

# 2016 FLUE-CURED TOBACCO INFORMATION



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# 2016 FLUE-CURED TOBACCO Information

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**CONTENTS**

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Extension Personnel Working with Tobacco .....4

1. U.S. Tobacco Situation and Outlook .....7

2. Complying with North Carolina Farm Labor Regulations.....17

3. Selecting a Variety.....24

4. Producing Healthy Transplants in a Float System.....47

5. Managing Nutrients.....61

6. Managing Weeds.....77

7. Topping, Managing Suckers, and Using Ethephon .....96

8. Managing Diseases .....118

9. Tobacco Insect Management .....146

10. Curing and Mechanization .....165

11. Protecting People and the Environment When Using Pesticides.....190

Fred G. Bond Scholarships.....203

## EXTENSION PERSONNEL WORKING WITH TOBACCO

Tobacco growers in North Carolina are fortunate to have an Extension agent with tobacco responsibilities in each tobacco-producing county. These agents are supported by research and extension faculty in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University. The following are the county Cooperative Extension Service personnel with tobacco responsibilities as of December 5, 2015.

COUNTY	NAME	TELEPHONE
Alamance	Dwayne Dabbs	336-570-6740
Alexander	Allison Brown	828-632-4451
Anson	Jessica Morgan	828-694-2915
Beaufort	Rod Gurganus	252-946-0111
Bertie	Jarette Hurry	252-794-5317
Bladen	Sandra Cain	910-862-4591
Brunswick	Mark Blevins	910-253-2610
Caldwell	Seth Nagy	828-757-1290
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Caswell	Joey Knight	336-694-4158
Chatham	Sam Groce	919-542-8202
Chowan	Matt Leary	252-482-6585
Columbus	Michael Shaw	910-640-6605
Craven	Mike Carroll	252-633-1477
Cumberland	Tyler Adams	910-321-6875
Davidson	Troy Coggins	336-242-2081
Davie	James Boggs	336-751-6297
Duplin	Amanda Hatcher	910-296-2143
Durham	Delphine Sellars	919-560-0526
Edgecombe	Art Bradley	252-641-7815
Forsyth	Tim Hambrick	336-703-2850
Franklin	Charles Mitchell	919-496-3344
Gates	Paul Smith	252-357-1400
Granville	Gary Cross	919-603-1350
Greene	Roy Thagard	252-747-5831
Guilford	John Ivey	336-375-5876
Halifax	Arthur Whitehead	252-583-5161
Harnett	Brian Parrish	910-893-7530

Hertford	Mitch Smith	252-358-7822
Hoke	Howard Wallace	910-875-3461
Iredell	Teresa Herman	704-878-3153
Johnston	Bryant Spivey	919-989-5380
Jones	Jacob Morgan	252-448-9621
Lee	Zack Taylor	919-775-5624
Lenoir	Jacob Morgan	252-527-2191
Martin	Lance Grimes	252-792-1621
Montgomery	Molly Alexi	910-576-6011
Moore	Kelly McCaskill	910-947-3188
Nash	Charlie Tyson	252-459-9810
Northampton	Craig Ellison	252-534-2711
Onslow	Melissa Huffman	910-455-5873
Orange	Carl Matyac	919-245-2050
Pamlico	Daniel Simpson	252-745-4121
Pender	Mark Seitz	910-259-1235
Person	Paul Westfall	336-599-1195
Pitt	Lance Grimes	252-902-1702
Randolph	Jonathan Black	336-318-6000
Richmond	Susan Kelly	910-997-8255
Robeson	Mac Malloy	910-671-3276
Rockingham	Will Strader	336-342-8230
Sampson	Della King	910-592-7161
Scotland	Randy Wood	910-277-2422
Stokes	Tim Hambrick	336-593-8179
Surry	Tim Hambrick	336-401-8025
Vance	Paul McKenzie	252-438-8188
Wake	Peter Austin	919-250-1096
Warren	Paul McKenzie	252-257-3640
Washington	Anna-Beth Stewart	252-793-2163
Wayne	Tyler Whaley	919-731-1520
Wilkes	John Cothren	336-651-7331
Wilson	Norman Harrell	252-237-0111
Yadkin	James Boggs	336-679-2061





# 1. U.S. TOBACCO SITUATION AND OUTLOOK

**Blake Brown**

*Extension Economist—North Carolina State University*

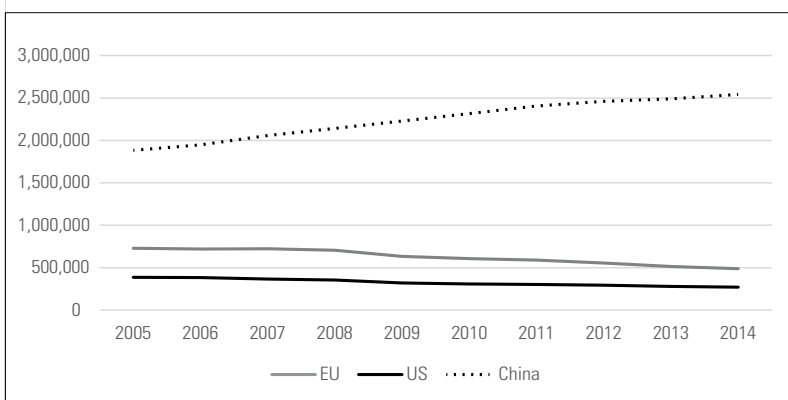
**Will Snell**

*Extension Economist—University of Kentucky*

## CIGARETTE MARKET

U.S. cigarette production for the first half of 2015 reversed trends from recent years with output up 2.2 percent. Domestic consumption for the January–July 2015 period was virtually flat. U.S. cigarette consumption totaled 270.2 billion sticks in 2014, down 3 percent from 279.5 billion in 2013. Similarly cigarette consumption in the European Union declined from 513.4 billion sticks in 2013 to 486.4 billion sticks in 2014. With continued implementation of regulations by FDA and under the EU Tobacco Products Directive, health concerns, and heavy taxation, cigarette consumption in developed countries like the EU and US is expected to continue its decline.

Despite the decline in sales quantity U.S., cigarette manufacturers have successfully increased product prices so that before-tax revenue has been maintained. Before-tax revenue of U.S. cigarette manufacturers is estimated at \$43.5 billion in 2015 with profit of \$11.9 billion. After-tax revenues from tobacco products have shown continued strength with federal, state, and municipal governments being the beneficiaries. According to the Tobacco Merchants Association (TMA), federal, state, and local excise and sales tax revenues totaled \$37.9 billion in 2014, or approximately 39 percent of the \$96.4 billion U.S. consumers spent on tobacco products last



**Figure 1-1. Cigarette consumption: US, EU, and PRC (million pieces)**

year. U.S. consumer expenditures on tobacco products peaked at \$100 billion in 2010, with U.S. tobacco tax revenues also now retreating from 2011 record highs of \$40.2 billion.

In China, now the largest customer for U.S. flue-cured tobacco, cigarette consumption continued increasing. Cigarette consumption in China was estimated at 2.543 trillion pieces for 2014. While cigarette consumption is still on an upward trend, the pace of growth is slowing and is expected to slow further. Significantly for U.S. tobacco producers, a growing share of Chinese can now afford to upgrade to higher quality cigarettes. Consequently sales in China of premium brand cigarettes are growing faster than overall consumption. This increases the demand for U.S. tobacco because Chinese cigarette manufacturers use more flavor style tobacco in premium brands.

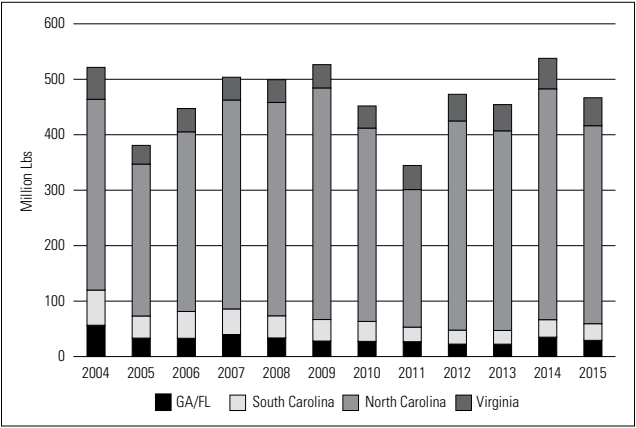
Sales of E-cigarettes and other tobacco vapor products again grew rapidly in 2015, although their share of the total tobacco products market is still small. The U.S. E-cigarette/vapor market is estimated to be around \$3.5 billion in 2015, compared to more than \$95 billion in consumer expenditures on traditional tobacco products. What sort of nicotine delivery devices will emerge as winners in this race to develop reduced risk products is impossible to say. Rechargeable E-cigarettes/vapor devices have surpassed disposable E-cigarettes in sales. Traditional cigarette manufacturers have invested in both e-cigarette/vapor devices and heat-not-burn technologies through development and acquisitions. None of these new technologies will require as much tobacco as traditional combustible cigarettes. But heat-not-burn technologies likely will require high quality flavor style tobacco, while production of nicotine solution for E-cigarette/vapor products requires little or no traditional tobacco.

## **FLUE-CURED PRODUCTION AND MARKET**

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After a large increase in U.S. flue-cured acres in 2014 to 245,300 acres, contracts for the 2015 season were cut severely with acreage shrinking to an estimated 218,300 acres. USDA's October 9 crop estimate for 2015 is 468.3 million pounds down from 572.9 million in 2014. While the exact total quantity of pounds contracted is unknown, production was reported to be at least 20 percent above contracted pounds. Because of the late season much tobacco was still in the field when widespread frost hit the Piedmont and Coastal Plain on October 18 and 19. This frost could reduce the size of the 2015 crop by another 5 to 10 percent. Price is down substantially from a season average of \$2.03 in 2014 and \$2.11 in 2013. Yield for 2015 was estimated at 2,145 pounds per acre, down from 2,335 in 2014.

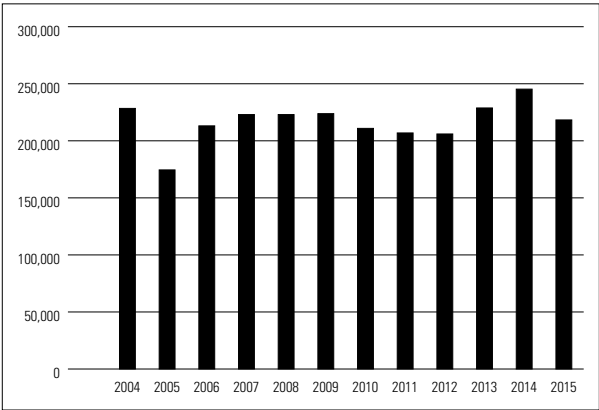
Large inventories and large changes in exchange rates seem to be the prime factors in the market downturn for U.S. flue-cured tobacco. First, large inventories accumulated in 2014 after larger production and unexpected lower demand in a number of markets. Second, the U.S. dollar strengthened against currencies like the euro. Simultaneously, the value of the currency of Brazil, the biggest competitor to U.S. flue-cured, fell. The rising dollar and falling Brazilian real mean that Brazilian products are much cheaper in the world market than U.S. products.



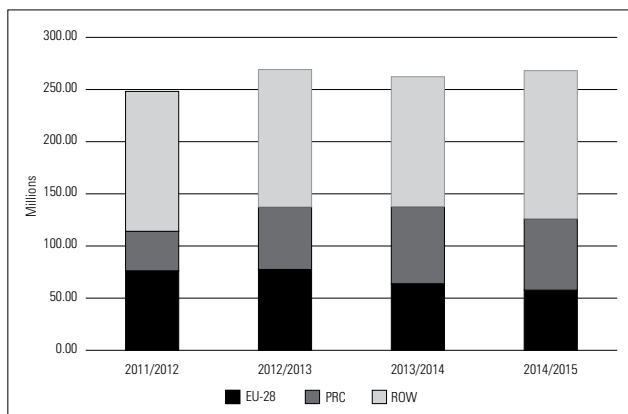
**Figure 1-2. U.S. Flue-cured tobacco production**

Flue-cured production in Brazil declined from 1.34 billion pounds in 2014 to 1.26 billion pounds for the 2015 marketing season. In Zimbabwe, another major U.S. competitor, production declined from 477 million pounds in 2014 to 438 million pounds in 2015. Zimbabwean flue-cured prices, which are published by the Zimbabwe Tobacco Association, declined from an average of \$1.44 per pound to \$1.34 per pound for the 2015 crop. Prices are not available for Brazilian tobacco. Smaller 2015 crops will help reduce large inventories. However any recovery in production in 2016 likely will occur in other countries, like Brazil, mainly due to the strong dollar and devalued Brazilian real. The 2016 Brazilian and Zimbabwean crops have been planted. More will be known about the area planted toward the end of 2015.

Unmanufactured exports of U.S. flue-cured tobacco rose from 262 million pounds for the 2013 crop to 268 million pounds for the 2014 crop. Exports have been on an upward trend since the end of the tobacco program. Export destinations have changed over this time. Exports to the

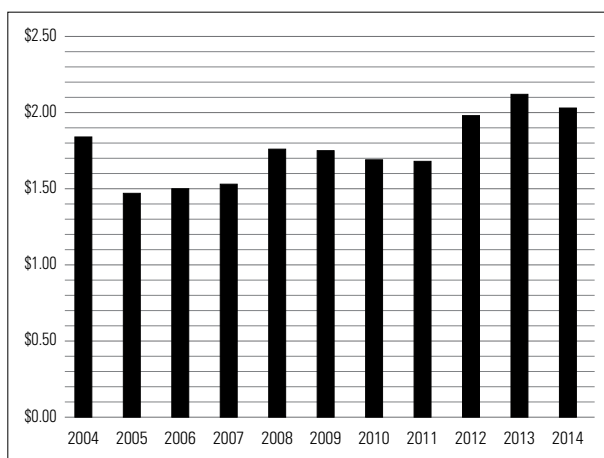


**Figure 1-3. U.S. Flue-cured tobacco: harvested acres**



**Figure 1-4. U.S. Flue-cured unmanufactured exports (farm sales weight)**

European Union are in decline, but this decline has been offset by increasing exports to China and other Asian customers. China imported almost no U.S. flue-cured at the end of the U.S. tobacco program in 2004. For the 2013 marketing year, exports to China exceeded exports to the EU-28.

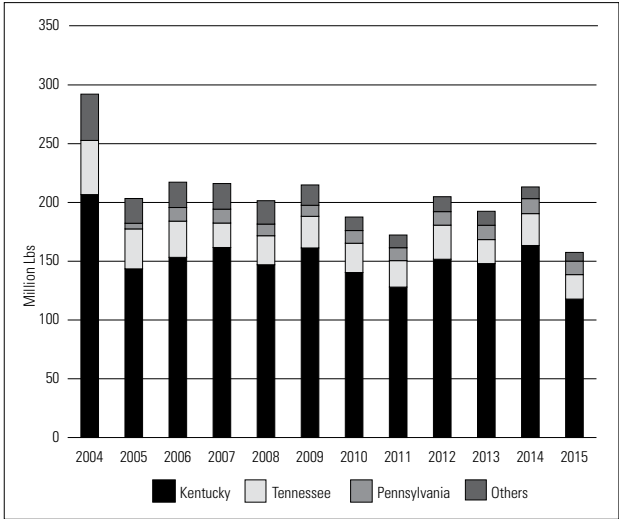


**Figure 1-5. U.S. Flue-cured tobacco average prices**

Ending stocks of U.S. flue-cured for the 2014 crop year climbed to 530 million pounds up from 334 million pounds for the previous year. With U.S. exports of unmanufactured flue-cured at 268 million pounds for the 2014 crop, domestic use declined from 117 million pounds for the 2013 crop to 75 million pounds for the 2014 crop. While domestic use of U.S. flue-cured is clearly in decline, domestic use has experienced large swings in recent years. Whether the fluctuations are some artifact of the data or adjustment in stocks is not clear.

# BURLEY PRODUCTION AND MARKET

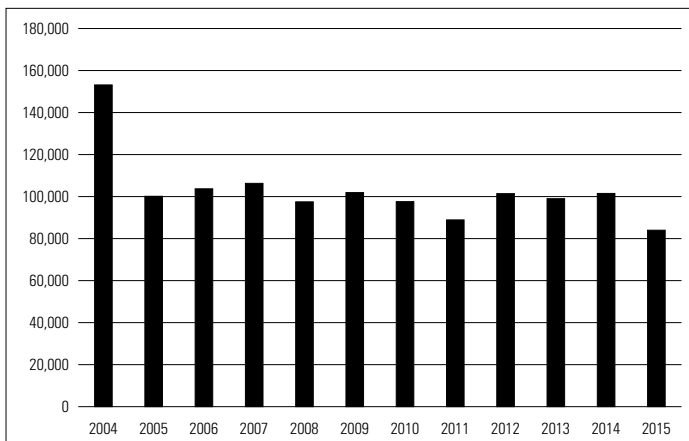
Like flue-cured, U.S. burley production is expected to be down considerably in 2015, following a remarkably stable pattern during the first ten years of the post-buyout era. Contract volume changes ranged from small increases for a few growers, to 100 percent reduction for other growers. Some companies extended contracts almost exclusively to their multi-year contract growers, resulting in the elimination or sharp reduction in contract volume for single year contract growers while others did offer “across the board” cuts to all contract growers.



**Figure 1-6. U.S. burley tobacco production**

Contracts for the 2015 U.S. burley growing season were reduced for a variety of reasons. Following an extended period of relatively tight supplies of flavor burley in the international market, a global surplus of burley rapidly materialized over the past two years, with world burley production increasing by more than 30 percent from 2012-2014. Ample supplies combined with a strengthening dollar and declining volume of American-blended cigarette output in many traditional markets caused U.S. burley exports to decline by more than 20 percent during the 2013-2014 marketing year. However, U.S. burley exports have actually stabilized in recent months indicating an improved supply/demand balance amidst a strengthening U.S. dollar.

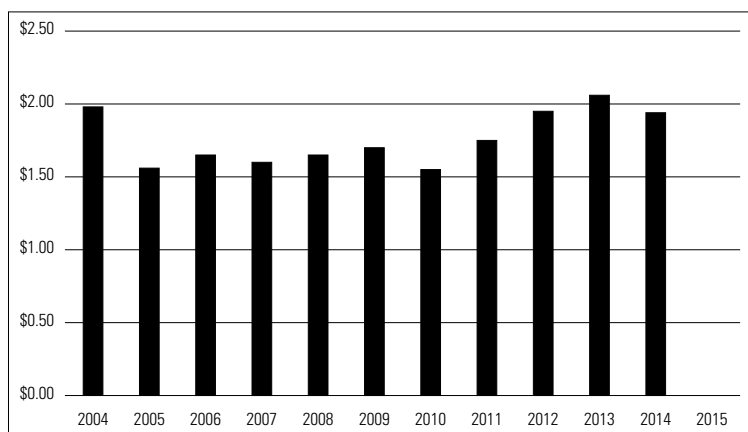
According to the October USDA crop report, U.S. burley production is expected to total 152 million pounds (-29 percent) in 2015, compared to crops totaling in the neighborhood of 200 million pounds since 2004. Beltwide acres are down 20 percent, according to the USDA survey, while the average U.S. burley yield is off 11 percent. A much smaller crop may be more in line with anticipated U.S. burley needs in the current demand environment where total disappearance (exports plus domestic use) fell to 160 million pounds during the 2013-2014 marketing year.



**Figure 1-7. U.S. burley tobacco: harvested acres**

U.S. burley prices averaged \$1.94/lb in 2014, following a post-buyout record high price of \$2.06 in 2013. Prices for the 2015 burley crop will hinge critically on the eventual size and quality of the 2015 crop. Relatively small downward contract price adjustments for a few grades suggest that 2015 burley prices could average in the low to mid 190s for the 2015 marketing season. An anticipated lower crop size relative to current USDA estimates could maintain prices similar to 2014, but a crop in the 150-160 million pound range coupled with some quality concerns could lead to lower grower prices for the upcoming marketing season.

Looking forward to 2016, it appears burley is in a much better global supply/demand balance compared to last year. Following a 17 percent drop in world burley production in 2015, Universal Leaf is currently projecting stable global burley leaf output for 2016.



**Figure 1-8. U.S. burley average prices**

## TRADE AND LABOR ISSUES

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In addition to changes in product demand and changes in exchange rate, U.S. tobacco growers are closely monitoring trade and labor policy developments. The U.S. just finished negotiations with eleven other countries (Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam) on the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement, which could have implications for future U.S. tobacco trade. Tariffs on unmanufactured exports of tobacco from the U.S. to some nations will be lowered as will tariffs on many agricultural exports from the U.S. to the TPP nations. Lower tariffs will potentially increase unmanufactured exports of US tobacco. Under the agreement, corporations may sue countries who do not follow the agreement. Notably the agreement denies tobacco manufacturers this ability to sue nations in the agreement that the tobacco industry deems to have violated terms of the agreement with regard to policy on manufactured tobacco products. This “carve out” only applies to tobacco product manufacturers, not unmanufactured exports of tobacco. The TPP is set for fast track approval by Congress, but it still will not be considered until 2016 or later. Currently around 8 to 10 percent of U.S. burley and flue production combined enters into TPP markets in either direct U.S. leaf exports or in U.S. cigarette exports which doesn’t account for the amount of U.S. leaf that is shipped into TPP markets in product form from other countries. While the net impact to the U.S. grower of manufactured tobacco products being carved out of the TPP is uncertain, other concerns arise, such as how tobacco will be treated in future trade policy negotiations as well as setting a precedent for carving out other U.S. products in future trade agreements.

The other major concern facing tobacco producers is immigration reform. While there has been a lot of political debate on this controversial issue over the past several years, the U.S. Congress has not moved forward legislation to address producer concerns over the availability, cost, and administrative requirements associated with an immigrant labor force that is critical to the future of U.S. tobacco production. Even so, this issue will likely continue to receive much attention by all three branches of government in the coming year.

**Table 1-1. Flue-cured tobacco—machine harvest—eastern North Carolina:  
2016 estimated costs per acre**

	Unit	Quantity	Price or Cost/Unit	Total Per Acre	Your Farm
<b>1. GROSS RECEIPTS</b>					
Stalk position		Yield	Price/lb		
Lugs	lb	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Cutter	lb	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Leaf	lb	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Tips	lb	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
<i>Total receipts:</i>				\$0.00	
<b>2. VARIABLE COSTS</b>					
Plants (greenhouse)	thou	6.00	\$32.25	\$193.50	
Multipurpose fumigation	gal	10.50	\$17.13	\$179.87	
Fertilizer					
8-8-24	cwt	5.00	\$29.00	\$145.00	
24s liquid	cwt	1.25	\$76.53	\$95.66	
Lime (prorated)	ton	0.33	\$47.50	\$15.68	
Pest Control	acre	1.00	\$259.44	\$259.44	
Sucker Control	acre	1.00	\$206.80	\$206.80	
Scouting	acre	1.00	\$8.00	\$8.00	
Hauling	lb	2500.00	\$0.05	\$125.00	
Cover crop	acre	1.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	
Curing fuel	gal	325.00	\$0.95	\$308.75	
Electricity	kwh	1580.00	\$0.08	\$126.40	
Crop insurance	acre	1.00	\$120.00	\$120.00	
Baling supplies	lbs	2500.00	\$0.003	\$7.50	
Tractor/Machinery	acre	1.00	\$228.71	\$228.71	
Labor					
Pre-harvest	hrs	46.25	\$10.23	\$473.14	
Harvest/Baling	hrs	23.54	\$10.23	\$240.81	
Postharvest	hrs	9.00	\$10.23	\$92.07	
Interest on op. cap.	\$	\$1,069.34	5.3%	\$56.14	
<i>Total variable costs:</i>				\$2,907.47	
<b>3. INCOME ABOVE VARIABLE COSTS</b>					
<b>4. FIXED COSTS</b>					
Tractor/Machinery	acre	1.00	\$335.06	\$335.06	
Bulk barn	acre	1.00	\$132.58	\$132.58	
Tobacco box loading sys.	acre	1.00	\$38.75	\$38.75	
Bailer	acre	1.00	\$7.50	\$7.50	
Total fixed costs:				\$513.89	
<b>5. TOTAL COSTS</b>				\$3,421.36	
<b>6. NET RETURNS TO LAND, RISK, AND MANAGEMENT</b>					

\* Note: This budget is for planning purposes only and does not include land rent or overhead cost

\* Crop insurance: 65% based premium. No disaster subsidies.

Prepared by: Gary Bullen, Derek Washburn – NCSU Agricultural and Resource Economics Department and  
Matthew Vann – NCSU Tobacco Extension Specialist



**Table 1-2. Flue-cured tobacco—machine harvest—piedmont North Carolina: 2016  
estimated costs per acre**

	Unit	Quantity	Price or Cost/ Unit	Total Per Acre	Your Farm
<b>1. GROSS RECEIPTS</b>					
Stalk position		Yield	Price/lb		
Lugs	lb	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Cutter	lb	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Leaf	lb	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Tips	lb	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
<i>Total receipts:</i>				\$0.00	
<b>2. VARIABLE COSTS</b>					
Plants (greenhouse)	thou	6.00	\$32.25	\$193.50	
Multipurpose fumigation	gal	10.50	\$17.13	\$179.87	
Fertilizer					
6-6-18	cwt	5.80	\$29.00	\$168.20	
15.5-0-0	cwt	5.60	\$28.00	\$156.80	
Lime (prorated)	ton	0.33	\$47.50	\$15.68	
Pest Control	acre	1.00	\$259.44	\$259.44	
Sucker Control	acre	1.00	\$206.80	\$206.80	
Scouting	acre	1.00	\$8.00	\$8.00	
Hauling	lb	2500.00	\$0.05	\$125.00	
Cover crop	acre	1.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	
Curing fuel	gal	325.00	\$0.95	\$308.75	
Electricity	kwh	1580.00	\$0.08	\$126.40	
Crop insurance	acre	1.00	\$120.00	\$120.00	
Irrigation	cycle	3.00	\$13.94	\$41.82	
Baling supplies	lbs	2500.00	\$0.003	\$7.50	
Tractor/Machinery	acre	1.00	\$228.71	\$228.71	
Labor					
Pre-harvest	hrs	46.25	\$10.23	\$473.14	
Harvest/Baling	hrs	23.54	\$10.23	\$240.81	
Postharvest	hrs	9.00	\$10.23	\$92.07	
Interest on op. capital	\$	\$1,111.51	5.3%	\$58.35	
<i>Total variable costs:</i>				\$3,035.84	
<b>3. INCOME ABOVE VARIABLE COSTS</b>					
<b>4. FIXED COSTS</b>					
Tractor/Machinery	acre	1.00	\$335.06	\$335.06	
Bulk barn	acre	1.00	\$132.58	\$132.58	
Bailer	acre	1.00	\$7.50	\$7.50	
Tobacco box loading system	acre	1.00	\$38.75	\$38.75	
Irrigation	acre	1.00	\$63.50	\$63.50	
<i>Total fixed costs:</i>				\$577.39	
<b>5. TOTAL COSTS</b>				\$3,613.23	
<b>6. NET RETURNS TO LAND, RISK, AND MANAGEMENT</b>					

\* Note: This budget is for planning purposes only and does not include land rent or overhead cost

\* Crop insurance: 65% based premium. No disaster subsidies.

Prepared by: Gary Bullen, Derek Washburn – NCSU Agricultural and Resource Economics Department and  
Matthew Vann – NCSU Tobacco Extension Specialist

**Table 1-3. Flue-cured tobacco—hand harvest—piedmont North Carolina:  
2016 estimated costs per acre**

	Unit	Quantity	Price or Cost/ Unit	Total Per Acre	Your Farm
<b>1. GROSS RECEIPTS</b>					
Stalk position		Yield	Price/lb		
Lugs	lb	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Cutter	lb	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Leaf	lb	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Tips	lb	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
<i>Total receipts:</i>				\$0.00	
<b>2. VARIABLE COSTS</b>					
Plants (greenhouse)	thou	6.00	\$32.25	\$193.50	
Multipurpose fumigation	gal	10.50	\$17.13	\$179.87	
Fertilizer					
6-6-18	cwt	5.8	\$29.00	\$168.20	
15.5-0-0	cwt	5.6	\$28.00	\$156.80	
Lime (prorated)	ton	0.33	\$47.50	\$15.68	
Pest Control	acre	1.00	\$259.44	\$259.44	
Sucker Control	acre	1.00	\$206.80	\$206.80	
Scouting	acre	1.00	\$8.00	\$8.00	
Hauling	lbs	2500.00	\$0.05	\$125.00	
Cover crop	acre	1.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	
Curing fuel	gal	325.00	\$0.95	\$308.75	
Electricity	kwh	1580.00	\$0.08	\$126.40	
Crop insurance	acre	1.00	\$120.00	\$120.00	
Irrigation	cycle	3.00	\$13.94	\$41.82	
Baling supplies	lbs	2500.00	\$0.003	\$7.50	
Tractor/machinery	acre	1.00	\$140.37	\$140.37	
Labor					
Pre-harvest	hrs	46.25	\$10.23	\$473.14	
Harvest/Baling	hrs	59.60	\$10.23	\$609.71	
Postharvest	hrs	9.00	\$10.23	\$92.07	
Interest on op. capital	\$	\$1240.69	5.3%	\$65.14	
<i>Total variable costs:</i>				\$3,300.99	
<b>3. INCOME ABOVE VARIABLE COSTS</b>					
<b>4. FIXED COSTS</b>					
Tractor/Machinery	acre	1.00	\$165.81	\$165.81	
Bulk barn	acre	1.00	\$132.58	\$132.58	
Bailer	acre	1.00	\$7.50	\$7.50	
Tobacco box loading system	acre	1.00	\$38.75	\$38.75	
Irrigation	acre	1.00	\$63.50	\$63.50	
<i>Total fixed costs:</i>				\$408.14	
<b>5. TOTAL COSTS</b>				\$3,709.13	
<b>6. NET RETURNS TO LAND, RISK, AND MANAGEMENT</b>					

\* Note: This budget is for planning purposes only and does not include land rent or overhead cost

\* Crop insurance: 65% based premium. No disaster subsidies.

