



The

Delmarva Farmer

50¢

May 7, 2013
Volume No. 38, No. 10

The agribusiness newspaper serving Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and the Mid-Atlantic region

Established 1976 • www.americanfarm.com

"When cultivation begins, culture follows. Therefore, the farmer is the founder of civilization." —Daniel Webster, 1840

In this issue

• Backyard chicken flocks are becoming more common as municipalities are modifying their zoning laws. See the article in *New Directions*.

• Chief Federal District Court Judge John Preston Bailey will launch a series of hearings on June 1 in the case brought by a poultry grower against the EPA, Page 8.

• The University of Maryland beat out 21 other colleges and universities from around the country to take home the top prize in the National Collegiate Soil Judging Contest last month in Wisconsin, Page 10.

• The number of federally-protected black vultures in Virginia has grown over the past 30 years, and the birds have become a nuisance for many farmers, preying on live calves, lambs, piglets and other vulnerable animals, Page 16.

Scientist wants to know origin of Bay's phosphorous

By BRUCE HOTCHKISS
Senior Editor

NEWARK, Del. — A University of Delaware research scientist argues that an efficient nutrient management plan for the Chesapeake Bay cannot be crafted until the origins of the invading nutrients, particularly phosphorous, are known.

Take phosphorous (P), says Dr. Deb Jaisi, an associate professor of environmental biogeochemistry at the university's

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences.

Did it come from runoff of manure or fertilizers? Or did it originate in wastewater, or geological processes such as soil or rock dissolution? Or how about driven into the Bay from the ocean?

Dr. Jaisi noted that the EPA recently finalized stringent rules on total maximum daily load in the Chesapeake Bay with rigor-

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Big corn yield results are all from details at Rigdon Farms

By SEAN CLOUGHERTY
Managing Editor

JARRETTSVILLE, Md. — Growing a good corn crop, like any aspect of farming, depends on many things out of a farmer's hands.

For John Rigdon, who farms about 2,000 acres of grain with son Harrison in Harford County and the Upper Eastern Shore, focusing on what they have power over puts them in the best position come harvest time.

The father-and-son team has done well over the years in the National Corn Growers Association's Corn Yield Contest.

One or both have been state winners the last three years, including a

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John Rigdon, left, and son Harrison farm about 2,000 acres in three counties. Although they cover a lot of ground each year, they say paying attention to small details helps them get the best crop they can.

Photo by Sean Clougherty

Shockley sticks out for forest conservation efforts

By MICHEL ELBEN
Staff Reporter

FRANKFORD, Del. — Many years ago, Bessie Shockley held 100 tree seedlings in her arms.

At the time, she said she didn't realize that they started out that small.

Her son, Stephen, said his mother just wanted to plant the trees on her property to make sure "the dirt didn't blow away."

Since then, Shockley has worked closely with the forestry department for 25 years to maintain her 49-acre loblolly pine forest.

This year, Shockley was Delaware Forestry Association's Tree Farmer of the Year.



Bessie Shockley has worked closely with the forestry department for 25 years to maintain her 49-acre loblolly pine forest. Shockley is Delaware Forestry Association's Tree Farmer of the Year.

Photo by Michel Elben

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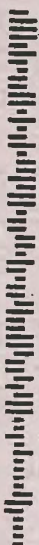
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New Jersey peach growers optimistic, plant new trees

GLASSBORO, N.J. — Since first planted in the 1600s, peach trees have thrived in New Jersey's ideal soil and climate, yielding extraordinary fruit to the benefit of both growers and consumers.

According to Santo John Maccherone, chairman of the New Jersey Peach Promotion Council, he and other grower-directors of the council have seen a renaissance in the peach industry with increased planting of peach trees.

"Planting more trees is a healthy sign for the New Jersey peach industry," said Maccherone, who has increased his own plantings of yellow- and white-fleshed peaches and nectarines on his Circle M Farms in Salem.

This spring has seen large new plantings, especially in Gloucester, Salem, and Cumberland Counties. Among those growers planting new trees are Holtzhauser Farms and Heilig Orchards in Mullica Hill, Gloucester County, a large planting in Cumberland County, Melick's Town Farm in Oldwick,

Hunterdon County; Donaldson Farms in Hackettstown, Warren County; and Terhune Orchards in Princeton, Mercer County.

"With a trend toward increased prices, there will be a corresponding increase in tree planting," said Maccherone.

According to data collected by the New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service, the 2012 season average price was 66-cents per pound, 5 cents per pound higher than the previous year.

