

AG NOTES
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FARMERS MARKET

The Bedford County Farmers Market opened up last week finally, after a long bout of unfavorable weather that prevented early production. Cold weather, a wet season followed by a dry period, wind damage to plants and facilities all contributed to a late start.

We had six vendors, with others calling to say they would be coming in a week or so. And we estimate the crowd at approximately 75, many past customers with some new ones.

So, with that in mind, we'll be open again this week on Thursday, starting at 2:30 pm with no early sales. This gives the vendors time to set up their displays.

One note about the COVID-19 issue, the vendors are masked, they sanitize their tables and covers, and they don't allow anyone to handle their food items until they are sold and handed over to the customer.

We have sanitizer stations for everyone to use, and we strongly recommend that customers use face masks, and most of them did. We have face masks that we will provide free of charge until they run out.

The vegetables are coming in now, and what we had looked good last week. We have had some talk of corn shortly and ripe tomatoes will be very soon. Of course, the green ones are a favorite of mine, battered and fried.

I'm gettin' hungry!

FERNS

I saw a planting of ferns in a shady area, and to be honest, it is so nice to look at. These are plants that in nature you will find in a forest area, and they do well in shade. A nice idea for a planting out of the sun. And there are various types that give a balanced look to the area.

On a couple of the smaller ones, I noticed a white look to the fringe of the ferns. I first thought that these might be a variegated kind, since so many foliage plants now have multi-colored leaves. But then I was worried that this might be a fungus or mold problem, since we had so much rain and humidity.

I sent the attached picture to the lab, and I got a different kind of diagnosis, or actually an opinion of what we were looking at. The white does look like an almost precise pattern to the edge, so that ruled out molds/fungi since they do not grow in precise patterns.

The rest of the plant looked and is very normal. Most plants are hosts to pathogens like the molds/fungi are not performing like they should, and they get progressively worse.

The opinion of the pathologist was that this was a build-up of salt left behind from fertigation, the process of adding fertilizer to the water system to feed the plants. The source of the ferns uses this technique to feed their plants, and often during the hot weather.

By now, the residue has washed off and the ferns are thriving at this point.



PESTICIDE TRAINING

We have about 125 farmers who have been trained and certified to apply restricted-use weed and insect control to their own crops. These products are considered safe by Environmental Protection Agency if applied using delivery methods that are approved and these applicators are trained in those methods. It's a good training. Farmers cannot buy these products without being certified to use them.

These certifications expire normally on June 30 of this year. The key word here is normal. Since training cannot be done to groups under the COVID-19 restrictions, the expiration date has been extended to September 30 of this year. When large groups can be convened for training, we will resume the process of recertifying those farmers. For folks who have never had the training, we can do these one-to-one by appointment.

I expect these recertification meetings to be held in late August/early September. I will be sending a notice to the current card holders that are registered as living in Bedford County per the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.

DICAMBA

Several soybean growers use this product to control some of the weeds that have developed a resistance to other weed controls. A recent decision from the Ninth District Court of the Appeals basically recalled the registration of some dicamba products.

That caused the Environmental Protection Agency to withdraw the labels. But EPA also ruled that any dicamba products on the farm could continue to be used on this crop. However, none can be sold to replenish that product.

For those in the crop business, this is a big blow. What will come next? Who knows. Stay tuned.

WISDOM

I haven't shared much on quotes in the last little bit. I've got some on planting from March that were good, some on taxes in April that are good or not so good, and some from May on weather. All of these are good and many are debatable.

Here are some from Cornerstones in the June Progressive Farmer. These are on opinions. They'll make you think, and then form an opinion on what was said. Here are some of my favorites.

Alfred Austin said "Public opinion is no more than this: what people think that other people think." John Calvin said "Inquire not what are the opinions of any one; but inquire what is truth." Plato said "Opinion is the medium between knowledge and ignorance."

Marie Corelli said "An opinion which excites no opposition at all is not worth having!" (In this day and time, this is something to consider.) Steve Jobs said "Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice." Samuel Goldwyn said "Don't let your opinion sway your judgement."

Ralph Waldo Emerson said "People don't seem to realize that their opinion of the world is also a confession of character." Terence said "There are as many opinions as there are people." Elisabeth Kubler-Ross said "The opinion which other people have of you is their problem not yours."

My favorite is "You are not entitled to your opinion. You are entitled to your informed opinion. No one is entitled to be ignorant."

Think about it.