Prepared by: Gary Bullen, Derek Washburn – NCSU Agricultural and Resource Economics Department and  
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## 2. COMPLYING WITH NORTH CAROLINA FARM LABOR REGULATIONS

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Tobacco growers who employ workers must comply with a set of ever-changing federal and state farm labor laws, including laws pertaining to migrant labor, tax withholding, minimum wage rates, and insurance. This summary provides only a general overview of the laws that affect farm workers. For detailed information about your legal requirements as an agricultural employer, contact the appropriate agency.

### IMMIGRATION

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The Immigration Reform Control Act of 1986 requires employers to hire only U.S. citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States. Employers must complete the I-9 form for every employee hired after 1986. The I-9 must be completed within the first three days of employment or on the first day of employment if the length of employment is less than three days. Employers must keep the I-9 either for three years or for one year after the end of employment, whichever is longer. The I-9 form is designed to verify an individual's identity and eligibility to work in the United States. An employer must accept documents that are listed on the I-9 as verification. An employer is not allowed to request additional documentation or to refuse documents that appear authentic. Employers may not refuse to hire a worker whose employment authorization expires at a later date. For forms and additional information about this requirement, contact United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Charlotte Suboffice, 6130 Tyvola Centre Drive, Charlotte, NC 28217; [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

E-Verify became mandatory on July 1, 2013, for businesses that have more than 25 employees. NC House Bill 786 was made law September 9, 2013. HB786 states that employers who hire temporary seasonal workers for fewer than nine months within a consecutive 12-month period are not required to use E-Verify. E-Verify is a free Internet-based system for matching an employee's Social Security number with other I-9 information. In most cases, employers who submit an employee's information to E-Verify will receive one of two types of feedback from the system: either the information is verified, or the system returns a tentative nonconfirmation (TNC). If an employer receives a TNC for an employee, the employer should follow the directions that E-Verify provides. E-Verify is not a replacement for the I-9 form and should not be used until after an employee has completed the I-9 form. Many rules, regulations, and requirements apply to E-Verify, and employers must understand them. For more information on North Carolina regulations, go to [http://www.nclabor.com/legal/e\\_verify/e\\_verify.htm](http://www.nclabor.com/legal/e_verify/e_verify.htm). You may also go to [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)

and select “E-Verify” in the far left-hand column. Be sure to read all information on the E-Verify site, particularly the E-Verify Quick Reference Guide and E-Verify User Manual for Employers under “Manuals and Guides” and information on employees’ rights under “For Employees.”

## **EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION**

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Employers who employ 15 or more workers must consider all qualified applicants for employment. All employees, including part-time and temporary workers, are counted for this purpose. Employment includes, but is not limited to, the employment application, hiring, promotion, pay, and termination. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prevents employment discrimination against individuals because of their membership in a protected class. Protected classes are currently defined as race, color, religion, sex, age (40 and older), disability, and national origin. For details, contact the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov).

## **TAXES**

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### ***Social Security and Medicare Taxes***

Agricultural employers must withhold and pay Social Security taxes on wages paid to their employees if they employ one or more agricultural workers (including parents, children age 18 or older, and spouses) and they meet either of these two requirements:

- They paid the employee at least \$150 in cash wages in the year.
- They paid a total of at least \$2,500 in cash wages to all employees in the year.

The 2015 Social Security rate was 6.2% for both the employee and employer portions. The maximum annual wage on which Social Security taxes must be paid will be \$118,500 in 2015. Medicare tax remains at 1.45% for both employee and employer, with no wage limit. Self-employed producers must pay both portions of the Social Security and Medicare taxes.

Agricultural employers are exempt from withholding and paying Social Security taxes on wages paid to work-authorized aliens under the H2A program. For more information, contact the United States Social Security Administration or visit the agency’s website: [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

### ***Income Taxes***

Agricultural producers must withhold federal and state income taxes from agricultural wages if the wages are subject to Social Security tax withholdings. Each employee should complete both form W-4 (Employee’s Federal Withholding Allowance Certificate) and form NC-4 (North Carolina Employee’s Withholding Allowance Certificate). The employer should keep copies of both documents. Income taxes on H2A workers are handled differently. Read current legislation to determine any withholding requirements.

## ***Unemployment Taxes***

Employers must pay federal and state unemployment tax if they paid cash wages of \$20,000 or more for agricultural labor during any calendar quarter in the current or preceding year or if they employed at least 10 persons in agricultural labor for some portion of the day in 20 different weeks during the preceding calendar year. H2A wages are considered for meeting the \$20,000 wage test. This tax may not be deducted from the employee's salary. Federal unemployment tax is paid only on the first \$7,000 of each employee's wages. The federal tax rate is 6.0%. A credit of up to 5.4% is usually granted, depending on the situation, making the effective tax rate 0.6%.

North Carolina unemployment tax is paid only on the first \$21,700 of each employee's wages in 2015. 2016 rates have not been published. The state tax rate is between 0% and 6.84%, depending on the credit or debt ratio. The new-business starting rate is 1.2%.

For detailed information about federal unemployment taxes, contact the Internal Revenue Service. The IRS has 10 local offices in North Carolina; to find the nearest one, visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or call (800) 829-4933. For information about state income taxes, contact the North Carolina Department of Revenue, 501 North Wilmington St., Raleigh, NC 27604; (877) 252-3052; [www.dor.state.nc.us](http://www.dor.state.nc.us).

You may also contact the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina, 700 Wade Ave., Raleigh, NC 27605; (919) 707-1170. The ESC has many regional offices. To find the nearest one, visit [www.ncesc.com](http://www.ncesc.com).

## **WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

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Any agricultural employer who regularly employs 10 or more full-time workers must purchase workers' compensation insurance from a private insurer to cover employees should they sustain an injury on the job or contract an occupational disease. Agricultural employers who employ H2A workers must have workers' compensation insurance regardless of the total number of employees. Specific information on workers' compensation is available from the North Carolina Industrial Commission, (919) 807-2500, (800) 688-8349, or [www.ic.nc.gov](http://www.ic.nc.gov).

## **MINIMUM WAGE**

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The federal minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour. Agricultural employers are exempt from paying the minimum wage if they employed fewer than five hundred man-days of agricultural labor in any quarter of the preceding year. A man-day is defined as any day in which one employee is employed for one hour or more. A farm will generally fall under the man-day provision if six or fewer full-time employees are hired.

Travel time to a job site is considered as hours worked, and the employee must be paid for those hours if his or her job would be affected in any adverse way by not using company transportation. For example, if one employee receives instructions during the trip, loads equipment on vehicles, or is required to use company transportation, the trip time must

be considered as hours worked for all employees using that transportation. For additional information, contact the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration, Wage and Hour Division, (866) 4-US-WAGE, or visit the division's web site: [www.dol.gov/WHd](http://www.dol.gov/WHd).

### ***Overtime***

The U.S. Department of Labor's new Fair Pay Overtime Initiative does not affect agricultural labor. Agricultural employers are still exempt from paying overtime (1.5 times the regular hourly wage rate for any hours worked in excess of 40 in one week). Christmas tree production is agriculture and is thus exempt. (See U.S. Department of Labor v. NC Growers Association appeal case.)

If an employee performs a mix of agricultural and nonagricultural work within the same week, such as working in the field and selling products at a roadside stand, then the entire week is considered nonexempt. For these nonexempt employees, overtime is calculated per work week, not per pay period. For example, assume that a nonexempt employee is paid every two weeks and works for 46 hours one week and 34 the next in the same pay period. In that scenario, the employer owes the employee 74 hours of standard pay and 6 hours of overtime. For more information, contact the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division at the phone number or web address noted above.

## **CHILD LABOR PROVISIONS**

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The minimum age for working in agriculture is 16 if the job is considered hazardous or is performed during school hours. Minors of age 14 or 15 may work in agriculture if the job is not during school hours and not hazardous. An exception is made for operating hazardous equipment if the minor has completed the 4-H training programs for tractor and machine operation through the Cooperative Extension Service of a land-grant university and received the appropriate certification. Minors of age 12 or 13 may be employed with their parents' written consent on a farm where their parents are also employed. Minors of any age may be employed at any time in any occupation on a farm owned and operated by their parents.

In North Carolina it is illegal to hire any youth younger than age 18 unless the youth and a parent or guardian have completed a youth employment certificate, a form provided by the North Carolina Department of Labor. The employer must keep a copy of the properly signed and witnessed certificate on file. This certificate serves as an official statement of the child's age and will serve as a defense against accusations of some child-labor violations. To receive a youth employment certificate or further information, contact the North Carolina Department of Labor at (800) NCLABOR, or visit the department's website: [www.nclabor.com](http://www.nclabor.com).

No child who is younger than age 12 may ride in an open bed or cargo area of a vehicle that is without permanent overhead restraining construction. Exceptions may be made under certain specific circumstances, such as when an adult is present in the bed or cargo area of the vehicle, and the adult is supervising the child. For detailed information about vehicle safety laws, contact the Governor's Highway Safety Program, North Carolina Department of Transportation, (800) 999-9676, or visit the program's website: [www.ncdot.org/programs/ghsp](http://www.ncdot.org/programs/ghsp).

## **JOINT EMPLOYMENT**

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The term joint employment denotes a situation in which an individual is considered an employee of two or more persons. Joint employment situations often arise with individuals employed by farm labor contractors and farm owners. If a joint employment relationship exists and a crew leader is unable to pay wages to workers or taxes to the government, then the farm owner could be liable. Joint employment is determined by the following factors:

- Nature and degree of control over workers
- Degree of supervision
- Power to determine pay rates
- Right to hire, fire, or modify employment conditions
- Preparation of payroll and payment of wages

## **VEHICLE INSURANCE**

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Agricultural employers, in general, are subject to the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA) if they employed five hundred man-days of labor during any calendar quarter. The MSPA requires \$100,000 worth of vehicle insurance for every seat in the vehicle. For example, a 15-passenger van must have \$1.5 million of insurance. The maximum requirement, including buses, is \$5 million per vehicle. For additional information about vehicle insurance, contact the U.S. Department of Labor, (866) 4-USA-DOL, or visit the department's MSPA compliance site: [www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-msawpa.htm](http://www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-msawpa.htm).

## **FARM LABOR CONTRACTORS**

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A farm labor contractor (FLC) is a person who recruits, solicits, hires, employs, furnishes, transports, or houses agricultural labor. Commonly known as a crew leader, such a contractor works mostly with migrant or seasonal workers. FLCs must have a federal license to operate in NC. A farm labor contractor must obtain the appropriate authorization certificates to house and transport laborers and drive transportation. An employer must be on the preauthorization H-2A application to use H2A workers provided by a crew leader (H2ALC workers). Under joint employment laws, if a farm labor contractor performs a function he or she is not certified in, the farm owner could be held liable. The appropriate certificates of authorization may be obtained by the farm labor contractor from the Wage and Hour Bureau of the North Carolina Department of Labor, (800) NC-LABOR or [www.nclabor.com/wh/wh.htm](http://www.nclabor.com/wh/wh.htm). Authorization certificates may also be obtained from any office of the North Carolina Employment Securities Commission. To find an office in your area, call (919) 733-4329 or visit [www.ncesc.com](http://www.ncesc.com).

## **MIGRANT HOUSING**

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If an agricultural producer provides housing to one or more migrant or seasonal workers, the workers are covered under the Migrant Housing Act. The producer must register the housing and notify the North Carolina Department of Labor 45 days before any workers arrive. The housing must meet certain standards, which can be obtained from the North Carolina Department of Labor's Bureau of Agricultural Safety and Migrant Housing. To register migrant housing, call (919) 807-2923 or obtain the registration form online, [www.nclabor.com/ash/ashform.htm](http://www.nclabor.com/ash/ashform.htm).

## **FIELD SANITATION**

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Agricultural employers who employ 11 or more workers on any given day or provide housing for one or more workers must provide the following:

- One field toilet per 20 workers or fraction thereof
- Hand-washing facilities
- Suitable cool, potable drinking water with individual cups

## **POSTER REQUIREMENT**

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Some North Carolina employers are required to place government posters in conspicuous places that explain employees' rights. If an employee is illiterate, then the poster information must be read to the employee in a manner they can comprehend. These posters are available free of charge from the website below. There is no need to buy these free posters from companies who are trying to sell them. Not all operations will be covered by the same statutes, so the requirements vary by individual business. Visit the following website to determine which poster you are required to display: <http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/osdbu/sbrefa/poster/matrix.htm>.

## **NEW HIRE REPORTING**

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North Carolina employers are required to report to state government the names, addresses, Social Security numbers, dates of birth, and dates of employment of all new employees. Employers are also required to report their names, addresses, and state employer identification numbers. This must be done within 20 days of a new hire's initial employment. An employer can complete a special form or make a copy of the new employee's W-4, plus the additional information, and send it to the New Hire Reporting Program, P.O. Box 900004, Raleigh, NC 27675-9004. An employer may also submit the information electronically at <http://newhire-reporting.com/NC-Newhire/default.aspx>. For more information, call (888) 514-4568.

The North Carolina Department of Labor administers the state's labor laws. For detailed information about wages and overtime, child labor laws, migrant labor, work conditions, and



other labor laws that affect agricultural workers, contact the department: (800) NCLABOR or [www.nclabor.com](http://www.nclabor.com).

## **NEW LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

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Additions to 2015 handbook beyond typical figure updates: Changes in labor law are being proposed at the time of this writing (October 2015). All producers are encouraged to stay informed about changes that may occur before this guide is published again.

# 3. SELECTING A VARIETY

**Loren R. Fisher**

*Crop Science Extension Specialist—Tobacco*

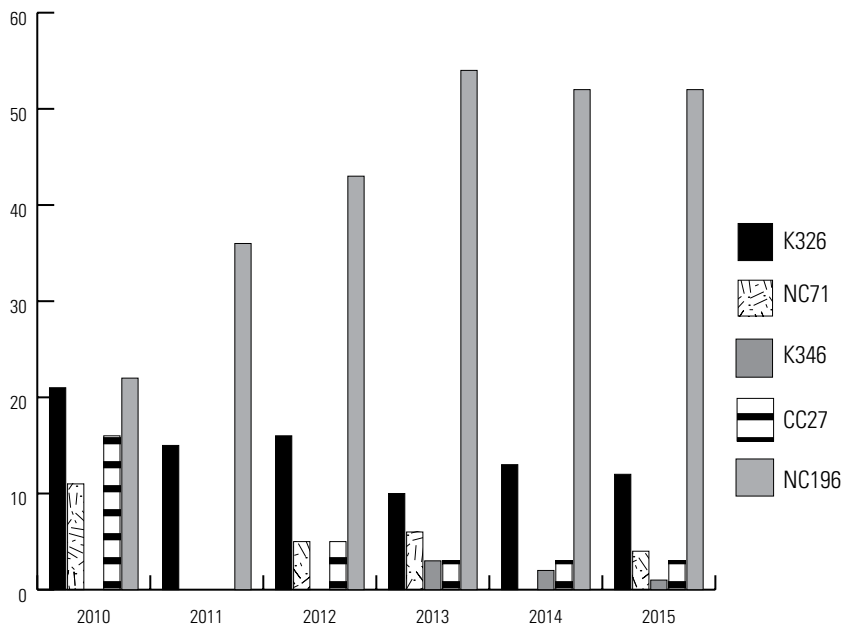
**Matthew C. Vann**

*Crop Science Extension Specialist—Tobacco*

**Kenneth Barnes**

*Crop Science Research Specialist*

According to a recent survey, NC 196 was the most popular variety of flue-cured tobacco planted in North Carolina during 2015. NC 196 was grown on 52 percent of the tobacco acres in the state. Other popular varieties were K 326 (12 percent); CC 143 and NC 71 (4 percent each); CC 27, NC 299 and GF 318 (3 percent each); and K 346, CC 33, CC 37, GL 395, PVH 1452 and PVH 2110 (1 percent each). Figure 3-1 shows the most popular varieties planted since 2010. To select the right variety for your fields, consider the information produced during variety testing at a research station in your area.



**Figure 3-1. County Extension agent estimates of plantings of several popular varieties, 2010 to 2015**

## VARIETY TESTING

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The variety testing program conducted through the Agricultural Research Service at North Carolina State University evaluates breeding lines through the Regional Minimum Standards Program and commercial varieties through the North Carolina Official Variety Test (OVT).

The Regional Minimum Standards Program is designed to ensure that varieties planted by growers are acceptable to the tobacco industry. Once a breeding line is genetically stable, it can be entered into the Regional Small Plot Test (RSPT) conducted cooperatively by university researchers in Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. Breeding lines that pass the minimum standards for chemical quality in the RSPT can be entered in the Regional Farm Test (RFT). In the RFT, researchers plant breeding lines at nine locations. Four of the RFT locations are in North Carolina. If a breeding line passes the RFT, which includes a smoke test, it is eligible for release as a commercial variety.

The OVT is designed to assist growers with variety selection, and it is conducted at these research stations:

Lower Coastal Plain Research Station—Kinston  
Upper Coastal Plain Research Station—Rocky Mount  
Oxford Tobacco Research Station—Oxford

Note that the OVT is conducted in fields with little, if any, soilborne disease, such as black shank and Granville wilt. Therefore, the yield and quality differences among varieties will differ depending on disease pressure. For example, K 326 is one of the highest-yielding varieties in the OVT, but its yield would be much lower in fields with high pressure from black shank and Granville wilt.

## VARIETY SELECTION

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The research findings reported in this guide can help you select the right variety for your fields.

Consider disease resistance first. Table 8-3 in chapter 8, “Managing Diseases,” provides a list of popular varieties and their ratings for resistance to black shank and Granville wilt, the two diseases that pose the most serious threats to flue-cured crops in North Carolina. (Table 8-3 also lists varieties’ resistance to tobacco mosaic virus.) Determine the level of disease resistance that you need based on field history, length of rotation, and crops grown in rotation with tobacco.

After you determine the necessary level of disease resistance, consider agronomic characteristics, such as yield, quality, and holding ability. Multiyear data, such as the three-year

average shown in Table 3-1 and the two-year average shown in Table 3-2, are better than single-year data. Averaging information across years removes much of the environmental effect and provides a stable picture of a variety’s performance over time. However, single-year data (Table 3-3) and individual location data (tables 3-4 and 3-5) are helpful when you wish to see data collected from a specific growing region and under certain climatic conditions.

Consider holding ability—the ability of a variety to hold its ripeness during the harvest period. Figures 3-2 through 3-7 in this chapter compare the value of the last priming for several popular varieties based on harvest schedule.

**Table 3-1. Performance of commercial varieties in the North Carolina Official Variety Test, three year average, 2013-2015**

Variety	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Price (\$/cwt)	Grade Index	Days to Flower	Leaves per Plant	Plant Height (in.)	Leaf Spacing (in.)	Sol. Sug. (%)	Total Alk. (%)	Ratio Sug. To Alk.
CC 1063	2784	4886	175.85	85	70	17.1	40	2.38	17.61	2.41	8.41
CC 13	2854	5101	178.53	86	70	17.5	40	2.32	18.24	2.25	9.39
CC 143	2958	4944	166.31	81	72	18.7	42	2.3	18.58	2.2	9.97
CC 27	2973	5136	172.28	83	71	17.5	40	2.29	18.58	2.26	9.24
CC 33	2877	5124	177.12	85	72	17.9	41	2.29	18.28	2.11	10.21
CC 35	3169	5120	160.94	78	73	18.1	45	2.49	19.59	2.25	10.46
CC 37	2856	4908	170.83	82	71	18.2	41	2.28	18.03	2.32	8.59
CC 67	2488	4274	171.89	83	70	17.4	41	2.35	16.5	2.47	7.61
CC 700	2738	4797	174.84	84	68	17.6	39	2.24	17.49	2.42	8.21
CU 144	2894	4884	167.37	81	69	18	42	2.35	18.88	2.25	9.52
GF 318	3039	5262	172.93	84	68	17.9	41	2.33	18.27	2.29	8.82
GI 395	2706	4667	171.91	83	69	17.8	41	2.32	17.15	2.56	7.57
K 326	2899	5098	175.71	84	71	17.2	39	2.29	18.48	2.29	9.33
K 346	2538	4463	175.13	84	70	17.4	40	2.32	17.24	2.38	9.01
NC 196	2932	5182	175.4	85	73	18	42	2.35	18.32	2.23	9.2
NC 297	2654	4489	167.85	81	70	17.5	40	2.29	18.57	2.46	8.7
NC 299	2950	5177	175.8	84	71	17.7	40	2.28	17.83	2.35	8.33
NC 471	2435	4350	178.65	85	70	18.2	42	2.35	17.52	2.57	8.1
NC 606	2564	4623	180.03	86	71	17.7	42	2.41	19.58	2.37	9.21
NC 925	2807	4572	161.3	79	71	17.5	40	2.3	17.63	2.34	9.13

**Table 3-1. (continued)**

Variety	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Price (\$/cwt)	Grade Index	Days to Flower	Leaves per Plant	Plant Height (in.)	Leaf Spacing (in.)	Sol. Sug. (%)	Total Alk. (%)	Ratio Sug. To Alk.
NC 938	3019	5218	173.33	84	69	17.2	41	2.41	18.43	2.05	10.91
PVH 1118	2894	5139	177.27	85	69	18	42	2.37	18.39	2.47	8.38
PVH 1452	2701	4692	173.34	83	69	18	41	2.28	17.13	2.52	7.95
PVH 2110	2979	5053	169.33	81	73	18.8	42	2.27	17.9	2.24	9.74
PVH 2254	3017	5294	175.6	84	72	18.6	43	2.32	19.03	2.09	11.27
PVH 2275	2684	4658	173.94	84	70	17.8	41	2.33	17.03	2.46	8.14
Test Average	2823	4889	172.83	83	70	17.8	41	2.33	18.09	2.33	9.05

**Table 3-2. Performance of commercial varieties in the North Carolina Official Variety Test, two year average, 2014-2015**

Variety	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Price (\$/cwt)	Grade Index	Days to Flower	Leaves per Plant	Plant Height (in.)	Leaf Spacing (in.)	Sol. Sug. (%)	Total Alk. (%)	Ratio Sug. To Alk.
CC 1063	2960	5424	183.36	88	72	17	41	2.43	17.77	2.56	7.62
CC 13	3008	5452	181.09	87	72	17.2	40	2.34	18.09	2.52	8.15
CC 143	3100	5638	181.01	86	75	18.7	43	2.34	18.68	2.36	8.94
CC 27	3152	5713	180.94	86	73	17.3	39	2.3	18.94	2.41	8.53
CC 33	3121	5746	183.84	87	75	17.6	40	2.32	18.55	2.32	9.62
CC 35	3463	5853	169.08	81	74	17.5	44	2.56	19.77	2.5	9.25
CC 37	3061	5415	175.72	84	73	18.4	41	2.28	18.15	2.48	7.84
CC 67	2537	4453	176.02	85	73	17.1	40	2.36	15.7	2.79	6
CC 700	2982	5421	181.99	87	70	17.7	39	2.24	17.7	2.62	7.61
CU 144	3154	5496	173.35	83	71	17.8	42	2.41	19.3	2.44	8.78
CU 159	3057	5470	178.51	85	73	17.9	43	2.44	18.89	2.1	9.93
CU 171	3147	5431	172.86	83	68	17.2	41	2.38	18.56	2.41	8.75
CU 186	3070	5110	169.01	82	75	17.8	41	2.3	17.73	2.39	8.5
GF 318	3213	5649	175.27	84	71	17.9	41	2.31	18.31	2.5	8.23
GL 395	2906	5295	182.32	87	72	17.8	42	2.37	17.61	2.72	7.48
GL 398	3204	5304	167.38	81	78	18.6	43	2.34	19.52	2.58	8.96
K 326	3179	5729	179.91	86	74	17.1	39	2.29	18.71	2.45	8.79
K 346	2888	5214	180.62	86	73	17.3	40	2.36	16.82	2.53	7.75
NC 196	3215	5935	184.52	88	75	18.1	43	2.42	18.46	2.42	8.33

Table 3-2. (continued)

Variety	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Price (\$/cwt)	Grade Index	Days to Flower	Leaves per Plant	Plant Height (in.)	Leaf Spacing (in.)	Sol. Sug. (%)	Total Alk. (%)	Ratio Sug. To Alk.
NC 297	2943	5215	176.66	85	73	17.4	40	2.34	18.97	2.56	8.33
NC 299	3081	5596	181.42	86	74	17.5	40	2.3	18	2.55	7.68
NC 471	2665	4819	180.82	86	72	18.2	43	2.37	17.13	2.83	6.88
NC 606	2783	5064	181.34	86	73	18	43	2.41	20.17	2.57	8.67
NC 925	3141	5446	173.39	83	74	17.6	41	2.36	18.2	2.43	8.66
NC 938	3236	5710	176.2	84	72	17.4	42	2.43	18.9	2.22	10.2
NC 960	2996	5282	176.3	83	74	17.9	40	2.27	16.02	2.75	6.61
PVH 1118	3145	5665	179.77	86	72	17.9	43	2.41	18.82	2.71	7.85
PVH 1452	2884	5071	176.15	84	71	18.3	42	2.31	17.24	2.7	7.12
PVH 1600	3002	5390	179.38	86	74	17.6	41	2.32	16.86	2.61	7.37
PVH 2110	3295	5788	175.98	84	76	18.3	42	2.31	17.82	2.48	8.57
PVH 2254	3287	5808	176.52	84	74	18.3	43	2.38	18.86	2.3	10.2
PVH 2275	2895	5116	177.43	85	72	17.4	41	2.39	16.38	2.77	6.81
PVH 2281	3345	5776	172.66	83	77	18.4	41	2.25	17.86	2.67	7.67
PVH 2310	2992	5429	181.44	87	71	17.9	41	2.31	16.53	2.53	7.26
Test Average	3062	5439	177.71	85	73	17.8	41	2.35	18.09	2.52	8.20



**Table 3-3. Performance of commercial varieties in the North Carolina Official Variety Test, combined over two locations, 2015**

Variety	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Price (\$/cwt)	Grade Index	Days to Flower	Leaves per Plant	Plant Height (in.)	Leaf Spacing (in.)	Sol. Sug. (%)	Total Alk. (%)	Ratio Sug. To Alk.
CC 1063	2987	5479	182.78	87	75	17.4	41	2.34	16.06	2.88	6.05
CC 13	3017	5400	178.85	85	73	17.6	38	2.17	14.13	3.12	4.76
CC 143	3003	5243	173.13	82	78	18.8	41	2.19	16.07	2.7	6.42
CC 27	3136	5741	182.86	87	75	17.8	37	2.06	16.02	2.83	5.73
CC 33	3007	5408	179.12	84	78	18.2	38	2.08	15.32	2.92	5.55
CC 35	3216	5807	179.92	84	79	18.2	44	2.42	18.5	3.19	5.85
CC 37	3018	5244	170.37	80	73	19	39	2.07	14.83	2.85	5.2
CC 67	2559	4575	178.61	85	74	17.3	38	2.22	13.96	2.91	4.86
CC 700	2980	5467	183.52	87	70	17.8	36	2	13.58	3.37	4.34
CU 144	3419	6151	179.68	85	71	18.4	40	2.19	17.41	2.89	6.24
CU 159	3095	5586	179.67	85	75	18.6	42	2.28	15.63	2.44	6.46
CU 171	3117	5136	165.91	78	69	17.5	36	2.07	15.37	3.04	5.06
CU 185	2825	4983	177.16	84	71	16.7	38	2.29	14.06	2.99	4.95
CU 186	2812	4714	173.31	83	77	18.5	39	2.11	14.88	2.93	5.35
CU 204	2833	4796	171.01	81	68	17.4	35	2	13.43	3.53	3.94
CU 208	2908	5355	184.09	88	72	17.1	38	2.22	14.28	3.75	4.06
GF 318	3337	5578	165.73	80	72	18.7	39	2.12	14.24	2.94	5.4
GL 309	3353	5874	174.19	83	75	18.2	39	2.15	14.95	3.09	5.46
GL 394	3511	6503	184.11	87	81	20.5	42	2.07	16.22	2.48	6.75
GL 395	2963	5485	184.35	88	74	18.3	40	2.22	13.78	3.37	4.37