Jerry Frecon, Rutgers professor emeritus and a former agricultural agent specializing in fruit, said, "We see some definite positive changes in our peach industry, as acreage has recently increased to meet the demand for tree-ripened locally grown Jersey fresh peaches."

Frecon said many new plantings are designed to extend the season by a couple weeks both early and late, from late June through the end of September.

"Over the past 20 years we have seen an increase

in the types and varieties of peaches we can plant because of global warming. We just don't have the cold winters we used to, which enables growers to worry less about buds freezing and allows for growing some high-quality bud-tender varieties. We can grow novel varieties, low acid peaches and white and yellow-fleshed nectarines."

According to USDA statistics, the growing season thus far has been behaving well for peaches, unlike the 2012 season, when high temperatures in February forced an early bloom in April. High winds and rain storms also hit a few orchards, reducing the crop.

The early season bloom and subsequent warm weather produced peaches earlier than usual and the season finished early as well.

Nonetheless, the 2012 season produced some of the best and sweetest peaches in several years.

Overall, 2012 production totaled 30,000 tons; value of utilized production was \$39.6 million.

Rigdon ...

Continued from Page 12

Once the planter starts rolling, seed spacing and depth are crucial things they watch.

"We want to make sure all of our corn is planted evenly and at the same depth," Rigdon said.

That means checking the planter for adjustments in each field, checking seed depth and spacing periodically and keeping tractor speed under

4 miles per hour while planting.

Poor spacing and depth can translate into uneven emergence and John said any seed that doesn't come up within 72 hours of the field's average won't have an ear worth picking.

"In other words, any seed that comes up 72 hours after the average is just a weed," he said.

Waiting for the best soil conditions to plant plays into getting a good stand "We could have started earlier this year but we waited for the ground to warm up," John said.

A few "add-ons" to the planter like

seed firmers to improve seed to soil contact and turbo coulters in front of each row unit help, too.

Though their planting habits run "pretty similar" from year to year, John said they're always considering new things to try or changes to make.

With corn gaining a lot of value in recent years, new products for many aspects of growing corn have hit the market and deciding what to use can be tricky.

"Basically corn's gotten expensive and there's a million different things out there," John said. "Some of them

work and some of them are basically snake oil."

He said a big help in making decisions and improving their practices is participating in the yield contest and talking with some other farmers who enter.

"They'll tell you what works and what doesn't work," John said. "They'll definitely tell you what doesn't work."

John said they've been submitting entries for close to 15 years but, "I bet we entered six or seven times before we ever placed."

Shockley ...

Continued from Front Page

"She's a good steward of the property and she's on top of things," said Brian McDonald, service forester, Sussex County. "It's important for her to be recognized when so many are developing their forestland into waterfront property."

Shockley said her husband, Calvin, bought the farm in 1953 and "paid cash. He bought a car at the same time. The car cost more than the whole farm."

He worked on oil tankers and she was a nurse. The farm was cultivated in soybeans and corn for more than three decades, she said.

Shockley lives on the shoreline of Assawoman Bay, where the soil is very erodible.

"When it was tilled up, the dirt would blow right across your car," she said. "The soil was running away."

Shockley said she went to a wreath making class and while talking to a man in class, he advised her to plant trees on the acreage.

When she talked to the forestry department, they recommended that she plant loblolly pine because of the sandy soil.

The department had someone come in and plant them in 1988, she said.

"Without the support of the forestry department I couldn't have made it. Just a call and I get the help I need," she said.

During the first year of growth,

loblolly pine sawflies infested the trees.

She and Stephen remember the trees were 10 to 12 feet tall and covered with green worms, the sawfly larvae.

They were so covered that they looked like part of the tree, Stephen said. Sawfly larvae eat the needles off the trees and will restrict the trees' growth.

Stephen sprayed every tree and most of the trees survived, Shockley said.

Stephen said the trees were thinned out in the last couple of years.

"They were looking for double trunks," said Stephen. "Those were the ones that had been compromised by the bugs."

Amid heavy development pressure in the coastal county, Shockley said she is proud to be part of such a large conservation effort.

The farm is adjacent to a property formerly owned by Shockley's husband's grandparents. During the Depression, 25,000 acres were sold to Sussex County and preserved for the Assawoman Wildlife Area.

"It's nice that it's never going to be developed," said Shockley. "They have Camp Barnes and the kids can go kayaking and canoeing all along the shoreline."

She isn't one for kayaking, she does spend time volunteering at the Samaritan Thrift Shop, where monies are donated to the Food Bank.

She is also a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and participates in Relay for Life, One Life at a Time.

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