this magazine's Master Farmer Awards program. Master Farmers in each of the five involved Mid-Atlantic states control scholarship monies raised in their respective states.

Add Web goodies to farm-biz recipe

IN Burlington, Vt., University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies and Women's Agricultural Network teamed up in November to pilot a three-part workshop

to help farmers figure out whether e-commerce is for them, and how best to use e-commerce to connect with new markets.

Farmers are fast learners when it comes to gathering market info from the Web. Next step is harnessing e-tools to pull in more customers and sales.

Take, for example, Rich and Steph Rockwood of Redrock Farm in Chelsea, Vt. The Rockwoods added an online store to their Christmas-tree-farm Web site in 2003 (www.christmas-trees.net). Since then, Rich says, their mailing list has grown by about 100 names a year.

Mail-order tree sales almost doubled since 2000. Rich attributes that growth directly to the Internet. "We're getting fewer paper orders and fewer checks," Rich says. "People seem to like doing things online."

For more info, visit www.uvm.edu/wagn/Ecommercepage1.html. Or contact Will "Chip" Sawyer at (802) 656-0892 or wsawyer@uvm.edu.

Prepare to stop corn leaf blight

LEAF blights had a great summer across New York and New England. Northern corn leaf blight showed up in pockets, arriving in August so most fields weren't affected.

Some fields showed many blighted leaves, showing the typical large cigar-shaped gray-to-brown leaf spots. Some fields looked badly "burned" in September, but since the infection came on so late, it caused little yield damage.

Will next year bring a return? That depends on the weather, and on genetics. Most hybrids have strong resistance to northern corn leaf blight. But as this year showed, some don't.

Talk to your seed supplier. Discuss the complete hybrid genetic package.

A good bet: Choose hybrids with strong resistance to northern corn leaf blight, particularly if you saw some this year.