Table 3-3. (continued)

Variety	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Price (\$/cwt)	Grade Index	Days to Flower	Leaves per Plant	Plant Height (in.)	Leaf Spacing (in.)	Sol. Sug. (%)	Total Alk. (%)	Ratio Sug. To Alk.
GL 398	3017	5535	183.24	86	81	19.4	40	2.07	17.6	3.35	5.42
GL 939	2556	4365	169.8	81	75	17.3	37	2.14	14	3.18	4.41
K 326	3040	5476	178.91	84	75	17.3	36	2.07	15.13	3.07	5.18
K 346	2813	5114	182.08	86	76	18.2	40	2.23	12.96	3.01	4.39
K 730	2927	5343	182.21	87	77	18.3	37	2.03	16.78	2.92	6.24
NC 196	3337	6038	181.17	86	76	19.4	42	2.16	14.93	2.8	5.59
NC 297	3099	5587	180.02	85	74	18.2	38	2.08	15.36	2.99	5.63
NC 299	3062	5516	179.87	86	79	19.2	39	2.04	14.74	2.93	5.22
NC 471	2430	4350	179.56	85	71	18	40	2.22	12.6	3.44	3.88
NC 606	2756	4937	178.67	84	75	18.4	42	2.27	16.78	3.1	5.57
NC 71	2987	5121	172.88	82	75	17.9	36	2	15.97	3.24	5.23
NC 925	3316	5800	175.36	83	76	18.4	40	2.18	15.04	2.9	5.75
NC 936	3125	5299	169.66	81	74	19.3	40	2.1	15.35	3.04	5.2
NC 938	3168	5728	180.68	86	74	18.1	40	2.23	16.02	2.68	6.19
NC 940	3432	6241	181.26	85	78	19.1	38	2.01	15.39	3.33	5.32
NC 960	3070	5183	167.73	77	75	18	36	2.03	12.71	3.28	3.94
PVH 1015	2926	5225	177.85	84	73	17.5	39	2.24	16.11	2.83	5.83
PVH 1118	3015	5500	181.97	86	73	18.7	41	2.22	15.82	3.12	5.37
PVH 1452	2789	5032	180.06	85	73	18.8	41	2.17	13.48	3.21	4.3
PVH 1600	2949	5416	183.14	87	75	18.2	38	2.1	14.12	2.8	5.52
PVH 1920	2902	5098	176.53	84	74	19.1	39	2.05	14.57	2.95	5.36

**Table 3-3. (continued)**

Variety	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Price (\$/cwt)	Grade Index	Days to Flower	Leaves per Plant	Plant Height (in.)	Leaf Spacing (in.)	Sol. Sug. (%)	Total Alk. (%)	Ratio Sug. To Alk.
PVH 2110	3212	5659	176.31	83	77	18.2	39	2.15	13.44	3.01	4.57
PVH 2254	3015	5392	177.9	84	76	18.6	41	2.24	14.3	3	5.23
PVH 2275	2734	4799	175.59	84	75	18.2	39	2.16	13.43	3.14	4.51
PVH 2281	3226	5920	183.1	87	80	19.1	38	1.99	14.97	3.15	5.19
PVH 2310	2847	5140	180.68	87	73	18.4	40	2.16	15.85	2.91	5.76
Test Average	3018	5377	177.93	84	75	18.3	39	2.14	15.00	3.03	5.25

**Table 3-4. Performance of commercial varieties in the North Carolina Official Variety Test, Oxford, NC, 2015**

Variety	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Price (\$/cwt)	Grade Index	Days to Flower	Leaves per Plant	Plant Height (in.)	Leaf Spacing (in.)	Sol. Sug. (%)	Total Alk. (%)	Ratio Sug. To Alk.
CC1063	2709	4818	177.59	84	67	16.7	39	2.35	11.74	3.22	3.93
CC13	2966	5094	171.62	83	67	16.5	38	2.33	12.33	3.17	4.09
CC143	2906	4917	168.2	79	68	18.3	42	2.26	12.9	2.84	4.76
CC27	2933	5289	180.36	85	67	16.8	35	2.1	12.83	2.94	4.35
CC33	2862	4851	169.46	79	68	17.4	39	2.2	13.17	3.04	4.35
CC35	2992	5104	170.57	78	74	17.3	44	2.57	15.57	3.33	4.66
CC37	2587	3910	150.1	69	67	17.8	40	2.23	12.42	2.82	4.34
CC67	2281	4021	176.46	85	67	17.2	39	2.28	10.05	3	3.32
CC700	2924	5200	179.21	84	67	16.9	36	2.09	9.56	3.61	2.77
CU144	3283	5663	172.56	81	66	18.7	42	2.24	13.66	3.01	4.6
CU159	2978	4958	165.89	77	67	18	44	2.44	11.19	2.36	4.95
CU171	3311	4959	149.22	68	67	17.4	39	2.22	13.7	2.96	4.6
CU185	3107	5221	168.15	79	68	16.3	38	2.33	11.15	3.15	3.67
CU186	2949	4412	159.24	77	69	17.8	39	2.18	11.33	3.21	3.77
CU204	3083	4773	155.56	72	66	17.4	37	2.11	10.79	3.72	2.95
CU208	2930	5212	177.7	84	66	15.1	36	2.34	10.72	4.13	2.63
GF318	3244	4823	148	72	66	17.6	40	2.27	10.21	3.3	3.21
GL309	3351	5428	160.18	75	70	17	37	2.19	11.13	3.46	3.24
GL394	3039	5307	174.88	82	71	19.9	42	2.09	13.6	2.66	5.07

**Table 3-4. (continued)**

Variety	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Price (\$/cwt)	Grade Index	Days to Flower	Leaves per Plant	Plant Height (in.)	Leaf Spacing (in.)	Sol. Sug. (%)	Total Alk. (%)	Ratio Sug. To Alk.
GL 395	2666	4747	177.82	85	65	17.1	39	2.3	12	3.37	3.67
GL 398	2944	5069	172.28	80	72	18.3	40	2.16	15.03	3.56	4.4
GL 939	2348	3623	155.49	75	65	16.7	38	2.27	12.43	3	4.16
K 326	3019	5176	169.3	79	67	16.1	35	2.18	13.1	3.18	4.22
K 346	2932	5035	171.01	79	68	17.9	39	2.2	8.38	3.05	2.69
K 730	2926	5262	179.84	85	68	17.1	37	2.19	15.1	3.12	4.89
NC 196	3421	5863	171.38	82	66	18.3	40	2.19	11.07	3.01	3.71
NC 297	3114	5325	170.43	80	68	17.1	37	2.16	10.81	3.09	3.6
NC 299	2920	5209	177.98	84	68	18.4	40	2.14	10.47	3.11	3.42
NC 471	2538	4383	173.05	81	67	17.5	41	2.36	8.22	3.61	2.52
NC 606	2703	4650	171.53	81	67	17.3	40	2.31	13.62	3.33	4.1
NC 71	3127	5070	163.66	77	70	17.1	35	2.05	13.33	3.57	3.76
NC 925	3299	5724	174.07	81	67	16.9	39	2.29	10.28	3.38	3.06
NC 936	2971	4577	154.93	73	68	18.7	39	2.09	11.26	3.24	3.55
NC 938	3046	5193	171.33	81	66	16.6	39	2.37	12.37	2.91	4.29
NC 940	3255	5520	169.65	79	68	18.7	37	2.02	10.74	4.13	2.64
NC 960	3234	5200	157.75	72	69	18.3	36	1.97	10.52	3.44	3.09
PVH 1015	2789	4690	167.99	79	65	16.9	39	2.32	12.01	2.96	4.17
PVH 1118	2764	4823	174.7	83	65	17.9	43	2.42	9.27	3.45	2.73
PVH 1452	2708	4555	168.19	78	65	19.2	43	2.22	8.49	3.35	2.56
PVH 1600	2891	5065	174.76	82	68	16.8	35	2.11	10.83	2.91	3.88

Table 3-4. (continued)

Variety	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Price (\$/cwt)	Grade Index	Days to Flower	Leaves per Plant	Plant Height (in.)	Leaf Spacing (in.)	Sol. Sug. (%)	Total Alk. (%)	Ratio Sug. To Alk.
PVH 1920	3076	5082	165.96	79	66	18.1	38	2.09	10.3	3.24	3.27
PVH 2110	3234	5545	171.32	80	70	16.9	37	2.19	9.21	3.1	3.01
PVH 2254	2760	4673	168.89	79	69	17.3	42	2.43	10.53	3.11	3.63
PVH 2275	2681	4831	179.25	86	68	17.2	40	2.32	11.06	3.11	3.65
PVH 2281	3104	5425	174.78	83	71	17.3	36	2.09	11.1	3.32	3.32
PVH 2310	2861	5024	175.8	85	66	18.7	42	2.27	16.6	2.97	5.9
Test Average	2951	4985	169.09	80	68	17.5	39	2.23	11.66	3.21	3.76

**Table 3-5. Performance of commercial varieties in the North Carolina Official Variety Test, Rocky Mount, NC, 2015**

Variety	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Price (\$/cwt)	Grade Index	Days to Flower	Leaves per Plant	Plant Height (in.)	Leaf Spacing (in.)	Sol. Sug. (%)	Total Alk. (%)	Ratio Sug. To Alk.
CC 1063	3266	6139	187.98	90	83	18.2	42	2.33	20.37	2.54	8.16
CC 13	3068	5706	186.07	88	79	18.7	38	2.01	15.93	3.08	5.42
CC 143	3100	5570	178.07	85	89	19.3	41	2.13	19.23	2.56	8.08
CC 27	3339	6193	185.36	89	82	18.9	38	2.02	19.2	2.72	7.11
CC 33	3151	5965	188.78	89	87	19	37	1.95	17.47	2.8	6.76
CC 35	3440	6510	189.27	89	85	19.1	43	2.27	21.43	3.06	7.05
CC 37	3448	6578	190.63	91	79	20.2	39	1.91	17.23	2.88	6.06
CC 67	2837	5128	180.75	85	81	17.4	37	2.17	17.87	2.81	6.4
CC 700	3036	5733	187.83	90	73	18.7	36	1.91	17.6	3.13	5.91
CU 144	3556	6639	186.8	88	76	18.1	39	2.14	21.17	2.76	7.87
CU 159	3212	6214	193.45	92	83	19.1	40	2.12	20.07	2.52	7.98
CU 171	2923	5313	182.6	88	70	17.6	34	1.91	17.03	3.12	5.53
CU 185	2543	4744	186.18	89	74	17.1	38	2.24	16.97	2.82	6.23
CU 186	2675	5016	187.38	89	85	19.1	39	2.03	18.43	2.66	6.94
CU 204	2583	4819	186.46	89	69	17.3	33	1.89	16.07	3.34	4.93
CU 208	2886	5498	190.48	92	78	19.1	40	2.09	17.83	3.37	5.49
GF 318	3431	6333	183.46	88	78	19.9	39	1.96	18.27	2.58	7.59
GL 309	3355	6321	188.19	90	81	19.3	41	2.11	18.77	2.73	7.69
GL 394	3983	7700	193.34	92	90	21.1	43	2.06	18.83	2.3	8.44

Table 3-5. (continued)

Variety	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Price (\$/cwt)	Grade Index	Days to Flower	Leaves per Plant	Plant Height (in.)	Leaf Spacing (in.)	Sol. Sug. (%)	Total Alk. (%)	Ratio Sug. To Alk.
GL 395	3259	6223	190.89	91	83	19.5	42	2.13	15.57	3.37	5.08
GL 398	3090	6001	194.2	92	89	20.5	41	1.99	20.17	3.13	6.43
GL 939	2764	5107	184.11	87	85	17.9	36	2.01	15.57	3.36	4.67
K 326	3062	5776	188.53	89	84	18.5	36	1.95	17.17	2.96	6.14
K 346	2693	5194	193.14	92	83	18.5	41	2.25	17.53	2.97	6.08
K 730	2927	5425	184.58	88	86	19.5	36	1.87	18.47	2.72	7.59
NC 196	3253	6212	190.96	91	86	20.5	44	2.12	18.8	2.59	7.46
NC 297	3084	5848	189.6	90	79	19.3	38	2	19.9	2.9	7.65
NC 299	3205	5822	181.76	87	89	20.1	39	1.93	19	2.74	7.02
NC 471	2321	4318	186.08	89	75	18.6	39	2.08	16.97	3.27	5.24
NC 606	2810	5225	185.81	88	83	19.5	43	2.24	19.93	2.87	7.04
NC 71	2847	5172	182.1	87	81	18.7	37	1.96	18.6	2.9	6.7
NC 925	3334	5876	176.65	85	85	20	41	2.06	19.8	2.41	8.44
NC 936	3279	6020	184.39	89	80	19.9	42	2.1	19.43	2.84	6.85
NC 938	3290	6262	190.03	90	83	19.7	41	2.1	19.67	2.45	8.09
NC 940	3608	6963	192.87	92	87	19.5	39	2.01	20.03	2.53	7.99
NC 960	2906	5166	177.71	83	80	17.6	37	2.1	14.9	3.12	4.79
PVH 1015	3063	5760	187.7	90	80	18.1	39	2.17	20.2	2.71	7.48
PVH 1118	3266	6177	189.25	90	82	19.4	39	2.02	22.37	2.79	8.01
PVH 1452	2870	5510	191.93	91	81	18.5	39	2.13	18.47	3.08	6.04

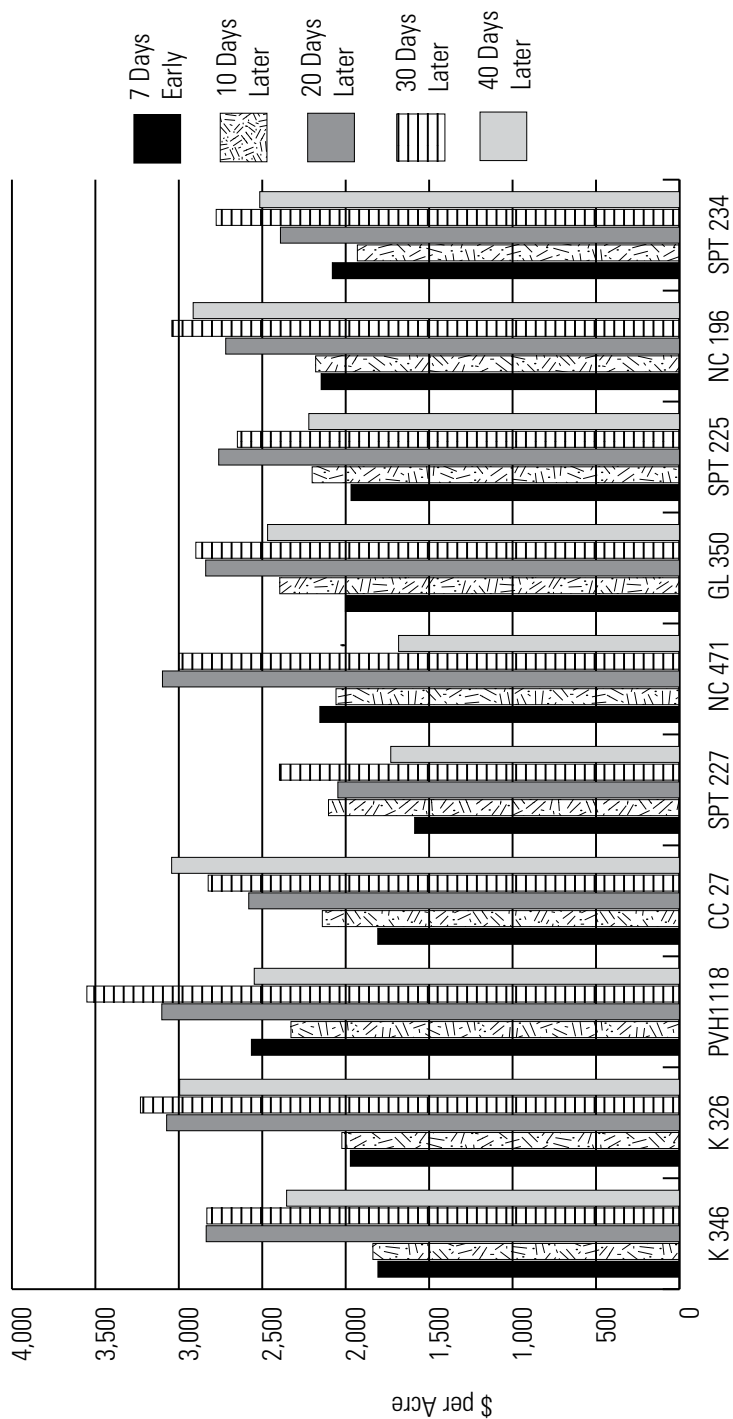


**Table 3-5. (continued)**

Variety	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Price (\$/cwt)	Grade Index	Days to Flower	Leaves per Plant	Plant Height (in.)	Leaf Spacing (in.)	Sol. Sug. (%)	Total Alk. (%)	Ratio Sug. To Alk.
PVH 1600	3007	5767	191.52	91	82	19.6	41	2.09	17.4	2.69	7.17
PVH 1920	2729	5114	187.09	90	82	20.1	40	2	18.83	2.66	7.46
PVH 2110	3190	5773	181.29	87	84	19.5	41	2.1	17.67	2.92	6.13
PVH 2254	3269	6111	186.91	89	84	19.8	40	2.06	18.07	2.88	6.83
PVH 2275	2787	4766	171.93	81	81	19.1	39	2.01	15.8	3.16	5.38
PVH 2281	3348	6416	191.43	91	90	20.9	39	1.89	18.83	2.98	7.06
PVH 2310	2832	5255	185.56	89	81	18.1	37	2.04	15.1	2.85	5.62
Test Average	3085	5769	186.76	89	82	19.1	39	2.06	18.35	2.86	6.74

**Table 3-6. NC State University post-buyout grade index and 2015 price index**

<b>Company Buying Grade</b>	<b>USDA Grade</b>	<b>Post-Buyout Grade Index (1-100)</b>	<b>2015 Price Index (\$/CWT)</b>
P1	P2F, P3F, P2L	85	170
P2	P3L, P4F	80	160
P3	P4L	70	140
P4	P5L, P5F	50	115
P5	P4G, P5G, N1L, N1GL	20	65
X1	X1F, X2F, X1L, X2L	90	170
X2, X1H	X3F, X4F, X3L	85	160
X3, X2H, X3H	X4L, X3KM, X3KR, X5F	70	140
X4	X5L, X4KR, X3V, X4V, X4KL, X4KF, X4KM, X3S	50	112
X5	X4KV, X4GK, X4G, X5G, N1XL, N1XO	25	65
C1	C1F, C2F, C1L, C2L	95	190
C2, C1H	C3F, C4F, C3L	90	185
C3, C2H, C3H	C5F, C4L, C4KR	80	158
C4	C5L, C4KM, C4KL, C4KF, C4V, C4S	60	122
C5	C4G, C4GK	30	75
B1, B1X, B2X	B1L, B2L, B1F, B2F, B1FR, B2FR	100	215
B2, B1H	B3F, B3K, B3FR, B4FR,	95	206
B3, B2H, B3H	B3L, B4F, B4K	85	188
B4	B4L, B3KM, B3KR, B4KM, B4KR	75	145
B5	B3V, B4V, B3KF, B3KL, B3S, B5L, B4S	60	120
B6	B4KL, B4KF, B5V, B5KL, B4KV, B5KV, B4GK, B5GK, B4G, B5G	40	70
BT	N1BO, N1R, N1GR, N1GG, N2	20	70
T, T1X	H3F, H4F, H4FR, H4K	100	213
T2, T2X	H5F, H5FR, H5K, B5FR	95	205
T3, T1H, T2H	B5F, B5K	90	185
T4, T3H	B5KR, B5KM	75	135
T5	B6K, H6K, N1K	60	100
T6	B6KV, N1KV	40	60



