

AG NOTES
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NEW RULES

All farmers with pesticide private applicator certificate cards and all commercial applicators certified likewise are supposed to see their cards certification expire on June 30, 2020. However, in view of the disruption from the COVID-19 orders, the Commissioner of Agriculture has extended the expiration to September 30, 2020.

This will allow sufficient time for certified applicators to renew their certification by contact with the UT Extension personnel when the stay-at-home order is lifted or by completing an online training available at UT. See the following statement and information on training. The following is taken from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture website.

“The Tennessee Department of Agriculture is aware of questions regarding Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for pest control professionals. While managing the COVID-19 outbreak, it is critical that the department take steps to protect the health of pesticide applicators, employees, and the public.

Commercial and private pesticides applicators are required to complete a certain amount of training before renewing their certifications on June 30. This protects public welfare by ensuring that chemicals used in homes and businesses are applied by trained and certified individuals. The primary source for training is the University of Tennessee. However, the university has temporarily halted in-person training.

A new rule filed with the Secretary of State extends the certification period to September 30, 2020, or 30 days from the end of the emergency declaration depending on which comes first. The rule also deems General Pest and Rodent Control licensees as authorized to make Category 14 pesticide applications for control of COVID-19.”

This is an important change for recertification scheduling, giving more time for applicators, both commercial and private, to receive the proper training that is required for those folks who use pesticides approved by the Environmental Protection Agency in their operations.

For those folks who wish to continue to receive the proper training while we are all on safe shelter at home restrictions, there is a great online option at the University of Tennessee that will work. It is called the K@TE Learning Management System, our distance education site. It is the best source for training, the fees are the same, and the training is good. I’ve used it and I like it.

I’m working on a letter to send to the 120 or so private applicators with the details. If anyone has any questions, call me at the office at 684-5971 and I will return your call. Or send me an email to jteague1@utk.edu

SOIL TESTING

Even though we are working from home, I am still able to accommodate those needing to send soil samples to the lab in Nashville. By a call or email, I can schedule a time to meet and provide soil sample kits, and then I can receive the samples back for transport.

The same system works best, call or email me.

FARMERS MARKET

I've been asked about farmers market this year. Our vendors are just now getting some of the produce in the garden. A wet spring and cold temperatures for a lot of the varieties has been a problem, but I suspect that after this week we'll see some serious gardening.

There are a lot of unanswered questions due to the COVID-19 issue. I've heard how some are doing with some success. We'll visit with our growers and make some decisions when we have enough information to make decisions.

Remember that our market is a locally grown market, meaning that our growers don't buy from out of state and resell. That's why we're a little late some times.

Just be patient and we'll get ready to open when we can.

THE KIDS

Ford was seven years old this past Saturday. He had a great time even though he couldn't have friends over. He did get a lot of cards from family and friends to compensate for the lack of a party. And he really did appreciate them, the thoughts that went with 'em.

Hank found out that he made the Principal's A Honor Roll for the last grading period before their school shut down. He was super proud of that, made a special call to tell Meme and Grandee. And Ford met all of his goals and standards for a first grader, and he had good remarks from his teacher. We're really proud of these boys!

Piper had a big time with her Easter basket, and she was really proud of her candy! When I asked if there was any for me, she was quick to say an emphatic "NO"! But then she'll share and grin!

Love 'em!