**Figure 3-2. Effect of harvest schedule on the value of last priming, 2008**

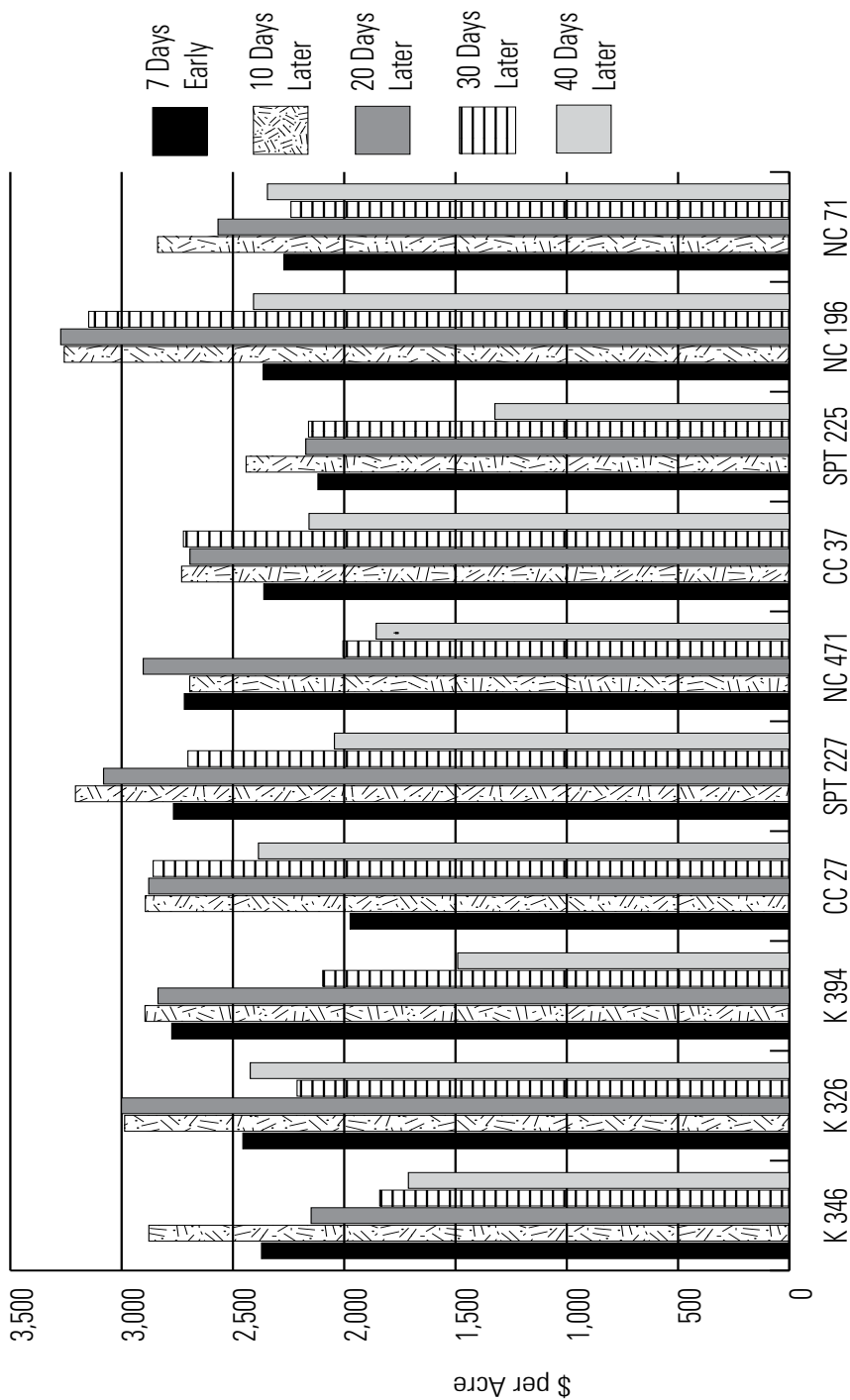


Figure 3-3. Effect of harvest schedule on the value of last priming, 2009

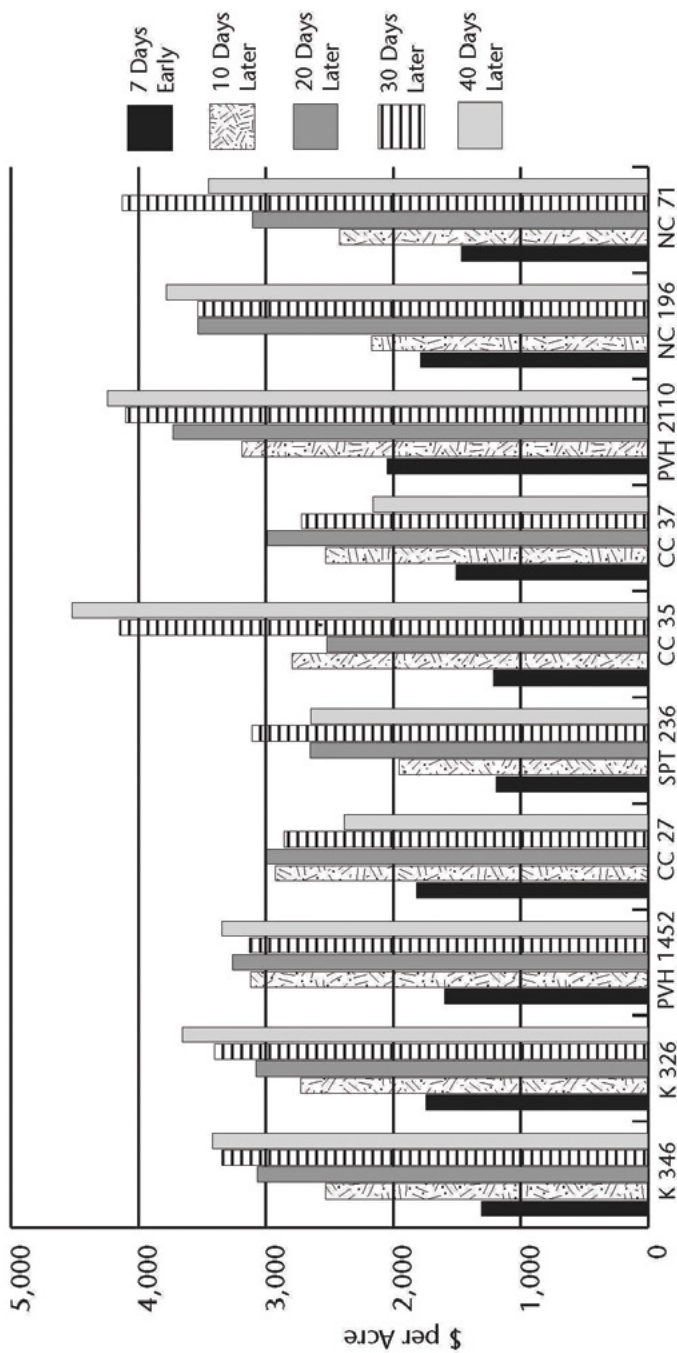


Figure 3-4. Effect of harvest schedule on the value of last priming, 2010

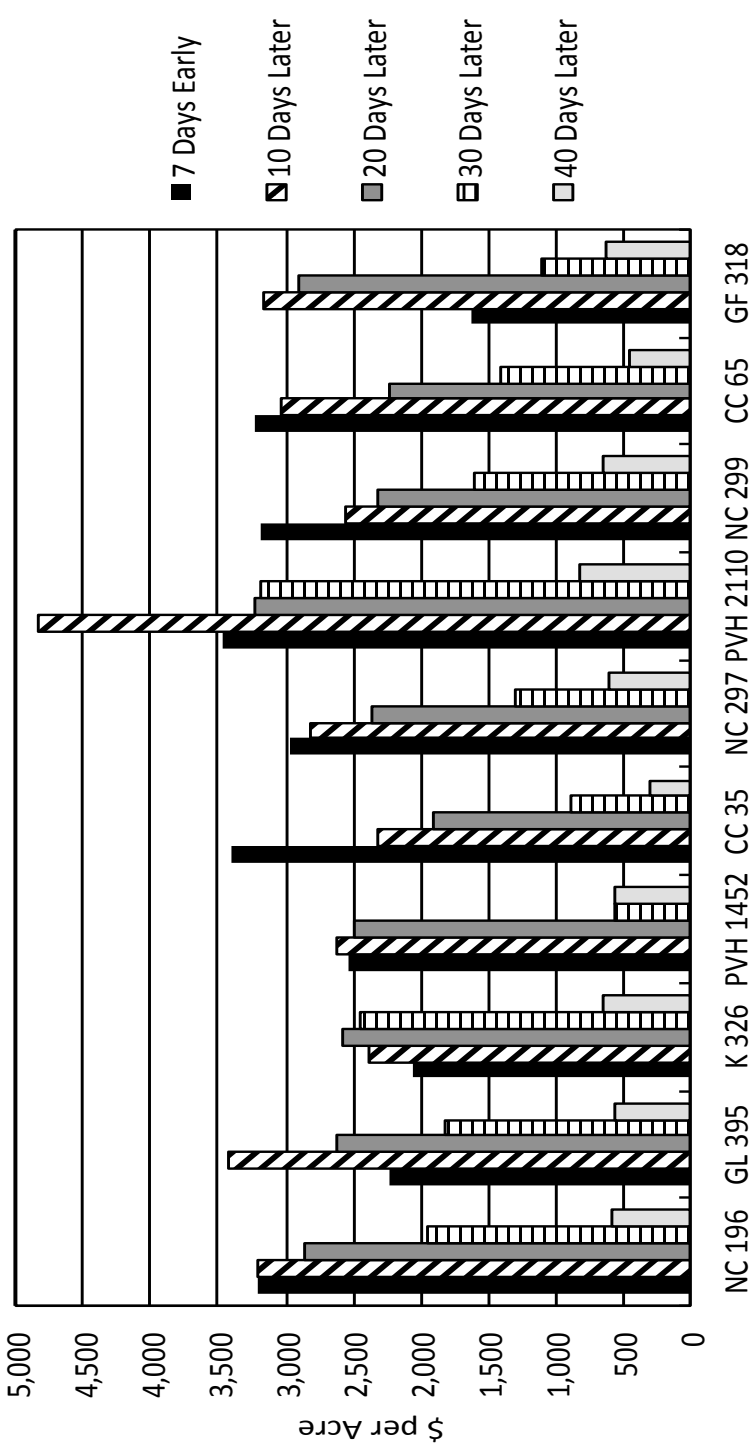
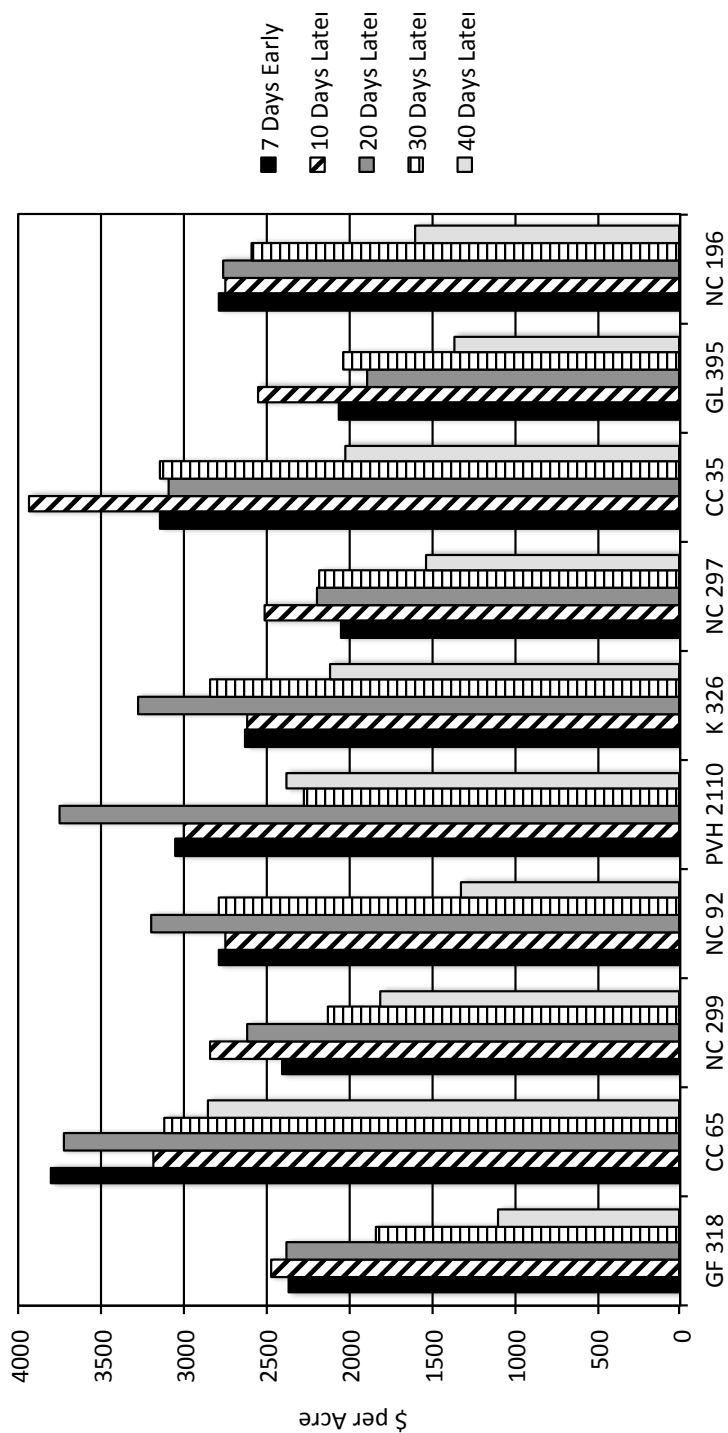
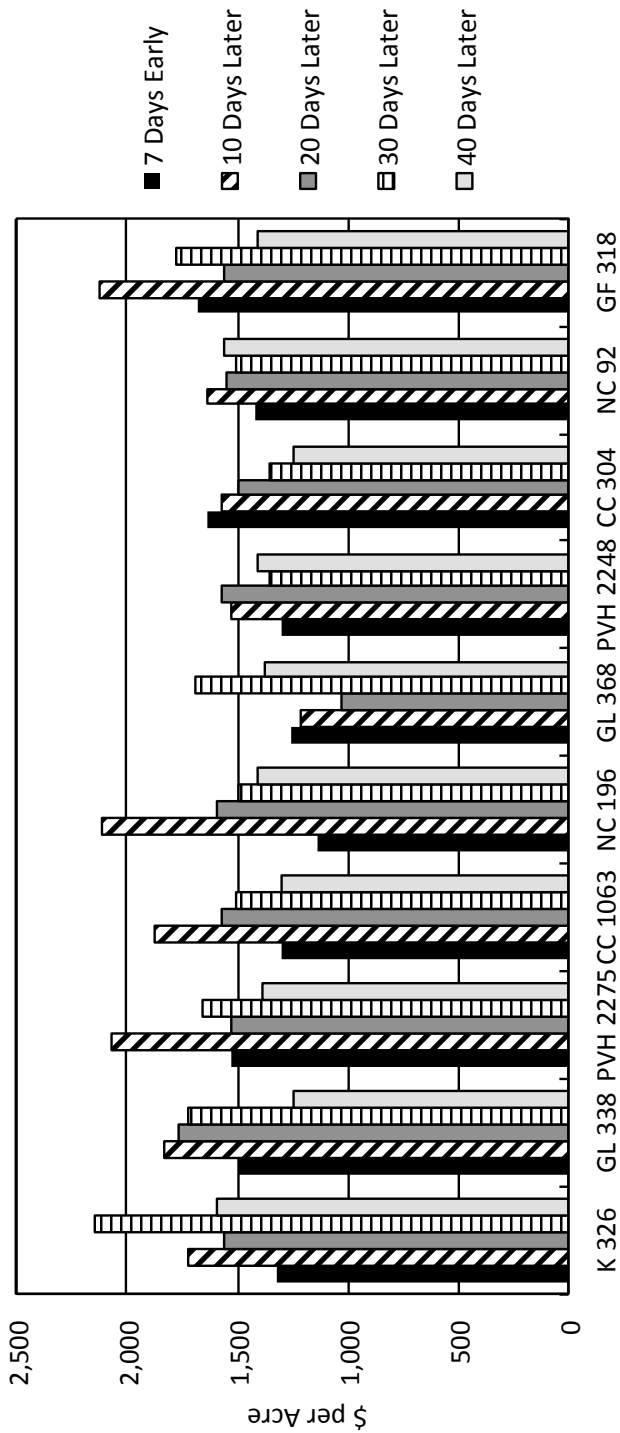


Figure 3-5. Effect of harvest schedule on the value of last priming, 2011



*Figure 3-6. Effect of harvest schedule on the value of last priming, 2012*



*Figure 3-7. Effect of harvest schedule on the value of last priming, 2013*



## 4. PRODUCING HEALTHY TRANSPLANTS IN A FLOAT SYSTEM

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Profitability remains a concern to many growers as a result of rapidly increasing production costs. The first step in minimizing heating-fuel costs is to avoid seeding too early. Most growers have learned that it only takes 60 days to produce a transplant and that seeding before the second week in February increases fuel usage and the cost of transplant production.

Nearly all of the costs in transplant production are on a whole-greenhouse basis. Thus, the best way to decrease the cost on a per-transplant basis is to increase usability. Therefore, management practices that improve stands and promote uniform growth decrease production costs. Nearly all management practices affect usability, but these are some of the most important:

### 1. **Consider the materials.**

- Analyze the water source and manage alkalinity.
- Select a uniform, high-quality growing medium with a low and well-mixed nutrient charge.
- Consider tray design.
- Use seeds with high germination rates and acceptable pelleting materials.]

### 2. **Promote uniform emergence.**

- Sow seeds during sunny periods.
- Fill trays uniformly.
- Place seeds uniformly (in the center of the dibble).
- Provide a warm temperature (68°F to 70°F at night).
- Control ants and mice.

### 3. **Promote uniform growth.**

- Monitor fertilizer salts in the medium and leach with water from overhead when necessary.
- Continue to analyze water and manage alkalinity when necessary.
- Clip properly.
- Manage insects and diseases.

#### **4. Prevent stand loss.**

- Provide proper ventilation and airflow to prevent heat injury.
- Avoid early seeding, high nitrogen rates, and hot daytime temperatures that promote stem rot diseases.
- Fumigate trays with methyl bromide or purchase new trays.

## **CONSIDER THE MATERIALS**

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### ***Analyze the Water Source and Manage Alkalinity***

Water quality management is an important part of successful transplant production. Bicarbonate levels (alkalinity) are high in water from many areas, particularly in eastern counties, and boron is absent from the water in many counties in the piedmont. Have a water sample analyzed from each potential water source before beginning transplant production.

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) analyzes water at a nominal cost. Growers receive a detailed report about the nutritional suitability of each water sample for transplant production.

Collect a twenty-ounce sample from each potential water source. A clean, nonreturnable drink bottle with a screw-on cap makes an excellent sample bottle. Rinse the bottle (but do not use soap) several times and allow the water to run several minutes before collecting the sample. Forms and assistance are available from county Cooperative Extension centers.

Wells usually provide the most desirable water. Municipal sources are also satisfactory, but the water occasionally requires acidification to reduce bicarbonates. Avoid pond or river water unless it comes from a municipal source due to potential contamination with disease-causing organisms. Herbicides that injure tobacco also could be carried by soil runoff into farm ponds.

### ***Select a High-Quality Growing Medium***

Typical tobacco media consist primarily of peat combined with vermiculite and perlite in various proportions. Consider a medium's particle size distribution and nutrient charge to determine its suitability for transplant production. Particle size in a soilless medium is similar to soil texture and is determined by the relative amounts and size of the mix's components. The particle size distribution of a medium determines many characteristics that are important in plant growth, such as aeration, water holding capacity, drainage, and capillarity (wicking). Research has shown that a wide range of particle sizes is suitable. After you find a medium with a good range of particle sizes for tobacco production, make sure that it is free of sticks, stems, clods, and weed seeds. Evaluate its moisture content, uniformity, and fertilizer charge.

### ***Consider Tray Design***

A significant factor affecting tray cost to the grower is the cost of fuel. High natural gas prices have increased the cost of manufacturing, while high fuel prices have increased the cost of transportation and delivery.

Tray costs have always been an issue outside the United States because of shipping costs. Polystyrene trays are light, but they are bulky, which makes them expensive to ship. The high cost of growing medium is also a factor overseas. One way to reduce production and shipping costs is to decrease the depth of the tray, which allows more trays to be placed in a shipping container or on a truck. Shallower trays have the additional advantage of requiring less growing medium to fill the cell, which decreases the cost to a grower. Less on-farm storage space is required for shallow trays than for traditional-depth trays.

A few years ago, a glazed tray was introduced that has hardened sidewalls within the cell, which are formed by superheating during the manufacturing process. The idea is that the hardened sidewalls will resist root penetration and be easier to sanitize. However, the tray depth is slightly shallower than a traditional 288-cell tray. This difference in depth results in slightly smaller cells (15 cubic centimeters versus 17 to 17.5 cubic centimeters), which partially offsets the cost of glazing and decreases growing medium requirements by 12 percent. Observations suggest that fewer roots penetrate the tray, but research has not been conducted to determine if disease incidence is different with plants produced in glazed trays versus those produced in traditional trays.

Research has measured the effects of cell density and volume on transplant production (Tables 4-1 and 4-2). Researchers compared four trays differing in cell density and volume filled with three different growing media. They compared the the following trays:

1. A glazed 288-cell tray with a cell volume of 15 cubic centimeters and cell density of 122.5 cells per square foot in 2004 and a traditional 288-cell tray with a cell volume of 18 cubic centimeters and cell density of 122.5 cells per square foot in 2005.
2. A shallow, glazed 288-cell tray with a cell volume of 8.6 cubic centimeters and cell density of 122.5 cells per square foot.
3. A traditional two-hundred-cell tray with a cell volume of 27 cubic centimeters and cell density of 85 cells per square foot.
4. A shallow 200-cell tray with a cell volume of 8.6 cubic centimeters and a cell density of 85 cells per square foot.

Results indicate that 200-cell trays produced larger plants than 288-cell trays. However, there were no differences in plant size due to tray depth. Thus, in a float system, cell density is more important than cell depth (root volume) in affecting plant size. These results indicate that shallow trays can be used without reducing transplant quality and that all media evaluated would be suitable for shallow trays.

Table 4-1. Effect of cell volume and density on transplant production in the float system, 2004

Treatment	ISM <sup>1</sup> (%)	Spiral Root (%)	Total Plants (%)	Usable Plants (%)	Stem Length (cm)	Stem Diameter (mm)
Trays						
Glazed 288 traditional (15 cc per cell)	95	3	94	88	6.4	3.0
Glazed 288 shallow (8.6 cc per cell)	96	4	92	84	6.3	3.0
200 traditional (27 cc per cell)	96	3	95	90	7.0	3.6
200 shallow (8.6 cc/cell)	95	3	94	87	7.0	3.8
LSD (0.05)	NS	NS	NS	4	0.3	0.3
Growing Medium						
Carolina Gold	95	3	94	87	6.6	3.3
Carolina Choice	96	4	94	88	6.5	3.4
All peat, aggregate free—experimental	96	4	93	86	6.8	3.3
LSD (0.05)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS

<sup>1</sup> ISM = Modified Index of Synchrony, which is a measure of the uniformity of germination. It is calculated as the percentage of the total germination that occurred over a 48-hour period.  
NS = Not statistically significant. Treatments should be considered similar.

**Table 4-2. Effect of cell volume and density on transplant production in the float system, 2005**

<b>Treatment</b>	<b>Emergence (%)</b>	<b>Total Plants (%)</b>	<b>Usable Plants (%)</b>	<b>Stem Length (cm)</b>	<b>Stem Diameter (mm)</b>
<b>Trays</b>					
288 traditional (17.5 cc per cell)	94	90	79	4.9	2.5
Glazed 288 shallow (8.6 cc per cell)	96	91	81	5.9	2.4
200 traditional (27 cc per cell)	94	91	84	6.2	2.9
200 shallow (8.6 cc/cell)	94	92	84	6.1	2.9
LSD (0.05)	2	NS	NS	0.4	0.3
<b>Growing Medium</b>					
Carolina Gold	93	87	78	5.7	2.6
Carolina Choice	95	93	84	5.8	2.6
All peat, aggregate free—experimental	95	93	84	5.9	2.7
LSD (0.05)	2	5	4	NS	NS

NS = Not statistically significant. Treatments should be considered similar.

# PROMOTE UNIFORM EMERGENCE

Uniform emergence and growth are necessary to produce a high percentage of usable transplants. Research has shown that even a 3-day delay in emergence in 25 percent of the seedlings could reduce usability (Table 4-3). The researchers seeded random cells within a tray 3, 5, 7, or 12 days after seeding the rest of the tray. In general, the delayed treatments produced fewer usable seedlings than the initial seeding. These results show the importance of uniform emergence and that clipping will not correct the uneven growth from delayed emergence.

**Table 4-3. Effect of staggered seedling emergence on transplant production, 1999–2000**

Treatment	Total Stand at Day 50 %	Usable Transplants at Day 50 %
1999 Experiment		
Check (100% seeded day 1)	89 a	76 a
75% seeded day 1, 25% seeded day 5	89 a	59 b
75% seeded day 1, 25% seeded day 7	90 a	66 ab
75% seeded day 1, 25% seeded day 12	80 b	65 ab
2000 Experiment		
Check (100% seeded day 1)	95 a	91 a
75% seeded day 1, 25% seeded day 3	96 a	85 b
75% seeded day 1, 25% seeded day 5	97 a	78 c

Note: For each experiment, averages followed by the same letter in a column are not statistically different and should be considered similar.

## Fill and Seed Trays Uniformly

Begin seeding 50 to 55 days before the anticipated transplanting date using only high-quality, pelleted seeds. Make sure that one seed is placed in each cell. Misting trays from overtop after floating has not been shown to speed seedling emergence. However, the use of a premoistened medium decreases the amount of medium that falls through the holes in the bottom of the tray and increases the speed of emergence as compared to a dry medium. Overly wet media do not flow from the hopper box as uniformly as dry media. Be sure the trays are filled uniformly.

Wet new trays before filling them, and screen the planting medium if it contains sticks and clods. Use a moist medium, and pack the medium all the way to the bottom of the cell. Research indicates that taking these precautions will help to prevent dry cells within a tray. Dry cells create a common problem in float systems, particularly with new trays, because they float higher than old trays and because it is difficult to keep the medium from falling through the hole in the bottom of the tray.

## Provide a Warm Temperature

The ideal germination temperature for tobacco seeds is approximately 68°F at night and 86°F during the day. Fuel use decreases 15 percent for every five-degree reduction in temperature.

Therefore, after maximum seedling emergence is obtained, nighttime temperatures should be reduced to a range of 55°F to 60°F to conserve fuel usage. Daytime temperatures of 80°F to 85°F are adequate for normal growth. Heat injury (browning of leaves or seedling death) has been observed when air temperatures inside the structure exceed 110°F.

Different varieties respond in various ways to germination temperature, and it is very common to see differences in germination rate among varieties in the same greenhouse. The response of three popular varieties to temperature during germination is shown in Figures 4-1 through 4-6. In all varieties the germination was earlier at 68°F night and 86°F day than at 68°F night and 95°F day. However, the delay in germination from high temperatures differed greatly among varieties and, in some cases, between seed lots within a variety. These data show that higher than ideal temperatures, even as low as a 95°F day, can delay emergence, reduce uniformity of emergence, and sometimes even decrease total emergence. For a variety such as K 326, the delay in emergence at high temperatures is relatively small. However, for NC 71 and NC 297, the delay in germination is significant. It is important to remember that these studies were conducted in an incubator. Response to high temperature stress in a greenhouse will be greater because delayed germination makes the plants more susceptible to salt injury and disease.

While research has shown 68°F night and 86°F day to be the most favorable temperatures for germination in all tested varieties, it is very common to observe a range of germination times among varieties. Studies conducted with seed from the 2003 Official Variety Test found that most varieties reached maximum germination in seven to eight days when exposed to ideal temperatures of 68°F night and 86°F day. However, the range among varieties was from 6 to 13 days. The germination of most varieties was delayed by 1 day when the daytime temperature was increased from 86°F to 95°F. However, the germination of NC 71 was delayed by 2 days (from 9 days to 11 days).

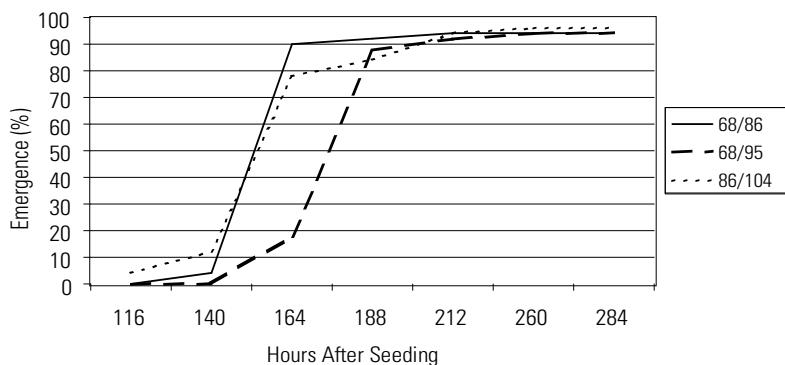
## **PROMOTE UNIFORM GROWTH**

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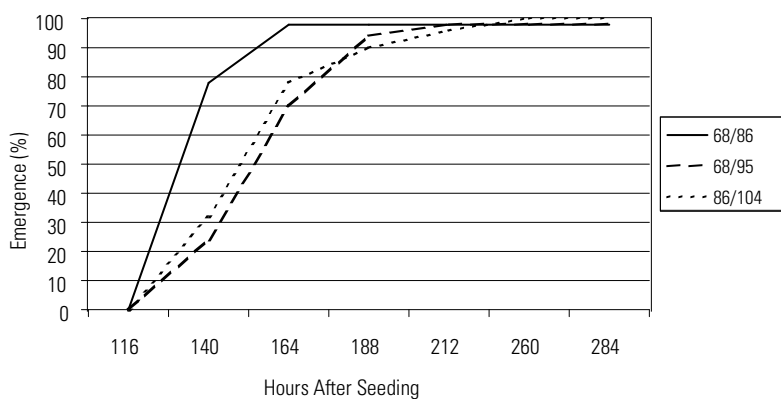
### ***Monitor and Manage Fertilizer Salts in the Growing Medium***

Fertilizer salts injury is the most common nutritional problem in float systems. Fertilizers supply nutrients in the form of salts. When fertilizer is added to the waterbed, these salts dissolve in the water. Then the nutrients move into the growing medium as water is absorbed from the waterbed.

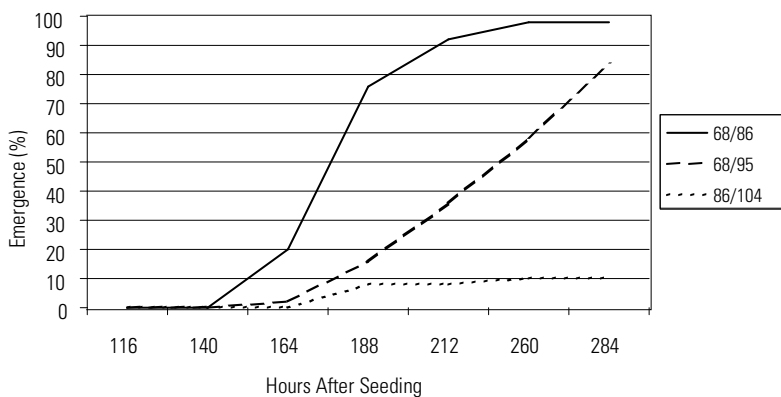
High temperatures, low humidity, and excessive air movement promote water evaporation from the surface of the growing medium, which results in accumulation of fertilizer salts in the medium in the top of the cell. Salts can reach levels high enough to injure seedlings, even when recommended fertilization programs are followed (Figure 4-7). Fertilizer salts levels in the upper half inch are directly related to the total amount of fertilizer applied (in the waterbed and in the medium). Therefore, it is better to use a medium with no fertilizer (or with only a minimal amount) than to use a highly charged medium.



**Figure 4-1. Effect of temperature on the germination of K 326 (2003)**

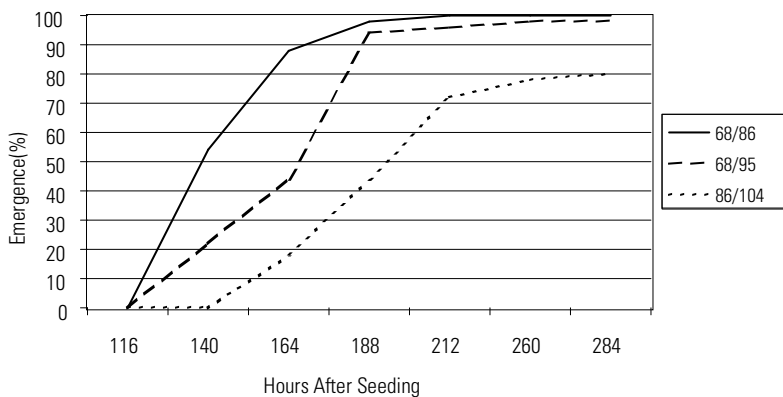


**Figure 4-2. Effect of temperature on the germination of K 326 (2004)**

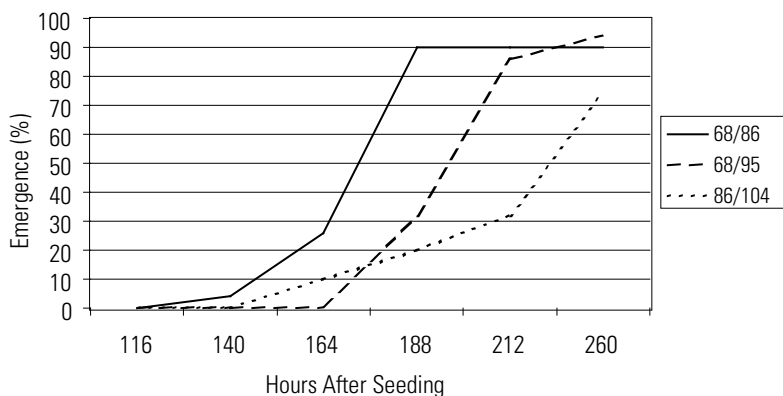


**Figure 4-3. Effect of temperature on the germination of NC 71 (2003)**

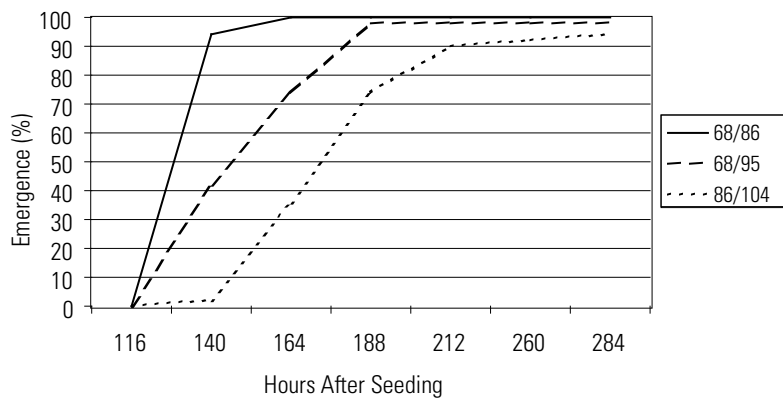




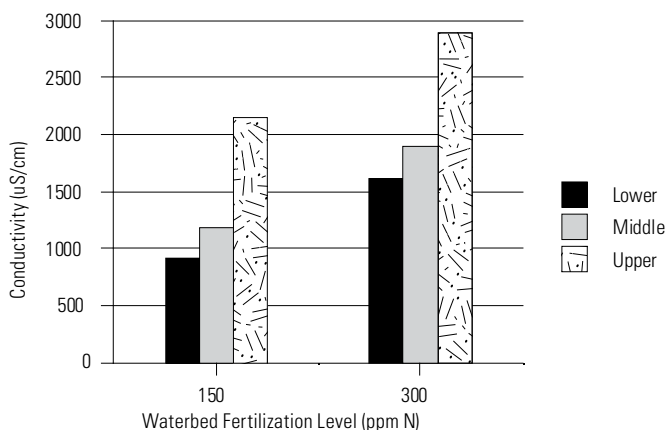
**Figure 4-4. Effect of temperature on the germination of NC 71 (2004)**



**Figure 4-5. Effect of temperature on the germination of NC 297 (2003)**



**Figure 4-6. Effect of temperature on the germination of NC 297 (2004)**



**Figure 4-7. Conductivity of a soilless medium at two fertilization levels and at three depths in the cell**

Electrical conductivity is a commonly used indicator of fertilizer salts levels in media and water. Pocket-sized conductivity meters are available for a reasonable price from many farm supply dealerships. When properly calibrated, these meters are very helpful in a salts-monitoring program for float water and growing media.

Salts should be monitored in the growing medium every 24 to 48 hours from seedling emergence until the plant roots grow into the waterbed. Collect a sample of the medium from the upper half inch of the cell from several trays, then add twice as much distilled water as growing medium on a volume basis (a 2:1 water-to-growing-medium dilution). Shake or stir the sample and wait two to three minutes before measuring the conductivity. Normal levels range from 500 to 1,000 microseimens (0.5 to 1 millimhos). Readings of 1,000 to 1,500 microseimens (1 to 1.5 millimhos) are moderately high, and readings above 1,500 microseimens are very high. Apply water from overhead to leach and dilute salts when: (1) conductivity readings are above 1,000 microseimens and plants are pale or stop growing; or (2) conductivity readings are 1,500 microseimens or above.

### **Fertilize Properly**

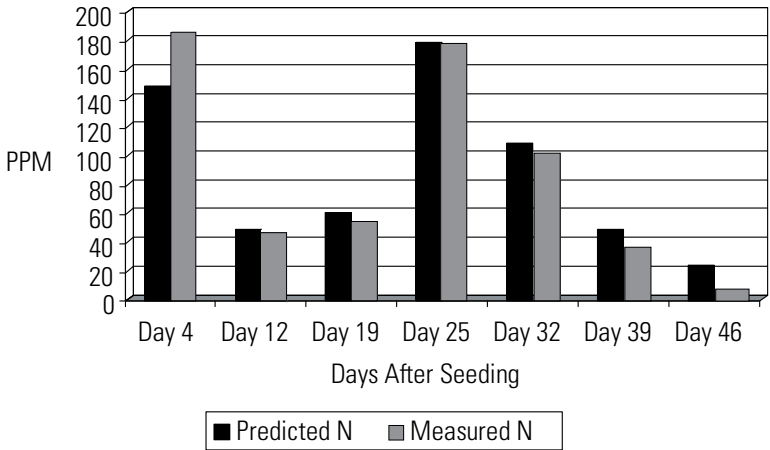
Growers with fertilizer injection systems have been successful in using a constant application rate of 125 parts per million (ppm) nitrogen from 20-10-20, 16-5-16, or similar ratio fertilizers. For noninjected systems, fertilizer can be added to the water in two steps. Research has shown that excellent transplants can be obtained from an initial application of fertilizer to supply 100 to 150 ppm nitrogen within 7 days after seeding plus a second application to supply 100 ppm nitrogen 4 weeks later. Use a complete fertilizer (with 2-1-2 or 3-1-3 ratio) for the first application. The same fertilizer or ammonium nitrate can be used for the second application. Higher application rates cause tender, succulent seedlings that are more susceptible to diseases. Also, high application rates promote fertilizer salts injury to seedlings as noted above. If high fertilizer salts levels are

detected during the first four weeks after seeding (>1,000 microseimens in the medium from the upper half inch of the cell), apply water uniformly from over-top to reduce fertilizer salts levels.

**Monitoring waterbed fertility levels.** Pocket-sized conductivity meters can be used to monitor fertility levels in waterbeds. Most fertilizer labels contain a chart that provides the expected conductivity level for the initial fertilizer concentration, usually expressed as nitrogen concentration in ppm. Conductivity is useful in measuring the accuracy of fertilizer injectors and how well the fertilizer is mixed throughout the waterbed. Conductivity measurements can also provide a rough estimate of the general fertility status in a waterbed throughout the growing season. It is important to understand that while the chart lists nitrogen concentration, the meter is measuring total conductivity from all salts (nutrients). Therefore, as the season progresses and plants adsorb nutrients from the waterbed at different rates (and water levels fluctuate), the relationship between conductivity and nitrogen concentration becomes less dependable (Figure 4-8). Therefore, collecting a water sample for analysis by the NCDA&CS (or another laboratory) is the only way to get an accurate measure of the concentrations of all nutrients in the waterbed.

**Nitrogen form.** Fertilizers commonly provide nitrogen from various combinations of nitrate, ammonium, and urea sources. Tobacco seedlings can use nitrogen in the nitrate and ammonium forms, but urea must be converted to ammonium before the nitrogen can be used by the plant.

Research has shown reduced seedling growth when more than half of the nitrogen in a fertilizer was provided from urea, as compared to all of the nitrogen being supplied as nitrate and ammonium. Similar results have been observed at the University of Kentucky, where Bob Pearce suggests that reductions in plant growth may be a result of nitrite toxicity. Nitrite is an intermediate nitrogen form that occurs when ammonium converts to nitrate. Nitrite can accumulate to levels high enough to cause plant injury when high levels of ammonium are present.



**Figure 4-8. A comparison of predicted (based on conductivity) and measured nitrogen concentrations in a float bed, 2002**

Exclusive use of nitrate nitrogen has been observed to raise the pH of the medium, which causes plant-growth problems similar to those caused by bicarbonates. Therefore, study the fertilizer label carefully to determine the nitrogen form as well as the concentration of nitrogen and micronutrients. The best choice is a fertilizer that contains a balance of nitrogen in the ammonium and nitrate forms.

**Phosphorus.** Research at Clemson University has shown the need to limit phosphorus concentrations to 35 to 50 ppm in the waterbed. Applying excess phosphorus causes spindly transplants and leaves more phosphorus in the waterbed for disposal after transplant production. Therefore, 20-10-20 and 20-9-20 are better choices than 20-20-20 fertilizer. Other fertilizers, such as 16-5-16, are also good choices because very little phosphorus is left in the float water after the transplants are taken to the field.

**Sulfur.** A sulfur deficiency is occasionally observed in float systems when the medium was not supplemented with magnesium sulfate (Epsom salts) or calcium sulfate (gypsum) and sulfur was not provided by the fertilization program. The major media marketed for tobacco should contain sulfur. Also, some fertilizers such as 16-5-16 contain sulfur. If the sulfur content in a medium is questionable, the fertilizer used does not contain sulfur, or a sulfur deficiency is observed, add Epsom salts to the waterbed at a rate of four ounces per one hundred gallons of water.

**Boron.** A boron deficiency causes bud distortion and death and has been observed in several float systems. In most cases, the water and the fertilizer did not contain any boron. The best solution to this situation is to choose a fertilizer such as a 20-10-20 with a guaranteed micronutrient charge if the water analysis indicates no boron. If a fertilizer with boron is unavailable, adding no more than 0.25 ounce of Borax per 100 gallons of float water should prevent a deficiency.

**Organic fertilization.** In recent years, some growers have contracted to grow tobacco organically. Thus far, it has been acceptable to produce transplants with the water-soluble fertilizers typically used in float systems. However, growers may be required to use organic fertilizers during transplant production for USDA organic certification in the future. Studies were conducted to compare seedling production when using bat manure (8-4-1) and Peruvian seabird guano (13-8-2) to seedling production when using the standard water-soluble fertilizer 16-5-16 (Table 4-4).

Results show that seabird guano is a better choice than bat manure when both are applied at the normal rate. Only 33 percent of the nitrogen in bat manure is in a plant-available form, which resulted in small, nitrogen-deficient seedlings when used at the normal rate. Tripling the bat manure rate to compensate for reduced availability resulted in seedlings comparable to the seabird guano. However, a 3× rate of bat guano is very expensive.

Both organic products produced smaller seedlings and a lower percentage of usable seedlings than 16-5-16 in one study, but in another study the seabird guano and 16-5-16 produced similar

**Table 4-4. Effect of fertilizer on stem length and transplant usability, 2002 and 2003**

Fertilizer	Stem Length (cm/plant)		Usable Transplants (%)	
	2002	2003	2002	2003
16-5-16	8.7	5	73	88
Bat manure (8-4-1)	2.6	1	0	0
Peruvian seabird guano (13-8-2)	6.8	3	77	72
Bat manure (8-4-1) at a 3× rate	—	3	—	84

percentages of usable transplants. Based on these results, the Peruvian seabird guano seems to be a better choice than bat manure for organic seedling production. Growers using seabird guano should monitor alkalinity levels in the waterbed closely and correct when necessary.

**Calculating parts per million.** Because nutrient recommendations in the float system are given on a concentration basis, growers must calculate these concentrations as parts per million (ppm). While this is very different from the traditional pounds per acre or pounds per plant bed, it really is not very difficult to calculate. The following formula is a useful way to calculate the amount of fertilizer necessary for a given concentration in the waterbed.

$$\text{Fertilizer added} = \frac{\text{Concentration}}{\text{per 100 gallons} \quad \% \times 0.75}$$

**Where:**

Fertilizer added per 100 gallons = amount of fertilizer to add to each  
100 gallons of water in the waterbed;

Concentration = desired concentration in parts per million;

% = concentration of the nutrient in the fertilizer.

**Example:** A grower wishes to obtain 100 parts per million nitrogen from 16-5-16. This product is 16 percent nitrogen. Therefore:

$$\frac{100}{16 \times 0.75} = 8.3 \text{ ounces of 16-5-16 per 100 gallons of water.}$$

**Clip Properly**

Proper clipping is an important practice that can increase the number of usable transplants and improve transplant hardiness, stem-length uniformity, and stem diameter. A properly clipped plant is essential for carousel transplanters because uniform stem lengths are needed to transplant seedlings at the proper depth, and excessive foliage disturbs the timing mechanism. Clipping can also be used to delay transplanting when field conditions are unfavorable. Research has shown that maximum usability is obtained with three to five clippings. However, many growers clip 15 to 20 times. Too many clippings indicate that the greenhouse was seeded too

early. Early seeding increases heating costs as well as the potential for collar rot. Another problem is improper clipping (clipping too early and too close to the bud), which reduces stem length, increases stem rots, and slows plant growth in the field.

Research conducted by Walter Gutierrez of NC State University showed that collar rot infection increased when clipping residue was left on tobacco stems and leaves. Therefore, to reduce the incidence of this disease, remove as much residue as possible. Use high-suction rotary mowers and properly collect residue with reel mowers to accomplish this.

Research conducted by David Reed at Virginia Tech showed that the severity of clipping affects stem length at the time of transplanting. For example, severe clipping (0.5 inch above the bud) decreased stem length but did not increase stem diameter as compared to normal clipping (1.5 inches above the bud). Therefore, there is no advantage in severe clipping. Dr. Reed found that severe clipping early in the season was particularly detrimental, resulting in very short transplants that grew slowly in the field. Additional work in North Carolina indicated that severe clipping, down to the bud, immediately before transplanting reduced early season growth and delayed flowering.

Current recommendations are to begin clipping at three- to five-day intervals when total plant height is two to 2.5 inches above the tray and to set the blade height at one to 1.5 inches above the bud. This procedure provides the best balance of uniformity, stem length, and disease management.

# 5. MANAGING NUTRIENTS

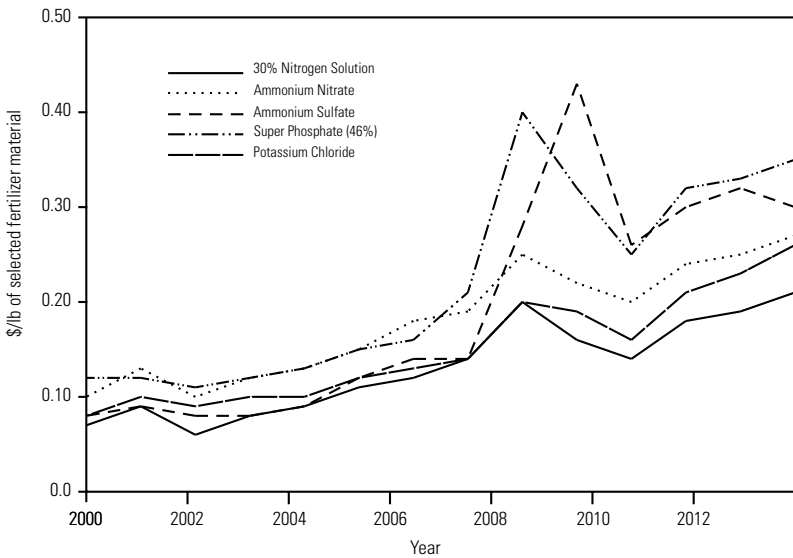
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For the past 15 years, fertilizer prices have increased in cost per pound of material. While prices have declined from the record highs of 2008-2009, it is extremely likely that this reduction will be short lived. Figure 5-1 demonstrates both of these trends for selected nutrient sources from 2000 to 2013. At least one of the selected fertilizer sources is not used in tobacco production (potassium chloride, or 0-0-60); however, it is the overall price trend that is important, as it reflects price trends for tobacco grade sources of potassium as well.



**Figure 5-1. Average price per pound of selected fertilizer materials, 2000-2013. From R. Nehring, USDA-ERS.**

Although the cost of fertilizing tobacco has increased significantly, the good news is that there is a wide range in the cost of fertilization programs, and some programs offer significant savings without sacrificing yield or quality. Research conducted in all tobacco producing areas of North Carolina has consistently shown that programs utilizing all-nitrate or UAN nitrogen products

produce tobacco leaf with similar yield and quality. The most recent studies conducted compared 32 percent UAN (25 percent nitrate, 75 percent ammonium), ammonium nitrate (50 percent nitrate, 50 percent ammonium), and calcium nitrate (100 percent nitrate) to supply all of the nitrogen to the crop. The study was conducted at research stations near Oxford and Kinston, North Carolina, in 2004, 2005, and 2006. Yield and quality were not affected by nitrogen source at any location during any year of the study.

The bottom line on ammonium versus nitrate is that under our growing conditions, nitrification is rapid enough that UAN products containing 75 percent of the nitrogen as ammonium (such as 30 percent and 24S) are equally as acceptable as all-nitrate nitrogen sources (such as calcium nitrate). Growers should feel comfortable using any of these products and should base the decision on factors such as application technology and cost because crop response is not an issue.

A recent survey of county Extension agents found that nearly 50 percent of tobacco acreage received at least some of its nitrogen from liquid materials. Additionally, it is estimated that 20 to 25 percent of tobacco acreage receives all of its nitrogen from a liquid material on an annual basis. Consider the following practices to reduce fertilization costs:

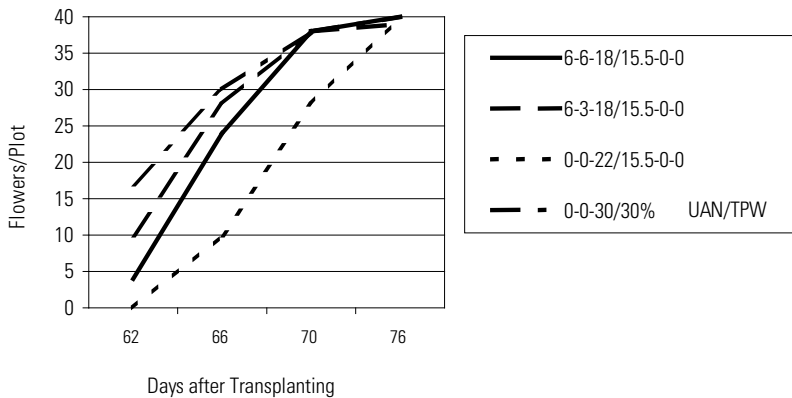
- Use UAN products, such as 28, 30, or 32 percent or 24S, for at least the side-dress application if not the entire nitrogen program. See treatments 5, 6, and 7 in Table 5-1.
- Apply no more phosphorus than recommended from the soil test. More than 90 percent of the soil test reports from tobacco fields in the coastal plain and 50 percent from fields in the piedmont recommended not applying fertilizer phosphorus. Growers reluctant to not apply any phosphorus can apply 5 pounds of phosphorus in the transplant water, which has been shown to equal the growth response of 40 pounds of phosphorus banded in the complete fertilizer (Figure 5-2).
- Research in North Carolina also indicates that rates of applied potassium can be reduced to 75 pounds of  $K_2O$  per acre on soils that have a medium to high potassium index, fine to medium soil texture, and relatively shallow depth to clay (less than 10 inches) without reducing yield or quality. Potassium can also be broadcast-applied and incorporated prior to forming raised beds as much as 30 days before transplanting on soils with characteristics similar to those previously mentioned. This alternative approach to potassium fertility fits extremely well with production systems in which producers are only making independent applications of nitrogen and potassium.
- Based on current fertilizer prices, the most economical program involves the application of a potash material, such as potassium sulfate or potassium magnesium sulfate (or blend), to supply all of the potassium suggested by the soil test report and a UAN product to supply all of the nitrogen (Table 5-1). If soil phosphorus levels are high to very high, then no more than 5 pounds of phosphorus in the transplant water is sufficient to provide rapid early season growth.



**Table 5-1. Effect of fertilizer treatment on tobacco yield, value, and grade index at three North Carolina locations, 2005**

Treatment	Onslow County			Upper Coastal Plain Research Station				Central Crops Research Station				Average		
	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Grade Index	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Grade Index		Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Grade Index		Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Grade Index
1. 6-6-18 667 lb/acre + 15.5-0-0 194 lb/a	2,799a	3,191a	75a	2,031a	2,963a	91a		3,266a	3,767a	75a		2,699	3,307	80
2. 6-3-18 667 lb/a + 15.5-0-0 194 lb/a	2,784a	3,284a	77a	2,170 a	3,251a	93a		3,256a	3,521a	70a		2,737	3,352	80
3. 0-0-22 540 lb/a + CN-9 64 GPA	3,350a	3,717a	70a	2,068a	3,021a	91a		3,249a	4,019a	79a		2,889	3,585	80
4. 0-0-22 540 lb/a (broadcast) + CN-9 64 GPA	3,408a	3,865a	73a	2,226a	3,290a	92a		3,142ab	3,577a	74a		2,925	3,577	80
5. 0-0-30 400 lb/a + 30% UAN 21.5 GPA	3,241a	3,507a	68a	1,966a	2,717a	86a		3,247a	3,725a	74a		2,818	3,316	76
6. 0-0-30 400 lb/a + 30% UAN 21.5 GPA + 9-45-15 11 lb/a TPW	3,215a	3,711a	75a	1,759a	2,450a	86a		3,166a	3,980a	79a		2,713	3,380	80
7. 0-0-30 400 lb/a + 15.5-0-0 452 lb/a + 9-45-15 11 lb/a TPW	3,191a	3,487a	71a	2,016a	2,927a	91a		3,118ab	3,896a	79a		2,775	3,437	80
8. 6-3-18 667 lb/a + 15.5-0-0 194 lb/a + 9-45-15 11 lb/a TPW	3,466a	4,066a	74a	1,869a	2,741a	91a		3,276a	3,664a	73a		2,870	3,490	79
9. 6-6-18 667 lb/a + 15.5-0-0 194 lb/a + 9-45-15 11 lb/a TPW	3,000a	3,389a	74a	1,732a	2,486a	89a		2,882c	3,355a	75a		2,538	3,070	79
10. 12-4-17 500 lb/a + 13-44 76 lb/a	3,243a	3,663a	72a	2,174a	3,163a	91a		2,982bc	3,712a	79a		2,800	3,513	81

Treatment results followed by the same letter within a column should be considered similar.



**Figure 5-2. Effect of phosphorus application on flowering rate at the Upper Coastal Plain Research Station, 2005**

It is likely that early broadcast applications of potassium with current rate recommendations would only be of concern with combinations of conditions that included coarse soil textures, low potassium indices, and/or excessive rainfall.

- Avoid products that add cost without improving profitability. For example, the product Avail has been shown—under conditions of limited soil phosphorus outside of the tobacco production region in North Carolina—to improve phosphorus uptake. However, phosphorus levels in most of our tobacco fields are very high. Studies conducted during 2008 showed no advantage of including Avail in the fertilizer for tobacco produced in fields with typical soil phosphorus levels (Table 5-2).

**Table 5-2. Effect of fertilizer treatment on tobacco yield, grade index, price, and value at two North Carolina locations, 2008**

Treatment	Cunningham Research Station			Oxford Tobacco Research Station		
	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Grade Index	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Grade Index
6-6-18 667 lb/a + 15.5-0-0 226 lb/a	2,974a	5,138a	84a	2,496a	4,198a	80a
8-8-28 + Avail 500 lb/a + 15.5-0-0 226 lb/a	2,895a	5,002a	84a	2,491a	4,338a	83a

Treatment results followed by the same letter within a column should be considered similar.

## SOIL TESTING

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Have your soil tested. This is the first step in planning an economical and environmentally sound fertilization program. Testing is provided as a free service by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services from April to November of each year. Each soil sample is analyzed to determine pH and the available levels of most major nutrients, such as phosphorus ( $P_2O_5$ ), potassium ( $K_2O$ ), calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), and sulfur (S). The analysis also determines soil levels of several micronutrients, such as manganese (Mn), copper (Cu), and zinc (Zn). The soil test report suggests application rates for lime and for each nutrient that should meet crop needs under good growing conditions.

The nutrient rates suggested on the soil test report reflect only what is found in the sample. Therefore, each sample should be taken properly so it adequately represents the field where the crop is to be grown. Soil sample reports from fields tended regularly by the same grower should be no more than two years old. For unfamiliar fields or those out of tobacco production for several years, take samples four to six months before the first tobacco crop. *Submitting samples in the fall rather than winter or spring will enable you to receive soil test reports quickly and allow more time for planning fertilization programs.* Soil boxes and instructions for taking samples can be obtained at your county Cooperative Extension center.

### **Liming and Soil pH**

Provide the ideal pH of 5.8 to 6.2 through the application of dolomitic limestone. This is a key step in a cost-effective and responsible nutrient management plan. Low pH causes greater solubility of soil aluminum (and manganese in piedmont soils), which reduces root growth and development. Therefore, liming to promote healthy root systems improves drought tolerance and nutrient absorption, sometimes resulting in better yields. Alternatively, overliming and, therefore, increasing soil pH above 6.2 can reduce the availability of certain micronutrients, such as boron, iron, manganese, copper, and zinc. While these nutrients can be supplemented through N-P-K and/or specialty fertilizers, the most cost effective management program will promote micronutrient availability within the soil profile.

In previous research trials, limed plots produced higher yields than unlimed plots regardless of the nitrogen rate (Table 5-3). Also, note that the yield of unlimed plots that received 15 pounds per acre of extra nitrogen was no higher than that of limed plots that received 15 pounds per acre less than suggested nitrogen. These data indicate the following:

- Extra nitrogen cannot overcome the adverse effects of low soil pH.
- Lower nitrogen rates are possible when acid soils are limed according to soil test suggestions.

**Quick Reference Guide to Fertilization**

- 1. Have a soil sample tested to determine nutrient and lime needs. Use dolomitic lime, if needed, to adjust pH and supply magnesium as well as calcium. Do not overlime!
- 2. Use a base nitrogen rate of 50 to 80 pounds per acre. Your portion of the rate range will depend on topsoil depth and texture, previous crop grown, and personal experience (Table 5-4).

**Table 5-3. Effects of lime and nitrogen on tobacco yield**

Nitrogen Rate (lb/a)	Yield (lb/a)	
	No Lime Used	Lime Used
Suggested -15	2,272	2,497
Suggested	2,434	2,688
Suggested +15	2,405	2,516

**Table 5-4. Effect of nitrogen rate on tobacco yield and value at the Lower Coastal Plain Experiment Station, 2004–2006**

Nitrogen Rate (lb/a)	2004		2005		2006	
	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)	Yield (lb/a)	Value (\$/a)
0	2,232	4,381	2,513	3,500	1,971	2,880
20	2,590	4,543	2,773	3,800	2,056	3,005
40	2,825	4,935	2,939	4,086	2,063	2,998
60	3,002	5,288	3,027	4,247	2,033	2,855
80	3,051	5,357	3,009	4,183	2,053	2,928
100	—	—	2,799	3,866	2,029	2,774
120	—	—	2,893	3,923	2,012	2,701

- 3. Apply 20 to 30 pounds of sulfur per acre on deep, sandy soils. Sulfur application recommendations are now provided in soil test reports. Read the label to be sure that the complete (N-P-K) fertilizer contains sulfur. If the complete fertilizer does not provide this nutrient, then apply a sidedresser containing sulfur.
- 4. Determine and make leaching adjustments for nitrogen losses with caution, only after leaching occurs. Do not assume that leaching will occur and apply extra nitrogen up front in the growing season.
- 5. Use a method of fertilizer application that maximizes nutrient uptake efficiency but minimizes fertilizer salts injury and early season leaching losses. Examples include the bands at transplanting and bands within 10 days after transplanting methods. The latter method is more risky than the first on poorly drained soils because frequent rains after transplanting could delay fertilizer application for more than 10 days. Fertilizers should be incorporated

into the soil to reduce nutrient losses through runoff and/or volatility. Liquid nitrogen materials can be injected through a sidedress application or applied to the side(s) of the bed and incorporated with cultivation.

## IN-SEASON ADJUSTMENTS

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### ***Adjustments for Leaching***

Leaching occurs when certain nutrients move below normal rooting depth due to excessive water moving (percolating) through the root zone of deep, sandy soils. Leaching of nitrogen is more likely to reduce yield and quality than leaching of other nutrients. Although leaching losses of sulfur, magnesium, and potassium sometimes occur, their effects on yield and quality are relatively small.

More than 50 to 80 pounds of nitrogen per acre may be needed if leaching occurs, but determining the correct amount to replace is one of the most difficult and risky tasks in tobacco production. A general guide to leaching adjustments for nitrogen is shown in Table 5-5. The amount of nitrogen to replace is expressed as a percentage of the suggested base rate that was applied before leaching occurred. If you used excess nitrogen before leaching occurred, subtract the number of excess pounds from the number of replacement pounds calculated. This guide is based on three major factors that influence the amount of leaching:

- *Topsoil depth to clay.* Topsoil depth is used in the guide because water usually moves more freely and in larger quantities through deeper topsoil. The mass of tobacco roots normally occurs in the upper 12 to 14 inches of soil. Therefore, the deeper the clay below rooting depth, the more likely it is that nitrogen will leach below the root mass.
- *Age of the crop when leaching occurs.* Crop age is included in the guide because plants absorb more of the needed nutrients as they get older, and the amounts left in the soil and subject to leaching decrease as the crop grows. Also, as the plants get larger, their leaves form a canopy that sheds some of the water to the row middles, reducing the amount of water passing through the fertilized zone.
- *Estimated amount of water (in inches) that moves through the root zone.* A reasonable estimate of the amount of water that enters the soil and ultimately percolates through the root zone is necessary to calculate the leaching adjustment. The amount of rainfall alone usually is not a good indication of how much leaching has occurred. Factors such as soil texture and slope, crust formation, duration of rainfall, and the amount of moisture already in the soil also are important.

Unfortunately, a practical method that includes these many percolation factors has not been developed, but growers who have experienced similar rainfall on their land in past years can make reasonable estimates. An invaluable tool in making leaching adjustments is an up-to-date record of daily rains and estimates of how much of each rain soaked into the soil.

**Table 5-5. Nitrogen adjustments for leaching**

Topsoil Depth	Estimated Water Percolated through Soil	Percentage of Applied Nitrogen to Replace after Transplanting <sup>a</sup>		
		1–3 Weeks	4–5 Weeks	6–7 Weeks
Less than 10 inches to clay	1 inch	0	0	0
	2 inches	20	10	0
	3 or more inches	30	20	0
10 to 16 inches to clay	1 inch	30	20	0
	2 inches	45	30	10
	3 or more inches	60	40	15
17 or more inches to clay	1 inch	50	25	15
	2 inches	75	35	20
	3 or more inches	100	45	25

<sup>a</sup>Apply about one pound of potassium (K<sub>2</sub>O) for each pound of nitrogen used as a leaching adjustment if the topsoil is deeper than 10 inches.

Because phosphorus leaches very little in our soils, it is both expensive and unnecessary to use phosphorus-containing fertilizers, such as 6-6-18, to make leaching adjustments. Some growers do this, however, to supply additional sulfur (S), magnesium (Mg), or both, along with nitrogen, for adjustments on deep, sandy soils. These nutrients can be supplied at less cost and just as effectively by using 13-0-14 or an 8-0-24 that guarantees sulfur and magnesium but contains no phosphorus. Another alternative is to mix equal amounts of Sul-Po-Mag (K-Mag) and one of the 1:0:0 ratio sidedressers. For example, an equal mixture of 15.5-0-0 fertilizer and Sul-Po-Mag gives an 8-0-11 N-P-K analysis, which also provides 5 percent magnesium and 11 percent sulfur. (If additional nitrogen is not needed, about 100 to 150 pounds of Sul-Po-Mag per acre usually will supply adequate sulfur and magnesium.)

**Adjustments for Drowned and Partially Drowned Tobacco**

Distinguishing between drowning and leaching is often confusing because excess water causes both problems. Leaching is usually not a serious problem on soils that have clay within 10 to 12 inches of the surface because percolation through the root zone is restricted. If the soil becomes saturated, oxygen starvation and then root decay will begin unless the saturated condition is alleviated within about 24 hours. Usually, the plants yellow and partially or completely wilt. Wilting is a symptom of drowning and indicates that leaching losses are minimal because water remains in the root zone rather than moving through it. Although some nitrogen may be moved down to the clay, causing a temporary deficiency, it will be absorbed later as root growth resumes.

In most drowning situations, adding 10 to 15 pounds of extra nitrogen usually benefits the crop if it was not overfertilized with nitrogen before drowning. However, using the leaching adjustment procedure for a drowned crop often overestimates the amount of nitrogen to replace and may delay ripening and cause curing problems later in the season.

Heavy, frequent rains may cause drowning (root injury). Deep rooting is limited as long as the soil remains saturated, confining root development to the upper 6 to 10 inches. Many growers make at least one application of dry or liquid fertilizer after drowning in an attempt to reduce losses in yield and quality. Experiments were conducted on research stations near Kinston and Clayton in 1995 to study the effects of soil-applied fertilizers on the yield and quality of partially drowned tobacco (the term “partially drowned” is used because the tobacco remained wilted for only several days and then recovered). The fertilizers used are shown in Table 5-6; the results are averages of two nitrogen rates at Kinston (15 and 30 pounds per acre) and one nitrogen rate at Clayton (20 pounds per acre). All fertilizer treatments, made in one application on June 20, improved yield and value per acre compared to the nonfertilized control. The 16-0-0 and 30 percent liquid nitrogen fertilizers increased yield and value about 10 percent, and the 15-0-14 and 8-0-11 fertilizers increased yield and value about 15 percent. This indicates that the potassium supplied by the 15-0-14 and 8-0-11 fertilizers may have improved yield more than the 16-0-0 and 30 percent liquid nitrogen fertilizers that supplied only nitrogen. None of the fertilizers improved grade index or average market price compared to the control.

**Table 5-6. Effects of fertilizer additions on yield and value of partially drowned tobacco, 1995<sup>a</sup>**

Fertilizer Treatment <sup>a</sup>	Application Method	Yield (lb/a)	Grade Index	Price (\$/cwt)	Value (\$/a)
None	—	1,714	77	173.50	2,974
16-0-0	BC-OT	1,887	77	174.60	3,294
30% nitrogen	WB-RM	1,873	79	175.50	3,288
15-0-14	BC-OT	1,961	76	173.80	3,408
8-0-11	BC-OT	1,996	77	174.50	3,483

<sup>a</sup> Average results of tests conducted at research stations near Clayton and Kinston. N rates for each fertilizer were 15 and 30 lb/acre at Kinston and 20 lb/acre at Clayton. Adjustments were applied on 6/20/95. BC-OT = broadcast overtop of plants; WB-RM = wide band sprayed in row middle.

The results in Table 5-7 indicate that using fertilizers at rates to provide 30 pounds of nitrogen per acre was no more effective than using them at rates to provide 15 pounds of nitrogen per acre. In addition, the nitrogen rate did not affect grade index or average market price. The plant roots in these tests never recovered from the water injury. Therefore, the crops did not respond fully to the applied nutrients. Unfortunately, the results of these tests indicate that much of the extra fertilizer applied to drowned crops does not benefit them. Observations on farms in 1995 indicated that the more severe the drowning (root injury), the less likely the crops were to recover, regardless of the kinds or rates of fertilizers used.

**Table 5-7. Effects of nitrogen rate adjustments on yield and value of partially drowned tobacco, 1995**

Nitrogen Adjustment (lb/a)	Yield (lb/a)	Grade Index	Price (\$/cwt)	Value (\$/a)
0	1,748	74	180.00	3,146
15 <sup>a</sup>	1,946	74	179.30	3,489
30 <sup>a</sup>	1,903	76	179.30	3,412

<sup>a</sup> Results averaged over 16-0-0, 30 percent liquid N, 15-0-14, and 8-0-11 fertilizers for each N rate. Test conducted at Lower Coastal Plain Research Station near Kinston.

**TIME AND METHOD OF FERTILIZER APPLICATION**

Proper placement and timing of fertilizer applications provide maximum return for each dollar spent on fertilizers. Fertilizers should be applied at the proper time and with the proper method to maximize nutrient use by the crop while minimizing leaching losses and fertilizer salts injury to roots. Four methods of fertilizer application have been evaluated in on-farm tests under a wide range of soil and climatic conditions. Results varied among locations, primarily because of differences in soil moisture at and following transplanting:

- If soil moisture was adequate but not excessive, the bands at transplanting and bands *within 10 days after transplanting* methods yielded moderately better than the broadcast or one band deep methods.
- If early leaching conditions occurred, best results were obtained with the *bands within 10 days after transplanting* method, with *bands at transplanting* being a close second, and the *broadcast method* giving the poorest results.
- When the soil was dry, which contributed to fertilizer injury, the *bands within 10 days after transplanting* method gave the best results, and the *one band deep* method the poorest results.
- Overall, the *bands at transplanting* and *bands within 10 days after transplanting* methods produced better yields more consistently than the *broadcast* and *one band deep* methods. These methods are also more environmentally sound than pretransplant methods because nutrient uptake is more efficient and leaching losses are reduced.

**UNDERSTANDING THE NUTRITIONAL NEEDS OF THE PLANT**

**Primary Nutrients**

**Nitrogen (N).** Nitrogen has a greater effect on tobacco yield and quality than any other nutrient. Too little nitrogen reduces yield and results in pale, slick cured leaf. Too much nitrogen may increase yield slightly but may also make mechanical harvesting and curing more difficult, delay maturity, extend curing time, and result in more unripe cured leaf. Excessive nitrogen also stimulates sucker growth, which can lead to excessive use of maleic hydrazide (MH) and increase problems with hornworms and aphids. Nitrogen is also very leachable, and overapplication may contribute to groundwater contamination in deep, sandy soils.



Soil analysis is not used to estimate the nitrogen rate needed for a specific tobacco field in North Carolina. Rather, the 50- to 80-pound-per-acre range shown on the soil test report is based on information from numerous field tests conducted across the state. In these tests, a base nitrogen rate of 50 to 80 pounds per acre has given consistently good results on most soils in most seasons. This is the total amount of nitrogen supplied by normal applications of the N-P-K fertilizer and the sidedresser but does not include additional nitrogen sometimes needed for leaching adjustments. The lower portion of the range is suggested for fine-textured, fertile soils, especially where legumes such as soybeans or peanuts were grown the previous year. The higher portion of the range is suggested for coarse-textured soils with topsoils deeper than 15 inches to clay.

Suggested nitrogen rates for several average topsoil depths are shown in Table 5-8. Determine your portion of the nitrogen rate range primarily by topsoil depth, or depth to clay. Fields with deeper, sandier topsoils usually are more leachable and contain less nitrogen as humic matter than those with shallower, more heavily textured topsoils. Generally, you should reduce the nitrogen rates shown by about 5 to 10 pounds per acre if the previous crop was a legume or the variety to be planted is known to mature late or cure poorly when overfertilized with nitrogen. Even greater nitrogen rate reductions may be needed on dark soils with 1 percent or more humic matter.

**Table 5-8. Base nitrogen rates for tobacco in relation to topsoil depth**

Topsoil Depth (inches)	Nitrogen Rate <sup>a</sup> (lb/a)
5	50
10	60
15	70
20+	80

<sup>a</sup> Does not include leaching adjustments.

Also, when tobacco follows a heavily fertilized but poor corn crop (less than 75 bushels per acre), the residual nitrogen available for the tobacco may be as high as that left by soybeans or peanuts.

Only 15 pounds of extra nitrogen may reduce leaf quality, particularly in dry seasons. Both drought and excess nitrogen delay maturity and increase the amount of unripe tobacco. The first step to increasing the amount of ripe tobacco is to use a reasonable base nitrogen rate (particularly if irrigation is not available and mechanical harvesting is used), depending on topsoil depth, previous crop, variety to be grown, and experience. Also, be cautious and conservative with leaching adjustments for nitrogen. The second step is to delay harvest, if necessary, and make three or more primings so that each priming will have a high percentage of ripe leaves. The rate of ripening depends primarily on the amount and distribution of water, the nitrogen rate, soil type, and variety, so base your harvest rate on these factors, not on the calendar date or how fast your neighbor's tobacco is being harvested.

The normal ripening process is caused by partial nitrogen starvation, which should begin about topping time. Therefore, nitrogen in the soil should be nearly depleted by flowering. Overapplication of nitrogen, prolonged drought, or both extend nitrogen uptake beyond topping time and therefore delay ripening because the crop is still absorbing nitrogen. Leaves harvested when they are high in nitrogen are more difficult to cure and often turn dark at the end of yellowing and into the early leaf-drying stage. This problem is increased by dry, hot conditions, which cause the leaves to appear riper than they really are.

**Phosphorus ( $P_2O_5$ ) and potassium ( $K_2O$ ).** Phosphorus is not very leachable, even in sandy soils, and a good tobacco crop only removes about 15 pounds per acre (as  $P_2O_5$ ). However, many times this amount has been applied to tobacco fields over the years, resulting in at least “high” levels of available phosphorus in about 85 percent of the fields used for tobacco. Under this soil condition, no more than 5 pounds of phosphorus in the transplant water is sufficient to promote early season growth, specifically when cool, damp soil conditions are present just after transplanting. Applying a reduced rate of phosphorus in the transplant water greatly increases phosphorus use efficiency while reducing the risk of runoff into nearby bodies of water. In addition, phosphorus continues to be one of the more expensive nutrients required for crop production in general (Figure 5-1); therefore, reduced application rates for tobacco production will also reduce the cost of a desired fertility program. Potassium is leachable, especially in deep, sandy soils, and a good crop removes about 90 pounds per acre (as  $K_2O$ ). However, about 60 percent of our tobacco soils contain at least “high” levels of available potassium because of more abundant soil sources and excessive application. Also, subsoils in tobacco fields often contain substantial amounts of potassium and other leachable nutrients that are seldom measured by soil tests because only topsoils are usually sampled (Table 5-9). These results represent primarily coastal plain soils and should be considered as preliminary at this point. But they do provide additional evidence that application of several leachable nutrients above soil test recommendations usually does not improve tobacco yield and quality, but does increase production costs. In addition, overapplication increases the potential for these nutrients to reach our ponds and streams by soil and water movement.

**Table 5-9. Average soil test levels of several nutrients in topsoils and subsoils of 13 flue-cured tobacco fields, 1999–2000**

Soil Horizon	Soil Nutrients				
	(Availability Index) <sup>a</sup>			(% of CEC)	
	P	K	S	Ca	Mg
Topsoil	123	56	41	45	12.9
Subsoil	35	63	122	48	17.3

<sup>a</sup> 0–10 = very low; 11–25 = low; 26–50 = medium; 51–100 = high; 100+ = very high.

Potassium has long been overapplied due to relatively low material cost and the affinity the tobacco plant has for the nutrient. However, it is likely that producers can reduce total potassium input by as much as 10 to 20 percent without reducing leaf yield or quality. Recent research efforts focused on potassium nutrition indicate that as little as 75 pounds of  $K_2O$  per acre is sufficient for soils with medium to high potassium indices, medium to fine texture, and less than 10 inches to clay. While these specific soil conditions might be more common in the Piedmont than the Coastal Plain region of the state, the overall message is still valid: potassium rates can be reduced without having a negative impact on crop growth/development. In areas marked by deep, sandy soil types, a split application of potassium (1/2 the full rate after transplanting and 1/2 the full rate at layby) can mitigate some of the risk associated with excessive rainfall and nutrient loss.

### ***Secondary Nutrients***

The secondary nutrients of concern for tobacco are calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), and sulfur (S). These nutrients are called secondary because they are usually needed by most crops in smaller amounts than the primary nutrients. However, they must be available in adequate amounts for good yields and quality.

**Calcium and magnesium (dolomitic lime).** If soil pH is kept within the desirable range of 5.8 to 6.2 with dolomitic limestone, the available levels of calcium and magnesium will usually be high enough to meet the needs of the crop. Otherwise, 40 to 50 pounds of calcium (Ca) and 15 to 20 pounds of magnesium (Mg) per acre are needed from the N-P-K fertilizer. Even with proper liming, some magnesium deficiency may occur on deep, sandy soils (more than 15 inches to clay) under severe leaching conditions. In these instances, supplying 15 to 20 pounds of magnesium per acre in the fertilizer may be desirable in the second and third seasons after lime application. However, using N-P-K fertilizers containing calcium and magnesium will not substitute for using dolomitic lime if soil pH is too low. Be especially aware of low soil pH. The state's latest soil test summaries show that just over 25 percent of the tobacco fields tested in the last several years have had a pH lower than 5.5, with piedmont soils generally being more acidic than those in the coastal plain.

Calcium deficiencies are sometimes observed in North Carolina across a wide range of soil types and growing conditions, although they are more common during periods of rapid plant growth and are more typically observed near topping. Calcium is not mobile within the plant, and as a result, deficiency is most often observed in younger leaves. Producers should be aware that Ca deficiencies are transient and will often disappear after topping occurs. When topping occurs, most of the affected tissue is removed from the plant. Furthermore, topping stimulates additional root growth which can promote additional Ca uptake from the soil. Research in North Carolina has demonstrated that applications of Ca beyond what is applied through liming materials does not improve Ca uptake by the plant; therefore, foliar applications of Ca are not recommended during the season. In a study conducted during the 2015 growing season, liquid Ca was applied through foliar applications at rates supplying as much as 50 pounds Ca per acre. In this study leaf

yield was not increased with the addition of Ca. Furthermore, severe leaf injury was observed where Ca was applied due to high salt content within the solution.

**Sulfur (S).** Sulfur deficiencies are most likely on deep, sandy soils (more than 15 inches to clay) that are low in humic matter (less than 0.5 percent). Because sulfur leaches, deficiencies are more likely in these soils following heavy rainfall in the winter and spring, especially if sulfur is omitted from the fertilizer of the next tobacco crop.

Symptoms of sulfur deficiency are very similar to (and are often mistaken for) symptoms of nitrogen deficiency. When a plant is low in nitrogen, the lower leaves are paler than the upper leaves and “burn up” prematurely. However, sulfur deficiency begins as yellowing in the buds; the leaves gradually pale from top to bottom, and the lower leaves do not “burn up” prematurely unless nitrogen is also deficient. Because sulfur is required for nitrogen use in the plant, adding high rates of nitrogen to sulfur-deficient crops will not turn the crops green, and can, in fact, reduce leaf quality. Therefore, accurate diagnosis of the deficiency is very important and often requires tissue analysis.

Soil tests for sulfur are sometimes unreliable. Therefore, to reduce the chance of sulfur deficiency on deep, sandy soils, add 20 to 30 pounds of sulfur (S) per acre from the N-P-K fertilizer every year. Sulfur deficiency occurring before layby can be corrected by banding 100 to 150 pounds of Sul-Po-Mag or potassium sulfate (0-0-50) as soon as possible after the deficiency is identified. However, sulfur deficiency on soils less than about 12 inches to clay is often temporary, even when no extra sulfur is applied, because adequate sulfur is usually contained in subsoils (Table 5-9) and will be absorbed as roots reach this depth.

### ***Micronutrients***

The soil test report for tobacco shows a \$ symbol in the “Suggested Treatment” block for copper (Cu) and zinc (Zn), and a \$pH symbol for manganese (Mn), if the availability index for one of these micronutrients is low. The \$ symbol indicates that corrective treatment may be beneficial, but it is uncertain that tobacco will respond to application of copper or zinc. The \$pH symbol appears on the report when soil pH is greater than 6.1 and the manganese availability index is less than 26 (low or very low). The symbols also call attention to an enclosed note, also identified by a \$ symbol, that provides information on suggested rates, sources, and application methods for these three micronutrients.

Crops differ in their response to micronutrients, and tobacco is considered less sensitive to low soil levels than other crops, such as corn, soybeans, and small grains. Micronutrients are also somewhat expensive, depending on the kind and source. Therefore, their application for tobacco is not likely to be beneficial unless indicated by soil or tissue analyses. When in doubt, use tissue analysis or strip testing on several rows to confirm a micronutrient need.

**Copper (Cu) and zinc (Zn).** Known deficiencies of copper or zinc are extremely rare for tobacco. Rates suggested on the soil test report will be sufficient for several years, and future test results should be used to determine if and when copper and zinc should be reapplied.

**Manganese (Mn).** Manganese deficiency begins to show on the lower leaves as flecks very similar to those caused by high ozone concentrations in the air (commonly called weather fleck). While weather fleck can occur anywhere in the state, manganese deficiency occurs primarily on low-manganese, overlimed soils in the coastal plain. Using too much lime causes soil pH to increase, which reduces manganese availability to plant roots. Tobacco plants that develop manganese deficiency are grown on soils with a pH of 6.2 or higher and low levels of soil manganese (availability index less than 26). Based on recent soil test results, 7 percent of the tobacco soils in the coastal plain were pH 6.5 or above. Therefore, tobacco planted in these soils is at risk for manganese deficiency, particularly on soil types such as Goldsboro, which have slightly higher organic matter than other coastal plains soils. Tobacco performs well when soil pH stays in the 5.8 to 6.2 range. Other major crops, such as soybeans, corn, and small grains, also perform well in this pH range if soil phosphorus is high. Therefore, when these crops are in rotation with tobacco, they usually should not be limed at rates higher than those suggested by the soil test for tobacco.

Tissue analysis of flecked leaves, along with a soil test, is the best way to distinguish between manganese deficiency and weather fleck. However, it is important to submit leaf and soil samples as soon as flecking occurs because several days are required to complete analyses. If the problem is manganese deficiency, a corrective treatment should be made as soon as possible. If weather fleck is the culprit, only cooler, drier weather will help.

Manganese deficiency can be corrected by soil or foliar application of several manganese sources. Manganese sulfate is a relatively soluble, inexpensive source that can be used for soil or foliar treatment. The more expensive chelated sources generally perform satisfactorily as foliar sprays but are not superior to sulfates when applied to the soil. For soil applications, mixing the manganese source with acid-forming fertilizers increases its effectiveness, and banding is usually better than broadcasting. Do not broadcast manganese on soils with a pH greater than 6.1 because it will be converted to a less available form. For band application, special blends may be required because premium fertilizers usually do not contain enough manganese to correct a deficiency. When applying manganese, the general recommendation for actual Mn in North Carolina is to add about three pounds per acre banded, 10 pounds per acre broadcast, or 0.5 pound per acre as a foliar spray. Foliar application of manganese is an efficient way of correcting an unexpected deficiency because lower rates are often as effective as much higher rates of soil-applied manganese.

**Chloride (Cl).** There is no suitable soil test for chloride, but this nutrient is included in most N-P-K tobacco fertilizers. You will apply sufficient chloride when you use N-P-K fertilizers guaranteeing chloride at rates suggested in Table 5-8. Suggested rates of most fumigants also supply adequate amounts of chloride as chlorine; when Telone C-17 or Chlor-O-Pic is used, the

N-P-K fertilizer does not need to contain chloride. Otherwise, the fertilizer should include enough chloride to provide a maximum of 20 to 30 pounds per acre. Higher rates will not improve yield but can reduce quality. Chloride may not be included in some fertilizers, particularly blends or liquids, unless requested by the grower.

Excessive rates or improper application of some micronutrients can cause toxicity. Contact your county Extension agent if you suspect you had a micronutrient problem in 2015 or if your soil test indicates that a problem might occur in 2016. Your agent can help you decide whether treatment is advisable and, if so, which sources, rates, and application methods are most effective.

**Boron.** Deficiencies of boron (B) have been documented in North Carolina. There are a number of factors, such as rainfall, soil type, and choice of fertilizer program, that likely contribute to deficiency. Producers should be aware that the range of B deficiency and toxicity is very narrow and that the deficiency should be confirmed prior to B application. Research has demonstrated a positive response in plants receiving 0.5 pounds of elemental B per acre in a foliar application of the nutrient. Alternatively, B toxicity has occurred when foliar application rates are increased to 1.0 pound of elemental B per acre. Producers should contact their local Extension agent if a suspected deficiency is observed and exercise extreme caution when making supplemental applications.

## 6. MANAGING WEEDS

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Herbicides are only part of a total weed management program that should include crop rotation, early stalk and root destruction, cultivation, and hand removal. Total reliance on herbicides is costly, less effective, environmentally detrimental, and unsound weed management. A rapidly growing tobacco crop aids weed control by shading beds and row middles. Weed problems are much worse when crop growth is restricted because of disease problems, fertilizer injury, or chemical injury. Therefore, it is important to follow practices that promote healthy tobacco roots: crop rotation, disease control, fertilizer application during or within ten days after transplanting, proper pesticide usage, and liming.

Some weeds, such as nutsedge, ragweed, and pigweed, differ in susceptibility to herbicides (Table 6-1). Therefore, keeping accurate field records of the species and population of weeds will help you select the proper herbicide and apply it at the right rate.

The herbicides labeled for use on tobacco control weeds in three ways:

- They restrict cell division during seed germination (Prowl, Tillam, and Devrinol).
- They are absorbed by emerging roots and shoots before affecting photosynthesis (Command).
- They affect plant metabolism (Spartan or Spartan Charge, Aim, and Poast).

Most of these herbicides have little effect on weed seeds that do not germinate (dormant seeds) or when applied postemergence (except for Poast and Aim, which only affect emerged weeds). It is common for susceptible weeds to emerge before they are controlled in fields treated with Spartan Charge, particularly after it rains following a prolonged dry period.

**Table 6-1. Expected weed control from herbicides labeled for use in tobacco**

Weeds	Command	Devrinol	Poast	Prowl	Spartan Charge	Tillam	Aim
Barnyardgrass	E	GE	E	GE	F	GE	N
Bermudagrass	PF	P	FG	P	P	P	N
Broadleaf signalgrass	E	G	E	G	F	P	N
Crabgrass	E	E	GE	E	F	E	N
Crowfootgrass	E	E	FG	E	F	E	N
Fall panicum	E	G	E	GE	—	G	N
Foxtails	E	E	E	E	F	E	N
Goosegrass	E	E	GE	E	F	G	N
Johnsongrass (seedlings)	G	F	E	G	—	G	N
Sandbur	G	—	FG	G	—	G	P
Texas panicum	G	—	E	G	F	P	N
Nutsedge	P	P	N	P	E	FG	N
Cocklebur	F	P	N	P	FG	P	G
Common purslane	FG	E	N	P	G	G	G
Hairy galinsoga	G	PF	N	P	G	P	P
Jimsonweed	G	P	N	P	—	P	G
Lambsquarters	G	G	N	G	E	G	G
Morningglory	P	P	N	P	E	P	E
Pigweed	P	G	N	G	E	G	E
Prickly sida	E	P	N	P	G	P	P
Ragweed, common	G	F	N	P	P	P	N
Ragweed, giant	PF	PF	N	P	—	P	N
Sicklepod	P	P	N	P	P	P	P
Smartweed	G	P	N	P	E	P	G

Note: Ratings are based on average to good soil and weather conditions for herbicide performance and on proper application rate, technique, and timing.

E = Excellent control, 90% or better.    G = Good control, 80%–90%.

F = Fair control, 60%–80%.                P = Poor control, 1%–59%.

N = No control.

## PROBLEM WEEDS

### **Nutsedge**

High populations of yellow nutsedge, purple nutsedge, or both are often a problem in tobacco fields. Yellow nutsedge occurs throughout North Carolina, and purple nutsedge is normally found in eastern and southeastern counties. Purple nutsedge has a reddish-purple to brown seedhead, and the bitter-tasting tubers occur in chains connected by rhizomes. Yellow nutsedge has a



yellow seedhead with single, sweet-tasting tubers on each rhizome. Purple nutsedge is more difficult to control than yellow nutsedge.

Spartan Charge and Tillam are both labeled for nutsedge control. Spartan Charge provides excellent control of both nutsedge species (although slightly better control of yellow than purple), and Tillam provides good control (Table 6-1). Studies have found that labeled and below-labeled rates of Spartan 4F (down to 6.0 ounces of Spartan 4F) provided good to excellent control of yellow nutsedge. Control was poor at one location with pretransplanting (PRE-T) applications of Spartan 4F at labeled and below-labeled rates, which was likely due to low soil moisture at and immediately following transplanting.

Yellow nutsedge control from Tillam and Spartan Charge is similar for the first 2 to 3 weeks after transplanting. However, late-season nutsedge and grass control are poor with Tillam. Tillam is short-lived in the soil, so applying it several weeks before transplanting, which is common in fumigated fields, greatly decreases control. Spartan Charge provides season-long control of nutsedge and better grass control than Tillam. However, there are significant rotational restrictions on the Spartan Charge label for cotton and sweet potatoes. If either of these two crops is planned for the year following tobacco, Tillam is the only herbicidal option for nutsedge control.

In fields with a history of high grass populations, try combinations with Command (soil incorporated or applied to the soil surface before transplanting), Prowl (soil incorporated), or a remedial application of Poast (over-the-top or directed).

### ***Morningglories***

Several species of morningglory occur in tobacco fields throughout North Carolina. Morningglory vines wrap around leaves and stalks, interfere with harvest, and end up as foreign matter in cured leaves. This is especially true when mechanical harvesters are used. Spartan Charge is the only herbicide labeled for tobacco that will control morningglories preemergence. Although control of morningglories is more consistent when Spartan Charge is incorporated before transplanting (PPI), injury to tobacco is less likely with PRE-T applications of Spartan Charge than with PPI applications. Aim will control morningglories postemergence, but it must be applied in a manner that prevents contact of spray solution with the tobacco plant and must be applied prior to layby or after first harvest (see the discussion of Aim in “Herbicide Application Post-directed Prior to Layby or After First Harvest” section below).

### ***Annual Grasses***

Large crabgrass, goosegrass, and broadleaf signalgrass are the most common grass species found in tobacco fields. Command, Prowl, and Poast offer excellent control of these grasses. Command and Prowl provide similar grass control but offer different strengths depending on location, rotation, and application method as described on their respective labels. If small grains are grown for harvest immediately after tobacco or if the plant-back requirements for susceptible plants cannot be met for Command, then Prowl is the better choice. If common ragweed is

expected, Command is preferable and can be tank-mixed with Spartan Charge or Tillam for improved grass control (compared to Spartan Charge or Tillam alone).

In past studies, pretransplant-incorporated treatments of Spartan Charge/Prowl resulted in significant tobacco stunting, and the Tillam 6E/Prowl combination has also resulted in excessive stunting. If Prowl is needed in combination with Spartan Charge, broadcast and incorporate the Prowl before bedding to comply with the current label. Then apply the Spartan Charge to the soil surface on knocked-down beds just before transplanting. Poast can be applied overtop to actively growing grass weeds up to 42 days before harvest. One advantage of Poast is that it can be used for remedial control of grass weeds in fields where populations are not known or when problems develop after transplanting.

### ***Common Ragweed***

The presence of common ragweed in tobacco fields is related to higher incidence of Granville wilt because populations of the disease-causing bacterium can survive on the roots of this weed. Ragweed control in a rotational crop and especially in skip-rows and field borders is necessary to reduce populations of this weed and the persistent soilborne bacteria that cause Granville wilt. Command offers good control, and Devrinol provides fair control.

### ***Redroot Pigweed and Palmer Amaranth***

These large, aggressive weeds can grow as tall as tobacco and interfere with harvest. Spartan Charge and Prowl provide the best control, and Tillam and Devrinol provide good preemergence control. Based on limited data, it appears that control of redroot pigweed is good to excellent at lower-than-labeled rates of Spartan Charge, but that Palmer amaranth control is poor with lower than labeled rates. Prowl and Devrinol can be applied at layby for additional residual control of pigweed. Neither herbicide has postemergence activity on pigweed and both must be applied before seedling emergence for acceptable control. In situations where dry conditions may have prevented full activation and maximum control with Spartan Charge, additional residual pigweed control may be needed to prevent late-season applications. (See the discussion of layby herbicides later in this chapter.) Aim will control small redroot pigweed and Palmer amaranth postemergence, but it must be applied in a manner that prevents contact of spray solution with the tobacco plant and must be applied prior to layby or after first harvest (see the discussion of Aim in “Herbicide Application Post-directed Prior to Layby or After First Harvest” section below).

### ***Horsenettle***

Horsenettle (or ball brier) is a deep-rooted perennial that is present in tobacco fields throughout North Carolina. This weed is a host for tobacco mosaic virus, but none of the herbicides labeled for tobacco control it. Control measures in a rotational crop such as corn are effective and can reduce the potential for tobacco mosaic virus when tobacco is planted in following years.

## CULTIVATION

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Herbicides can reduce the number of cultivations needed to produce a profitable, high-quality crop. However, properly timed cultivations are still an important weed and crop management tool.

Cultivation helps manage weeds not controlled effectively by herbicides. It also can improve weed control with soil-surface-applied herbicides, such as Command and Spartan Charge, in dry periods soon after transplanting. However, excessive and deep cultivation can decrease the effectiveness of surface-applied herbicides by removing them from row-middles. Extend weed control with these herbicides by limiting deep cultivation to layby time.

Cultivation is also a good crop management tool. For example, building a high row ridge improves drainage, which aids disease management and decreases drowning. Cultivation also improves aeration and water penetration by decreasing crusting. However, excessive cultivation increases leaching of potassium and nitrogen, injures root systems, increases leaf scald in hot weather, spreads tobacco mosaic virus, and contributes to soil erosion.

## HERBICIDE SELECTION AND APPLICATION

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Certain herbicides may be soil incorporated or applied to the soil surface before transplanting, within 7 days after transplanting, or at layby (Table 6-3). There are advantages and disadvantages to each application time depending on the herbicide and weed population. Remember that proper identification of weeds is essential for proper herbicide selection (Table 6-1) and that county Extension agents can help with identification. Also, always read the label before purchasing an herbicide to see whether the product controls the problem weed, to determine the proper rate, and to be aware of rotational restrictions.

### ***Spartan and Spartan Charge***

Spartan 4F has been the formulation for sulfentrazone used for several years in flue-cured tobacco. Sulfentrazone is also sold under the brand name of Spartan Charge, which contains a premix of sulfentrazone and carfentrazone-ethyl, the active ingredient in Aim herbicide. Both Spartan and Spartan Charge are labeled for use in flue-cured tobacco. However, the formulated amount of the active ingredient sulfentrazone is different. Growers should refer to the label as well as the conversion table below (Table 6-2) for conversion of the rate of Spartan Charge to deliver the correct amount of active ingredient. The addition of carfentrazone-ethyl to Spartan Charge does not increase residual activity over Spartan 4F but may provide additional burndown activity of broadleaf weeds, if any are present, when making a typical PRE-T or PPI application. Spartan Charge is not labeled for a layby application directed at the base of tobacco plants.

In this chapter, discussion of the use of Spartan is interchangeable with Spartan Charge. Growers are reminded, however, to refer to the label for the appropriate rates given a particular soil texture.

**Table 6-2. Conversion table for rate of Spartan 4F and Spartan Charge**

<b>Spartan 4F</b>	<b>Pounds Active Sulfentrazone</b>	<b>Spartan Charge</b>
4 oz	0.125	5 oz
4.5 oz	0.141	5.75 oz
6 oz	0.188	7.6 oz
6.9 oz	0.215	8.75 oz
8 oz	0.250	10.2 oz
10 oz	0.313	12.7 oz
12 oz	0.380	15.2 oz

**Pretransplant-Incorporated Herbicides (PPI)**

Pretransplant-incorporated herbicides offer several advantages. Growers can tank-mix them with other chemicals to save one or more trips across the field, and rainfall isn’t as essential for activity with them as it is for surface-applied herbicides. In addition, when poor field conditions delay transplanting, pretransplant-incorporated herbicides help prevent weed growth that may start in the freshly prepared soil.

The most important disadvantage is crop injury. Prowl, Tillam, and Devrinol have the potential to limit root growth and cause slow early season growth (stunting). Stunting is most likely during cool, wet springs. Poor incorporation, applying high rates, and tank-mixing two or more of these herbicides increase the chance of root injury.

Command occasionally causes leaf whitening, which is not a concern because the plant color returns to normal and growth is not restricted. Spartan Charge does not affect root growth directly; however, foliar symptoms and stunting have been observed. Foliar symptoms include browning along the lateral veins and midveins and the leaf area between the lateral veins. As with other herbicides, stunting is more severe with cool temperatures, low rainfall, or other environmental stresses. Also, using a proper application rate and uniformly incorporating Spartan Charge is critical. The activity of Spartan Charge is strongly related to soil texture and organic matter, with injury most likely on coarse-textured, low-organic-matter soils.

Studies have found few differences in stunting between labeled and below-labeled rates of Spartan (down to 6.0 ounces of Spartan 4F). This is important to note, because using Spartan Charge at rates below what is labeled may not provide desirable control of all susceptible weeds. In fact, the application method rather than the rate had the greatest impact on stunting in all treatments in these studies. Stunting ranged from 0 to 8 percent when Spartan 4F was applied PRE-T compared to 3 to 31 percent with PPI applications. Therefore, the most consistent way to reduce risk for stunting from Spartan is to apply it PRE-T. The primary risk associated with PRE-T applications of Spartan Charge is that early season weed control may be limited when soil moisture is low at (or immediately following) transplanting. Also, recovery from stunting is typically rapid, especially under favorable growing conditions, and no yield loss has been recorded in multiple tests when labeled rates of Spartan 4F were used.

Spartan Charge is often tank-mixed with Command to broaden the spectrum of weeds controlled by either herbicide alone. In addition, field, greenhouse, and laboratory research has shown that adding Command in a tank mix with Spartan 4F can reduce injury. In some cases, when Spartan 4F injury was severe, plots treated with a Spartan 4F and Command tank mix had half as much early season stunting as those treated with Spartan 4F alone.

If stunting from any herbicide occurs, it is important to remember that slow plant growth is due to a poor root system or herbicidal effect rather than a lack of nutrients. Applying more nitrogen will not increase the growth rate but will contribute to rank growth, slow ripening, more unripe grades, and lower prices at the warehouse.

Poor incorporation is an important factor in crop injury. Uneven incorporation leads to areas of concentrated herbicide in the soil. When tobacco is transplanted into an area of high concentration, root growth is restricted, resulting in root-bare areas often found on shanks of stunted plants when Prowl, Tillam, or Devrinol was applied. With Spartan Charge or Command, the roots absorb more of the chemical, which results in foliar symptoms.

Tractor speed, disk shape, and disk size are all important for uniform incorporation. Finishing or smoothing harrows with small, spherical disks and field cultivators incorporate chemicals more uniformly than cutting harrows with cone-shaped disks. Also, finishing harrows and field cultivators incorporate the chemical half as deep as the implements run, whereas larger cutting harrows incorporate approximately two-thirds as deep as the disks are run. Deep incorporation increases the probability that the herbicide will contact tobacco root systems and injure them.

Tractor speed should be at least 4 to 6 miles per hour (mph), and the field should be cross-disked to distribute the chemical more evenly. Disking once and bedding the rows will not incorporate the herbicide uniformly. You should never rely on the bedding operation alone to incorporate an herbicide. Doing so drastically increases the probability of crop injury while decreasing the effectiveness of the herbicide. Herbicides should always be incorporated with the proper equipment before bedding. Rebedding fields treated with a surface application of Spartan Charge can cause significant plant injury. This is because the rebedding operation concentrates the herbicide in the root zone of tobacco.

Research has found no consistent differences in Spartan 4F injury related to incorporation equipment in any of four experiments. Researchers considered the effects of no incorporation before bedding; incorporation with a disk; incorporation with a field cultivator; and PRE-T application to the soil surface. The lowest levels of injury were consistently observed with PRE-T applications. The type of incorporation equipment is only one factor that can influence distribution of the herbicide in the soil. Crop injury also can result from soil-applied herbicide movement during bedding and transplanting. Also, recent research using radio-labeled Spartan 4F shows that uptake, translocation, and metabolism in tobacco is very rapid and that metabolism of Spartan 4F by tobacco is likely the source of crop tolerance. Therefore, crop injury can occur because of poor incorporation of Spartan Charge, decreased metabolism due to transplant stress, or both.

Injury can be reduced by applying pretransplant herbicides at the lowest labeled rate that field and weed conditions allow, incorporating the herbicide properly, and applying only one PRE-T-incorporated herbicide (with the exception of Command, which can be safely tank-mixed with other herbicides).

Devrinol and Command may leave residues that stunt small-grain growth, as indicated on the product label, especially when they are soil-incorporated. If the small-grain crop is used only as a cover crop, this stunting is not a problem. The potential for carryover can be reduced by making band applications to the soil surface rather than by using soil incorporation or broadcast surface application. Check the label for restrictions on rotational crops and the use of cover crops.

### ***Herbicide Application to Soil Surface Before Transplanting (PRE-T)***

Command and Spartan Charge are labeled for soil-surface application before transplanting in addition to the more traditional pretransplant-incorporated method. This method is common in other crops but new to tobacco.

When applying herbicides PRE-T, apply other chemicals, including insecticides, nematicides, and fumigants, in the usual way before bedding. Before transplanting, knock down the beds to transplanting height and apply the herbicides to the soil surface. For best results, knock down the beds as close as possible to the time of transplanting (keeping in mind the worker reentry restriction on the Spartan Charge and Command labels). Do not knock off additional soil during transplanting.

Herbicides applied to the soil surface depend on water to move into the soil where weed seeds germinate. Therefore, the PRE-T application method fits well in irrigated situations. If rainfall does not occur within three to five days, a light cultivation may aid in activating the herbicide. Lack of rainfall early in the season can result in reduced weed control when herbicides are applied to the soil surface. Reduced weed control due to low soil moisture was observed with Spartan4F applied PRE-T in some fields.

Spartan Charge has excellent activity on nutsedge, morningglories, and pigweeds. It is the only herbicide labeled for tobacco that controls morningglories, and it controls nutsedge better than Tillam. Spartan Charge controls grass better than Tillam but not as well as Prowl or Command. If high populations of annual grasses are expected, combinations of Command/Spartan Charge or Prowl/Spartan Charge provide better control than Spartan Charge alone (Table 6-1).

Studies have shown that tank-mixing Spartan 4F with below-labeled rates of Command can enhance control of large crabgrass when compared to equivalent rates of Command alone. Spartan 4F tank-mixed with half the labeled rate of Command controlled large crabgrass as well as a full rate of Command applied alone. Therefore, not only can tank-mixing Spartan Charge/Command reduce injury to tobacco from Spartan Charge; you can use a reduced rate of Command and still obtain excellent control of large crabgrass. Spartan 4F tank-mixed with Devrinol showed similar enhancement of grass control. However, Devrinol does not give as good

season-long control of annual grasses as Command. This represents only one year of data, so results may vary from one year to the next. Also, if ragweed is a problem, then reducing the rate of Command would not give adequate control.

Because of potential carryover of Spartan Charge, there is an 18-month planting restriction for cotton and a 12-month restriction for sweet potatoes. Therefore, careful planning for these crops in rotation with tobacco will be necessary if Spartan Charge is applied.

### ***Herbicide Application Overtop Within 7 Days After Transplanting (OT)***

Command and Devrinol are labeled for application overtop of tobacco within seven days after transplanting. This method provides weed control similar to PRE-T application and offers the flexibility of application after transplanting. Application at transplanting is usually preferable to waiting up to seven days because it saves a trip through the field and the herbicide is in place before weed seedlings emerge.

### ***Herbicide Application at Layby***

In fields with high row ridges, previously applied herbicides are moved along with treated soil from between the rows onto the row ridge. This justifies layby applications of herbicide to row middles in fields with a history of severe grass problems.

Layby applications help extend grass control when a short-lived herbicide such as Tillam is used. Also, a layby application of Devrinol or Prowl following the earlier soil-incorporated Tillam will extend grass and small-seeded broadleaf (such as Palmer amaranth) control, and crop injury will be less than when a tank mix of Tillam and Devrinol or Prowl is used.

Some growers use drop nozzles to apply the herbicides to the row middles at layby. Devrinol can contact tobacco buds without injury, but avoid applying Prowl to tobacco buds to prevent injury. As with overtop applications, applying Devrinol and Tillam at layby depends on rainfall to move the chemicals into the soil and to make them active on germinating weed seed. They must be applied after a layby cultivation, which is necessary to remove existing weeds.

Using a herbicide at layby usually increases weed control in wet seasons. But yield is seldom increased unless weed populations are heavy. Therefore, layby applications should be considered on a year-to-year basis and used only when the season and weed situation justify the treatment.

There has been renewed interest in layby herbicide applications because of the prevalence of Palmer amaranth in many areas of North Carolina. Where dry conditions may have prevented maximum activation and control from PRE-T or PPI applications, Palmer amaranth has the ability to germinate mid- and late-season in the rows as well as row middles. In these situations, a layby herbicide should be considered. Unfortunately, there are few herbicide options that will provide postemergence control of Palmer amaranth; therefore, it is critical to recognize where the need for additional residual control will be needed and make the applications prior to pigweed emergence.

### ***Herbicide Application Postemergence Overtop***

Poast can be applied to actively growing grasses in newly transplanted tobacco up to 42 days before harvest. Application rates vary from 1 to 1.5 pints per acre, depending upon the size of grass weeds. Grasses must be fully covered by spray to ensure control. Add two pints of crop oil concentrate or one pint of Dash HC spray adjuvant according to label directions. Apply Poast overtop or directed in a band.

Poast may be desirable in many of the same situations mentioned in the above discussion of herbicide applications at layby. The main difference between Poast and other grass herbicides labeled for use on tobacco is that it is applied to actively growing grass weeds after emergence (see label for maximum height of weeds controlled). This allows growers to delay grass herbicide application until grass populations are known, or to provide control of grasses after other measures have failed.

### ***Herbicide Application Post-directed Prior to Layby or After First Harvest***

Aim can be applied using a shielded sprayer or hooded sprayer to emerged, actively growing weeds in the row middles prior to layby. Aim can also be applied after first harvest when nozzles are directed underneath the crop canopy. Damage can result if spray solution contacts the tobacco plant. Do not apply when conditions favor drift. Refer to the Aim label for specific recommendations regarding application precautions in tobacco. Also refer to the "Sprayer Calibration" section below for information on banded applications. Additionally, when Aim is used for weed suppression additional sprayer cleanout is commonly necessary to decrease chemical residue in tanks, spray lines, and nozzles.

## **WEED SEED CONTAMINATION IN CURED TOBACCO**

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There is growing concern over weed seed contamination in tobacco exported to foreign markets. Weed seed have been found in shipments of tobacco to China. Many of those weed species are listed on the Chinese government's quarantine list. At this point the Chinese government has not exercised the right to reject shipments, but this could change in the future. Weed seed contamination is a likely result of mechanical harvesters pulling in entire plants during the harvesting process. Growers should be aware that even when whole plants are removed prior to curing, the seeds are often left behind.

Practical ways to reduce weed seed in cured tobacco:

- Use an appropriate weed control program. Weed control programs are comprehensive plans that involve the use of labeled herbicides for tobacco production, post-transplanting cultivation, and hand weeding to remove larger weeds that herbicides and/or cultivation do not control. A comprehensive list of labeled herbicides and recommended application rates can be found at the end of this chapter and in the *2016 North Carolina Agricultural Chemicals Manual*.



- Consider deep tillage (> 8 inches) during field preparation. This will bury viable weed seed at a depth where germination is not feasible. Research in other crops has demonstrated that when certain seed are buried at this depth and left in place for an extended period of time (36 months), their viability is reduced to less than 10 percent. Producers should be aware that deep tillage by itself is not enough to ensure complete weed control in tobacco production and does not take the place of an effective herbicide program. Research at NCSU has indicated that the benefits of seed burial are typically not observed after layby, particularly where aggressive post-transplanting cultivation has occurred. While cultivation is a necessary component of crop management, the practice can re-expose weed seed previously buried through deep tillage.
- Keep field borders free of weeds. As mechanical harvesters turn around at the end of harvest rows, they can pull up any large weeds that are present.
- Be aware that the high temperature (165°F) reached during the stem-drying phase is not high enough to kill seed.
- If fields display excessive weed pressure during the season, use manual labor to remove them before they begin to develop seed. If seed development does take place, hand removal may spread the seed to tobacco leaves. In addition, once weeds are pulled, remove them from the field, as this will prevent the seed bank from being replenished. This practice is also recommended in fields with a relatively low number of weed escapes, as just a few weeds reaching maturity can produce enough seed to build a significant population the following season. This point is specifically true for Palmer amaranth, which can produce more than 500,000 seeds per plant. In this scenario, hand removal of weeds can occur without significant economic cost. Producers should realize that hand removal of weeds is a last line of defense and, much like herbicide use, is only a single component of a comprehensive weed control program.

## **MITIGATING RISK OF CROP PROTECTION AGENT DRIFT/ TANK CONTAMINATION**

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Residues from crop protection agents (CPAs), labeled for tobacco or not, have always been a concern to the U.S. tobacco industry. While those herbicides used in transgenic crop production are not labeled for direct use in tobacco production, there is risk that drift from application to adjacent crops (corn, cotton, and soybean) might occur under certain environmental conditions. If CPA drift is suspected, contact your local Cooperative Extension office and an agent can assist with diagnosis. In addition, it is in a producer's best interest to notify their contracting tobacco company or companies that drift is suspected, regardless of the herbicide. Being as transparent and proactive as possible with this issue will be your best option. What follows are ways to mitigate the risk of CPA drift or tank contamination.

- If planting herbicide-tolerant crops and tobacco on the same farming operation, do not use the same application equipment for all crops. Having dedicated tobacco equipment should be the first line of defense. If the same equipment must be used, refer to the

respective herbicide labels for appropriate sprayer cleanout guidelines. The 2016 North Carolina Agricultural Chemicals Manual is another information source for sprayer cleanout. Remember that rinse water must be disposed of according to federal, state, and local regulations.

- When applying CPAs, always follow the material label. Some materials have very specific information regarding application rate, application timing, nozzle selection, operating pressure (PSI), boom height during application, maximum wind speed, ground speed, buffer areas, and air temperature/humidity restrictions.
- **Communication** with neighboring farmers about what CPAs and crop technology are being used in surrounding areas is critical in reducing the chance of drift-related issues.

## SPRAYER CALIBRATION

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Proper sprayer calibration is essential to getting desired results from any pesticide and to minimize crop injury. Applying too much herbicide wastes money, could harm the environment, and may cause excessive root injury or pose a threat of carryover in the soil. Too little herbicide may give inadequate weed control.

Before calibration of a field sprayer, certain equipment repairs may be needed. Refer to the 2016 North Carolina Agricultural Chemicals Manual for proper cleaning procedures, nozzle selection, and other steps to be taken.

### **Broadcast Applications**

**Step 1.** After completing the necessary cleaning and repairs, fill the tank with clean water and calculate your speed under field conditions. It is always more accurate to calibrate a sprayer under field conditions than on a hard surface. Never rely on a tractor speedometer. Measure off 88 feet in the field, travel this distance, and record the time. Eighty-eight feet per minute equals 1 mph, so if you travel this distance in 15 seconds, for example, you are going 4 mph (20 seconds equals 3 mph).

**Step 2.** Using the desired pressure, catch the output from each nozzle with the tractor engine speed in revolutions per minute (rpm) set for the speed you traveled in the field; the tractor does not need to be in motion for you to measure the output. Catch the output from each nozzle in jars (or other suitable containers) for one minute, measure the water in fluid ounces or milliliters, and determine the average output of all nozzles. If a nozzle has an output that is 10 percent lower or higher than the average, replace it.

**Step 3.** Convert the average output per nozzle into gallons per minute (gpm) per nozzle using the following formula. For example, if the average output is 25 ounces per nozzle per minute:

$$\text{gpm} = \frac{25 \text{ oz/nozzle/minute}}{128 \text{ oz/gal}} = 0.195 \text{ gpm per nozzle.}$$

$$\text{Then, gpa (gal/a)} = \frac{\text{gpm} \times 5,940}{\text{mph} \times w}$$

where mph is the previously calculated speed and w is the average nozzle spacing in inches.

*An example.* You have a 10-nozzle boom with a nozzle spacing of 18 inches. You travel 88 feet in the field in 20 seconds, or 3 mph (see Step 1).

With the tractor standing still and the motor running at the same rpm traveled in the field, you catch the output from each nozzle at a desired pressure for 1 minute. You find that the average output for all 10 nozzles is 25 ounces per nozzle, or, if you are measuring in milliliters, 739 milliliters per nozzle (3,785 ml = 1 gallon).

$$\text{Calculate gpm: } \frac{25 \text{ oz}}{128 \text{ oz/gallon}} = 0.195 \text{ gpm}$$

$$\text{or } \frac{739 \text{ ml}}{3,785 \text{ ml/gallon}} = 0.195 \text{ gpm}$$

Now that you have gpm and mph you can calculate gpa:

$$\text{gpa} = \frac{\text{gpm} \times 5,940}{\text{mph} \times w}$$

$$\text{gpa} = \frac{0.195 \times 5,940}{3 \times 18}$$

$$\text{gpa} = 21.5$$

Suppose you want to apply 1.5 pints of an herbicide per acre, and you want to mix three hundred gallons. To determine how much herbicide to add to three hundred gallons of water:

$$\frac{(\text{recommended rate}) (\text{gal to mix})}{\text{gpa}} = \frac{(1.5 \text{ pt}) (300 \text{ gal})}{21.5 \text{ gpa}} = 21 \text{ pints}$$

This three hundred gallons will treat 14 acres (300 gal / 21.5 gpa = 14 acres). Therefore, you would add 21 pints of herbicide per three hundred gallons of water.

### **Band Applications**

Band applications of overtop herbicides provide an excellent opportunity to minimize costs without sacrificing weed control. Calibration for band applications is quite simple, but take care to calibrate correctly to avoid excessive application. If you attempt to band Spartan Charge over the bed before transplanting, be especially sure to calibrate properly. Serious crop injury will occur if rates that are intended for the field acre are concentrated into an 18- to 24-inch band.

To calibrate a sprayer for band application, use the previous gpa formula. However, instead of using the nozzle spacing for  $w$  in the formula, simply substitute the width of the band you are spraying. This will give you the number of gallons per treated acre, not per field acre. Once you obtain the number of gallons per treated acre, you must convert it to gallons per field acre using the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{gpa}}{(\text{per field acre})} = \frac{\text{Band width (inches)}}{\text{Row spacing (inches)}} \times \text{gpa (per treated acre)}$$

*An example.* You wish to apply Devrinol 50 DF at a rate of four pounds per treated acre in a 16-inch band on 48-inch rows. You follow the previously described calibration procedure (time the distance to travel 88 feet, catch output from nozzles, etc.) and obtain the average gallons per minute (gpm) per nozzle and the tractor speed (mph). Fill in the values in the formula, but substitute the band width for the average nozzle spacing ( $w$ ).

$$\text{gpa} = \frac{\text{gpm} \times 5,940}{\text{mph} \times w}$$

$$\text{gpa} = \frac{0.195 \times 5,940}{3 \times 16} = 24 \text{ (per treated acre)}$$

The sprayer is putting out 24 gallons per treated acre; or, put another way, the sprayer is putting out 24 gallons per acre in the treated band. But this rate will cover more than one acre of tobacco because you are spraying only one-third of the land. To obtain the number of gallons per field acre, use the previously mentioned formula:

$$\frac{\text{gpa}}{(\text{per field acre})} = \frac{\text{Band width (inches)}}{\text{Row spacing (inches)}} \times \text{gpa (per treated acre)}$$

$$\frac{\text{gpa}}{(\text{per field acre})} = \frac{16}{48} \times 24 = 8 \text{ gpa (per field acre)}$$

The sprayer is applying eight gallons per acre of land. But for every 24 gallons of water added to the tank, you add four pounds of Devrinol 50 DF. Suppose you add 150 gallons of water to your tank. To figure the acreage of tobacco this will cover:

$$\frac{150 \text{ gallons}}{8 \text{ gallons/acre}} = 18.75 \text{ acres}$$

*To figure the amount of Devrinol 50 DF to add to the tank:*

$$\frac{150 \text{ gallons}}{24 \text{ gallons/acre}} = 6.25 \times 4 \text{ pounds} = 25 \text{ pounds of Devrinol 50 DF per 150 gallons of water}$$

Or for every 24 gallons of water added to the tank, add 4 pounds of Devrinol 50 DF.

It is easy to see how band applications save money on herbicides. In this example, you can spray three acres of tobacco with the band application method for the same cost as spraying one acre with a broadcast application.

Other calibration methods are described in the *2016 North Carolina Agricultural Chemicals Manual*.

### ***Calibrating a Sucker Control Boom with Three Nozzles per Row***

The formula used to calibrate a broadcast application can be used to calibrate a sucker control boom with multiple nozzles per row. The only difference is that the output from the three nozzles for a given row should be combined and regarded as one nozzle. Then the output from the three nozzles should be converted into gpm, and the result should be entered into the formula.

*An example.* You have a four-row boom with three nozzles per row (two TG-3s on the outside and a TG-5 in the center). Your row spacing is 48 inches and you want to travel 3 mph, so you adjust your speed to travel 88 feet in 20 seconds. You catch the output from all three nozzles on a particular row. (Catch the output for each nozzle separately to make sure that similar-size nozzles are within 10 percent of each other.) Then combine the output for all three nozzles for 1 minute. Suppose it totals 4,550 milliliters, or 154 ounces.

$$gpm = \frac{4,550 \text{ ml/min}}{3,785 \text{ ml/gallon}} \text{ or } \frac{154 \text{ oz/min}}{128 \text{ oz/gal}} = 1.20 \text{ gpm}$$

Then enter that value into the formula:

$$gpa = \frac{1.20 \times 5,940}{3 \times 48} = 49.5$$

If you want to apply a 4 percent contact solution, add two gallons of contact per 48 gallons of water. This will apply a 4 percent contact at 49.5 gallons of total solution per acre.

### ***Some Useful Information for Calibrating a Sprayer***

88 ft/minute = 1 mph

1 gallon = 128 ounces

= 4 quarts

= 8 pints

= 16 cups

= 3.785 liters

= 3,785 milliliters

1 ounce = 29.6 milliliters

1 milliliter = 1 cubic centimeter

***A Precautionary Statement on Pesticides***

Pesticides must be used carefully to protect against human injury and harm to the environment. Diagnose your pest problem, and select the proper pesticide if one is needed. Follow label-use directions, and obey all federal, state, and local pesticide laws and regulations.

*(continued)*

**Table 6-3. Chemical weed control in tobacco.** NOTE: A mode of action code (MOA) developed by the Weed Science Society of America has been added to the Herbicide and Formulation column of this table. Use MOA codes for herbicide resistance management.

Crop	Weed	Herbicide, Mode of Action, and Formulation	Amount of Formulation Per Acre	Precautions and Remarks
<b>TOBACCO, FLUE-CURED Field, before Transplanting</b>	Most annual grasses and some broadleaf weeds plus nutsedge suppression	pebulate, MOA 8 (Tillam) 6 EC	2.7 qt	Apply to soil surface before bedding and immediately incorporate according to label instructions. Transplant as soon as possible. Early season stunting may occur under unfavorable growing conditions. Does not control cocklebur, morningglory, ragweed, or perennial weeds. Cultivate tobacco at least twice. See label for tank mixes with other pesticides.
	Some annual grasses and some broadleaf weeds	napropamide, MOA 17 (Devrinol) 2 XT (Devrinol) 50 DF	2 to 4 qt 2 to 4 lb	Lower rates usually adequate for most soils. Apply to soil surface and incorporate according to label instructions. Some early season stunting may occur under unfavorable growing conditions. Does not control cocklebur, morningglory, or perennial weeds. Gives some suppression of ragweed. NOTE: Do not seed crops not specified on label for 12 months after application.
	Most annual grasses and some broadleaf weeds	pendimethalin, MOA 3 (Prowl) 3.3 EC (Prowl) H <sub>2</sub> O	1.8 to 2.4 pt 1.6 to 2.1 pt	Can be applied up to 60 days before transplanting. Apply before bedding and incorporate into soil according to label instructions. Some early season stunting may occur under unfavorable growing conditions. Does not control cocklebur, morningglory, ragweed, or perennial weeds.
	Annual grasses and some broadleaf weeds	clomazone, MOA 13 (Command 3 ME) 3 ME	2 to 2.67 pt	Excellent annual grass control plus control of certain broadleaf weeds, such as prickly sida, jimsonweed, tropic croton, smartweed, and common ragweed. Partial control of cocklebur; does not control pigweed, sicklepod, or morningglory. Some whitening of lower leaves may occur but plants should recover. Do not plant small grains or alfalfa in the fall or following spring after Command application. Apply no more than once per season.
<b>TOBACCO, FLUE-CURED Field, before Transplanting</b>	Broadleaf weeds, nutsedges, and some grasses	sulfentrazone, MOA 14 (Spartan) 4F	4.5 to 12 fl oz	Excellent control of pigweed, morningglories, and nutsedges. Application rate is based on soil type and organic matter. See Spartan 4F and Spartan Charge label for rate determination and application methods. Early season stunting may occur especially when incorporated. Rainfall or irrigation needed within 7 to 10 days of application for maximum weed control, particularly when surface applied. Observe rotational crop guidelines on label.
		sulfentrazone + carfentrazone MOA 14 (Spartan Charge)	5.7 to 15.2 oz	

**Table 6-3. (continued)**

<b>Crop</b>	<b>Weed</b>	<b>Herbicide, Mode of Action, and Formulation</b>	<b>Amount of Formulation Per Acre</b>	<b>Precautions and Remarks</b>
<b>TOBACCO, FLUE-CURED Field, after transplanting</b>	Most annual grasses and some broadleaf weeds	napropamide, MOA 17 (Devrinol) 2 XT (Devrinol) 50 DF	2 to 4 qt 2 to 4 lb (broadcast, see label for band application)	Apply overtop immediately after transplanting tobacco. See remarks for Devrinol under "before transplanting." NOTE: Do not seed crops not specified on label for 12 months after application. Small grain seeded for cover crop in fall may be stunted. Do not use small grain for food or feed.
	Annual grass and some broadleaf weeds	clomazone, MOA 13 (Command 3 ME) 3 ME	2 to 2.67 pt	Excellent annual grass control plus control of certain broadleaf weeds, such as prickly sida, jimsonweed, tropic croton, smartweed, and common ragweed. Partial control of cocklebur; does not control pigweed, sicklepod, or morningglory. Make a single broadcast application in a minimum of 20 gal of water. Apply no more than once per season. Apply over the top of tobacco plants immediately, or up to 7 days after, transplanting but prior to emergence of weeds. Some whitening of lower leaves may occur, but plants should recover. Do not plant small grains or alfalfa in the fall or following spring after Command application.
<b>TOBACCO, FLUE-CURED Field, after transplanting</b>	Postemergence control of annual grasses	sethoxydim, MOA 1 (Poast) 1.5 EC	1 to 1.5 pt	Apply to actively growing grass not under drought stress. Apply in 5 to 20 gal of spray at 40 to 60 psi. Add 2 pt of crop oil concentrate per acre. Do not apply within 42 days of harvest. Do not apply more than 4 pt per acre per season. Complete coverage of grass required for control.
	Postemergence control of some broadleaf weeds	carfentrazone, MOA 14 (Aim) 2 EC	0.8 to 1.5 oz	Apply using SHIELDED SPRAYER or HOODED SPRAYER to emerged, actively growing weeds PRIOR TO LAYBY. Do not apply when conditions favor drift. MUST PREVENT CONTACT OF SPRAY SOLUTION WITH TOBACCO PLANT. See label for further instruction.



**Table 6-3.** *(continued)*

<b>Crop</b>	<b>Weed</b>	<b>Herbicide, Mode of Action, and Formulation</b>	<b>Amount of Formulation Per Acre</b>	<b>Precautions and Remarks</b>
<b>TOBACCO, FLUE-CURED Layby</b>	Most annual grasses and some broadleaf weeds	napropamide, MOA 17 (Devrinol) 2 XT (Devrinol) 50 DF	2 to 4 qt 2 to 4 lb (band; see label for band application)	Apply in a band to row middles immediately after last cultivation. Lower rates usually adequate for most tobacco soils. Incorporate lightly or sprinkler irrigate, if no rainfall within 3 days after application. Do not apply more than a total of 4 lb of Devrinol per acre in a season. See remarks for Devrinol under "Before Transplanting" and "After Transplanting."
		pendimethalin, MOA 3 (Prowl) 3.3 EC (Prowl) H <sub>2</sub> O	1.8 to 2.4 pt 1.6 to 2.1 pt	Apply to row middles immediately after last cultivation. Avoid contact with tobacco leaves. Use higher rate on medium- or fine-textured soils where grass infestation is heavy or if no herbicide was used previously. Rainfall or irrigation is needed within 7 days. Does not control emerged weeds.
<b>TOBACCO, FLUE-CURED After first harvest</b>	Postemergence control of some broadleaf weeds	carfentrazone, MOA 14 (Aim) 2 EC	0.8 to 1.5 oz	Apply AFTER FIRST HARVEST for control of actively growing, emerged weeds. Position nozzles 3 to 4 inches above the soil and directed underneath the crop canopy. Do not apply when conditions favor drift. MUST PREVENT CONTACT OF SPRAY SOLUTION WITH TOBACCO PLANT. See label for further instruction.

## 7. TOPPING, MANAGING SUCKERS, AND USING ETHEPHON

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Topping tobacco in the button stage (soon after the flower begins to appear) rather than later increases yield and body if suckers are controlled. When tobacco plants are not topped for three weeks after reaching the button stage, yields are reduced by 20 to 25 pounds per acre per day, or about 1 percent per acre per day when normal yields range from two thousand to 2,500 pounds per acre. Higher yields reduce per-pound production costs for acreage-related inputs such as chemicals, fertilizers, equipment, and some labor expenses. In addition to improved yield and quality, early topping has other advantages:

- It usually allows topping to be completed before harvest begins, helping spread the workload away from the peak harvest period.
- It reduces the possibility of plants blowing over in a windstorm.
- It stimulates earlier root development, which increases fertilizer efficiency, drought tolerance, and alkaloid production.
- It helps to reduce buildup of certain insects because eggs and larvae are removed with the floral parts.

These significant advantages of early topping far outweigh the disadvantage of earlier sucker growth, which can be controlled with proper use of contact chemicals. Also, sucker growth is often greater as a result of improved varieties and fertility programs, as well as better control of root diseases through the cultural practices of crop rotation, early stalk and root destruction, resistant varieties, and the use of soil-applied pesticides. As a result of these improved practices, plant roots normally have a greater ability to absorb water and nutrients throughout the growing season. The result is a higher yield as well as a greater potential for sucker growth, especially on plants topped in the button stage.

# CULTURAL PRACTICES TO REDUCE SUCKER PRESSURE

No matter what sucker control method is used, sucker control is facilitated by (1) managing tobacco in such a way as to reduce sucker pressure and (2) maximizing the effectiveness of chemical applications. Using a reasonable nitrogen fertilizer rate and striving for a uniform crop are two of the most important things that tobacco producers can do to facilitate sucker control and management.

## Using a Reasonable Nitrogen Rate

Excess nitrogen stimulates sucker growth and delays maturity, which increases the probability of troublesome sucker regrowth in prolonged harvest seasons. A base nitrogen rate of 50 to 80 pounds per acre is suggested, plus adjustment for leaching if needed. The lower portion of the rate range is suggested for finely textured, fertile soils, especially if legume crops were grown in the field the previous year. The higher portion of the rate range is suggested for coarsely textured soils with topsoils deeper than 15 inches to clay. The data in Table 7-1 illustrate the importance of nitrogen rate for sucker control. When the recommended nitrogen rate was exceeded, suckers were more difficult to control. See chapter 5 in this book, "Managing Nutrients," for more information on determining nitrogen rates.

**Table 7-1. Sucker control with various rates of nitrogen at Kinston and Reidsville, 1993<sup>a</sup>**

Nitrogen Rate	Sucker Control (%) <sup>a</sup>
Recommended – 16 lb/acre	87
Recommended	80
Recommended + 16 lb/acre	66
Recommended + 54 lb/acre	55

<sup>a</sup> Average of two locations. All treatments received two fatty alcohol applications followed by 1.5 gal/acre of maleic hydrazide.

## Striving for a Uniform Crop

Good plant uniformity in the field improves the chance for consistently good chemical sucker control. Therefore, it is essential to produce and use healthy, uniform transplants. Also, it is important to maintain soil pH in the range of 5.8 to 6.0, use fertilizer application methods that minimize salts injury, and use only labeled rates and proper incorporation methods for soil-incorporated pesticides, especially herbicides. Always follow label instructions for pesticides or fertilizers added to the transplant water. These practices reduce early-season root injury and improve crop uniformity, which allows the crop to mature on a normal schedule. This reduces the time that good sucker control is needed, particularly if the nitrogen rate is not excessive.

## CHEMICAL SUCKER CONTROL

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Two primary types of chemicals are available for sucker control: (1) contacts (fatty alcohols), which kill small suckers by touching (burning) them; and (2) systemics, which restrict sucker growth without killing. Contact alcohol chemicals desiccate (burn) tender sucker tissue, whereas systemic chemicals retard sucker growth by inhibiting cell division. Maleic hydrazide (MH) is the only true systemic suckericide because it is absorbed by leaves and translocated through the plant to small sucker buds. Flumetralin (Prime+, Flupro, and Drexalin Plus) is a contact-local systemic suckericide because it must touch the suckers to be effective, although it retards sucker growth by inhibiting cell division. Plucker Plus contains both flumetralin and a fatty alcohol. Each of these is discussed in more detail below.

In 2011, one purchaser of U.S. flue-cured tobacco only accepted tobacco without any MH residues. Growers who produce “pesticide residue clean” tobacco do this without using MH and have received a premium for their cured leaf. Therefore, there are essentially two approaches to chemical sucker control that producers must take: conventional programs that include MH or alternative approaches that control suckers without MH. A discussion of each approach and options for producers follow.

## SUCKER CONTROL WITHOUT MH

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Successful sucker control that does not use MH relies on reaching the maximum potential from the remaining tools at our disposal. The following is a discussion of using contacts and flumetralin to control suckers without MH.

### ***Contact Fatty Alcohols***

The purpose of contact fatty alcohol applications is to provide sucker control between early topping and the time at which the upper leaves are large enough to be sprayed with flumetralin without causing leaf distortion. Another major advantage of contact alcohols, especially where multiple applications are made, is to shorten the period for flumetralin to control suckers after topping. Successful sucker control without MH starts with proper application concentration and timing of contacts. Poor control with contacts cannot be corrected by flumetralin. Applications of contacts and flumetralin should be made only to the rows where the crop was transplanted, to facilitate as accurate a delivery of the product as possible.

**Timing.** You should make the first contact application as soon as 50 to 60 percent of the plants have a visible button. Timing of chemical application is important because neither contacts nor flumetralin will adequately control suckers longer than 1 inch. Contacts are more effective if applied three to five days apart when humidity is low and leaf axils are fully exposed—that is, generally between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on sunny days, except when the plants are wilted and temperature exceeds 90°F. Contacts should not be applied to plants that are wet with rain or heavy dew or that are severely stressed by drought.

Coverage of leaf axils and stalk rundown are essential for contact applications. Contacts should be applied with three nozzles per row (TG3-TG5-TG3 per row or equivalents), at a low pressure (20 to 25 pounds per square inch [psi]) and with a 50 gallons-per-acre delivery volume. Nozzle selection, pressure, and delivery volume are critical for proper droplet size, which leads to good stalk rundown and coverage.

**Concentration.** The degree of sucker control with contact alcohols is directly related to the ratio of chemical to water. Therefore, it is extremely important to mix a specific amount of contact chemical with an exact amount of water. The suggested ratio for the first application of  $C_8$ – $C_{10}$  contact alcohol products (Off-Shoot T, Fair 85, Kleen-Tac, Sucker Plucker, Royaltac-M, etc.) is two gallons in 48 gallons of water; this makes a 4 percent solution. A 5 percent solution is suggested for subsequent applications of  $C_8$ – $C_{10}$  contact alcohol products; this is 2.5 gallons in 47.5 gallons of water. The suggested ratio for the  $C_{10}$  products (Antak, Fair-Tac, Royaltac, Ten-Tac) is 1.5 gallons in 48.5 gallons of water; this makes a 3 percent solution. The mixtures should be strong enough to kill both of the tiny suckers in each leaf axil when the solution wets suckers less than one inch long. Using more than the suggested amount of water will weaken the mixture, and you will not obtain good control. Using less than the suggested amount of water will strengthen the mixture and may cause leaf burn on tender crops.

Weak contact solutions, those less than 4 percent for the  $C_8$ – $C_{10}$  products or less than 3 percent for the  $C_{10}$  products, often control only one of the two sucker buds in each leaf axil. A good general rule is to apply a contact solution that chemically tops 5 to 10 percent of the small, late plants in a field. If no chemical topping occurs during the first application, the solution is too weak to provide maximum sucker control, or the application took place too late. Some growers worry about leaf drop with contact alcohol solutions. This is not likely to be a problem unless the crop has been overfertilized with nitrogen and the season is unusually wet for several days after application. Generally, the benefits of increased sucker control from full-strength contact applications far outweigh any negative effects of leaf drop.

### ***Flumetralin (Prime+, Flupro, and Drexalin Plus)***

**Mechanical application of flumetralin (over-top sprays).** Flumetralin should be applied like a contact solution: only to the same rows to which the crop was transplanted. The objective is to apply flumetralin so that it touches the small suckers just like contact solutions because, unlike MH, flumetralin does not move to sucker buds through the leaves. Flumetralin must first wet the suckers like a fatty alcohol contact before it can stop cell division like a systemic. Therefore, flumetralin is referred to as a contact-local systemic. It has no true contact activity, and the controlled suckers do not turn brown or black but rather look yellow and deformed for several weeks after treatment.

Because flumetralin needs to run down the stalk and wet the suckers, it should be applied with contact nozzles (TG3-TG5-TG3 per row or equivalents), with a delivery volume of 50 gallons per acre and at a low pressure (20 to 25 psi). Flumetralin does not completely control suckers longer

than one inch, so you should remove larger suckers before application. Full-season sucker control can be expected on small suckers wetted by the flumetralin solution, but missed suckers will continue to grow and should be removed by hand. Missed leaf axils with flumetralin are typically in the top of the plant and may result from leaning stalks, leaves covering the leaf axil, or both, preventing proper “rundown” of flumetralin into all the leaf axils.

Even though the flumetralin label allows for application of up to one gallon per acre, the general recommendation has been for application rates of two quarts per acre. Increasing flumetralin rates from two quarts per acre to three quarts or one gallon in a single mechanical application has not consistently improved sucker control, primarily because control is so dependent on coverage of all leaf axils, which is not improved by increasing flumetralin rates. However, application of two quarts of flumetralin followed by one quart of flumetralin seven days later improves sucker control compared to three quarts of flumetralin applied in a single application. Plucker Plus from Drexel Chemical Co. contains both flumetralin and a fatty alcohol, so read the label carefully for additional instructions and precautions, and appropriate rate recommendations.

This would indicate that increasing rates of flumetralin above two quarts per acre is only advantageous if the flumetralin is applied in a split application. It is likely that split applications reduce the number of missed leaf axils—the main cause of poor sucker control when MH is not used.

Soil residues of flumetralin applied to tobacco may contribute to stunted early season growth of later crops, especially small grains and some vegetable crops, such as sweet potatoes and corn, but also nonrotated tobacco, particularly if excessive rates are used for sucker control on light, sandy soils. The carryover potential may be greater when a dinitroaniline is used for both weed and sucker control on sandy soils. (See product labels for comments on carryover residues and possible rotation crop injury.)

**Dropline applications of flumetralin.** Dropline applications are generally the most effective way to apply flumetralin because they allow for the most consistent ability to apply the flumetralin solution to each leaf axil. However, dropline applications require more labor, which is not always available on the farm depending on the scope of the farming operation or the degree of mechanization of other farming operations. Even though the best sucker control from flumetralin is achieved with dropline applications, growers must decide on a case-by-case basis whether such application methods are feasible and practical, depending on their individual situations.

A dropline application is made manually, with a single line per row, coming off of a powered sprayer (typically a high-clearance sprayer). Multiple lines can be used at one time, and each line has a valve (trigger) and a single TG nozzle. Flumetralin is then applied on a plant-by-plant basis by manually holding the nozzle over the center of the plant and opening the valve or “trigger” long enough to apply a desired amount of solution to each plant, which is enough for the solution to reach the soil line at the base of the plant.

Dropline applications should be initiated when approximately half of the plants are in the elongated bud to early flowering stage. Plants should be topped and then flumetralin applied within 24 hours. In many cases, both topping and applying flumetralin with a dropline can be accomplished at the same time. Where uniformity is a problem and some plants are later to mature, a second trip through the field to top and dropline flumetralin only on those plants may be needed. If a second trip is needed, it can usually be accomplished at a faster speed than the original dropline application. Only apply flumetralin with a dropline once per plant per season.

Another advantage of dropline applications is that they can reduce the need for contact applications because dropline applications of flumetralin can be made at topping. In many cases, contact applications, when used in conjunction with a dropline application of flumetralin, are used only to allow the crop to “even out” so that all plants are at the correct stage for flumetralin application and only one trip across the field with droplines is needed. Contacts may also be used in this scenario to delay flumetralin applications for better management of labor resources by controlling sucker growth until labor is available.

In a dropline application, flumetralin should be mixed the same as with mechanical applications: two or three quarts of flumetralin in 49.5 or 49.25 gallons of water, respectively. The flumetralin solutions should be applied alone to deliver one-half to two-thirds of a fluid ounce of solution per plant. The intent is for the solution to reach the soil line with no excess, to reduce residues in the soil. Workers who perform dropline applications of flumetralin must wear personal protective equipment. Read the label for each source of flumetralin carefully (Prime +, Flupro, Drexalin Plus) to determine the requirements for dropline applications. Remember, Plucker Plus contains both flumetralin and a fatty alcohol so rate recommendations will differ from other flumetralin products.

## **SUCKER CONTROL WITH PROGRAMS THAT USE MH TO MINIMIZE MH RESIDUES**

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MH has saved many hours of labor since its introduction in the early 1950s. It is widely used for sucker control because it is relatively inexpensive, easy to apply, and usually effective. But high residues can reduce demand by both domestic and export customers. No suitable alternative to MH has been developed, and many sucker control programs without this product have not given consistently good results.

Periodic droughts and the adoption of improved varieties and cultural practices that emphasize yield extend the harvest season, which extends the period needed for good sucker control. Unfortunately, longer harvest seasons and greater use of mechanical harvesters have sometimes led to excessive use of MH initially or in additional late-season applications. Consequently, MH residues on and in cured tobacco are often higher than acceptable to buyers.

Several members of the European Union, major importers of United States leaf tobacco, have adopted an MH tolerance level of 80 parts per million (ppm) for tobacco products. This tolerance

may be established by other European countries in the near future. The major competitor for American-style flue-cured tobacco, Brazil, does not use MH and could capture a more significant share of the export market if MH residues on U.S. tobacco do not drop to and remain near the 80-ppm level.

Although an official MH tolerance has not been established in the United States, domestic cigarette manufacturers and all members of the industry are very concerned about poor public perception of any pesticide residues that could reduce tobacco use both here and abroad. Although domestic cigarette consumption is not increasing, the United States is a leading leaf exporter. Our continued success will depend partially on the domestic manufacturers' ability to provide cigarettes that meet current or potential pesticide tolerances in other countries.

MH is very water soluble, and residues vary substantially among years and regions. Residues are generally lower when both rainfall and yields are relatively high. Also, don't forget that the Farm Services Agency certification you sign annually states that all pesticides you used for flue-cured tobacco production were applied according to label directions. In addition to possible loss of domestic and export markets, continued overuse of MH could result in greater use restrictions.

It is important for the entire tobacco industry, including producers and farm supply dealers, to understand the significance of the pesticide residue issue to our industry, particularly to our export market. Also, it would be wise to assume that all pesticides that leave residues on tobacco (not just MH) will very likely undergo even greater scrutiny and regulation soon.

### **Early sucker control can be maximized with fatty alcohol contacts and flumetralin.**

This is essential if good sucker control is to be maintained with one application of MH at the labeled rate. Because contacts and flumetralin must touch the suckers to be effective, uniform row spacing, proper application speed, correct boom height, precise nozzle size and arrangement, and suitable pump pressure are all important for good sucker control. (See product labels for instructions.)

### ***Proper Use of Contacts (Fatty Alcohols)***

The degree of sucker kill with contact alcohols is directly related to the ratio of chemical to water. Therefore, it is extremely important to mix a specific amount of contact chemical with an exact amount of water. Most other chemicals used to control insects, weeds, and diseases do not share this requirement because growers need to add only enough water to uniformly distribute the chemicals.

The suggested ratio for the first application of C<sub>8</sub>–C<sub>10</sub> contact alcohol products (Off-Shoot T, Fair 85, Kleen-Tac, Sucker Plucker, Royaltac-M, etc.) is two gallons in 48 gallons of water; this makes a 4 percent solution. A 5 percent solution is suggested for the second or third application; this is 2.5 gallons in 47.5 gallons of water. The suggested ratio for the C<sub>10</sub> products (Antak, Fair-Tac, Royaltac, Ten-Tac) is 1.5 gallons in 48.5 gallons of water; this makes a 3 percent solution. The mixtures should be strong enough to kill both of the tiny suckers in each leaf axil when the



solution wets suckers less than one inch long. Using more than the suggested amount of water will weaken the mixture, and you will not obtain good control. Using less than the suggested amount of water will strengthen the mixture and may cause leaf burn on tender crops.

Sucker control data (Table 7-2) show the great difference in sucker growth at final harvest when three different concentrations of a contact alcohol solution were applied. Suckers appeared to be under control for several weeks but then grew rapidly as the harvest season progressed, especially where the 2 and 3 percent solutions were applied.

**Table 7-2. Sucker growth with three different concentrations of C<sub>8</sub>–C<sub>10</sub> contact alcohol sprays**

Contact + Water (gallons)	Percentage Solution	Suckers per Acre	
		(number)	(lb)
1 + 49	2	29,900	6,256
1.5 + 48.5	3	15,600	4,794
2 + 48	4 <sup>a</sup>	7,800	1,950

<sup>a</sup> Normal suggested rate of 2 gallons of contact chemical in 48 gallons of water.

Weak contact solutions, those less than 4 percent for the C<sub>8</sub>–C<sub>10</sub> products or less than 3 percent for the C<sub>10</sub> products, often control only one of the two sucker buds in each leaf axil. Then the suggested rates of the systemic chemicals cannot control sucker growth on vigorously growing tobacco. Therefore, applying weak contact solutions may contribute to the use of excessive late-season applications of MH, which significantly increase MH residues on and in our cured tobacco. A good general rule is to apply a contact solution that chemically tops 5 to 10 percent of the small, late plants in a field. If no chemical topping occurs during the first application, the solution is too weak to provide maximum sucker control, or the application took place too late.

Some growers worry about leaf drop with contact alcohol solutions. This is not likely to be a problem unless the crop has been overfertilized with nitrogen and the season is unusually wet for several days after application. Generally, the benefits of increased sucker control from full-strength contact applications far outweigh any negative effects of leaf drop. Using a contact alcohol allows for earlier topping, which increases yields. Its purpose is to provide sucker control between early topping and the time when the upper leaves are large enough to be sprayed with a systemic chemical without causing distortion.

Timing of chemical application is also important because none of the chemicals, including MH, will adequately control suckers that are longer than one inch. You should make the first contact application as soon as 50 to 60 percent of the plants have a visible button. Contacts usually are more effective if applied three to five days apart when humidity is low and leaf axils are fully exposed—that is, generally between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on sunny days, except when the plants are wilted and temperature exceeds 90°F. Also, none of the products should be applied to plants that are wet with rain or heavy dew or that are severely stressed by drought.

Another major advantage of contact alcohols, especially where two or three applications are made, is that they shorten the period for the systemic chemical to control suckers after topping. Systemic chemicals containing only MH tend to “give out” six to seven weeks after application. When the harvest season lasts for 10 or more weeks, sucker regrowth often occurs. Flumetralin, another systemic-acting chemical, controls suckers longer than MH does, but its control is further extended when preceded by one or two applications of alcohol contact.

### ***Proper Use of Flumetralin (Prime+, Flupro, Plucker Plus, Drexalin Plus)***

Flumetralin should be applied like a contact solution but not until the plants are in the elongated button to early flower stage. This is a few days before MH application is suggested. The objective is to apply flumetralin so that it touches the small suckers like contact solutions do because, unlike MH, flumetralin does not move to sucker buds through the leaves. Flumetralin must first wet the suckers like a fatty alcohol contact before it can stop cell division like a systemic. Therefore, flumetralin is referred to as a contact-local systemic. It has no true contact activity, and the controlled suckers do not turn brown or black but rather look yellow and deformed for several weeks after treatment.

Because flumetralin needs to run down the stalk and wet the suckers, it should be applied with contact nozzles (TG3-TG5-TG3 per row or equivalents) at a low pump pressure (20 to 25 psi. And because it is not absorbed and moved through the plant, it performs better than MH in dry weather. Applying flumetralin by hand (downstalk application) is likely to wet more suckers than mechanical spraying (overtop), but hand application requires more labor. Like other sucker control chemicals, flumetralin does not completely control suckers longer than one inch, so you should remove larger suckers before application.

Full-season sucker control can be expected on small suckers wetted by the flumetralin solution, but missed suckers will continue to grow and should be removed by hand. Missed suckers are likely to occur on leaning plants, whether treated with flumetralin or fatty alcohol contacts. Therefore, using MH in a tank mix with flumetralin or within a day or two after flumetralin application will control the missed suckers. This is why the most effective chemical sucker control programs include the use of both MH and flumetralin.

Soil residues of flumetralin applied to tobacco may contribute to stunted early season growth of later crops, especially small grains, corn, and sweet potatoes, but also nonrotated tobacco, particularly if excessive rates are used for sucker control on light, sandy soils. The carryover potential may be greater when a dinitroaniline is used for both weed and sucker control on sandy soils. (See product labels for comments on carryover residues and possible rotation crop injury.) To minimize possible injury to crops planted in the fall or following spring, follow label mixing and rate instructions and do not apply any more spray volume than required to run down to the bottom of the stalks. Rainfall within two hours after application could reduce effectiveness of flumetralin, but reapplication will also increase the potential for soil residue carryover. Therefore, do not reapply if flumetralin washoff occurs. Also, destroy stalks and roots after the last priming

and bury them two weeks later with a moldboard plow set at a depth of five to six inches. Disk once or twice before planting a small grain cover crop.

Growers are advised not to exceed labeled rates of flumetralin whether used alone or in tank mixes with MH. Higher rates will not significantly improve sucker control but may make soil residue levels high enough to stunt crops planted in the fall or spring. Also note that Plucker Plus is a mixture of flumetralin and fatty alcohol, read the label carefully for additional application instructions and precautions and rate recommendations.

Sucker control from flumetralin can be improved by making split applications, essentially dividing the desired total amount per acre into two applications made five to seven days apart, instead of all in one application. This is especially advantageous when reduced rates of MH are used or when sucker control without using MH is necessary. (See the discussion of MH-free tobacco earlier in this chapter.)

### ***Apply the Labeled Rate of MH Properly***

Unlike fatty alcohol contacts and flumetralin, MH is absorbed by leaves and moves within the plant to small sucker buds. Good absorption and systemic movement depend on having good crop growing conditions. Therefore, MH should never be applied on drought-stressed crops or on those wilted by too much rain, high temperatures, or both. It is best to apply MH one to three days after a good rain or irrigation. When irrigation is not available, many growers use flumetralin or one extra contact application to control suckers until enough rain comes for good MH absorption. This should be viewed as “buying time” until rainfall occurs. If soil moisture is adequate but afternoon temperatures will be high enough to cause partial wilting, MH should be applied only during the morning, starting when the leaves are just slightly wet with dew. Afternoon spraying generally is not suggested except on cool, cloudy days when soil moisture is good. It is extremely difficult for growers with large acreages and only one sprayer to take advantage of the best weather conditions for MH application; some should consider buying another sprayer or using larger nozzles to allow faster application.

The labeled rate of MH application on flue-cured tobacco is one quart per 1,000 plants. Most tobacco in North Carolina is planted at approximately 6,000 plants per acre. The correct rate for 6,000 plants is 1.5 gallons per acre. (This rate is suitable for most formulations available in North Carolina, which contain 1.5 pounds of ai per gallon of product; some products contain 2.25 pounds of ai per gallon and should be applied at one gallon per acre for 6,000 plants per acre.) Only one application is permitted unless the first application is washed off by rain. Even then, research indicates that reapplication of the full MH rate is not needed unless a substantial rain occurs within four hours after the first application. Only a half-rate application (0.75 gallon of MH per acre) is needed if rain occurs between four and 10 hours after the first application. No reapplication is needed if rain occurs more than 10 to 12 hours after the first application. Following these important guidelines will ensure good sucker control with only minimal increases in MH residues.

MH is absorbed more effectively by younger, upper leaves than by older, lower leaves. Therefore, MH should be applied to the upper third of the plant using the three-nozzles-per-row arrangement. Some growers use drop nozzles with high pressure, as they do when spraying for aphids or flea beetles. This will not substantially improve sucker control but will increase MH residues because more of the spray is deposited on the undersides of leaves, where rainfall is less apt to wash it off. Therefore, the use of drop nozzles for MH application is strongly discouraged. MH residues are often higher on lower leaves than on upper leaves because the lower leaves are harvested sooner after MH application.

MH is very water soluble but is not substantially degraded by sunlight or the high temperatures used during curing. The data in Table 7-3 illustrate the importance of rainfall in reducing MH residues. In these tests, MH application was followed 24 hours later by various amounts of irrigation to simulate rainfall. Lower and upper green leaves were sampled for MH residues immediately after irrigation. As little as 0.05 to 0.1 inch of irrigation significantly reduced MH residues on leaves from both stalk positions.

**Table 7-3. MH residues on lower and upper green leaves following various amounts of irrigation, 1992–1993**

Irrigation Applied (inches)	MH Residues <sup>a</sup> (ppm)	
	Lower	Upper
None	61	181
0.005	53	125
0.01	51	96
0.05	32	85
0.1	27	84
0.2	22	76
0.5	24	70

<sup>a</sup> All treatments received 1.5 gal/acre of MH. MH residues are averages of four experiments.

**Timing of MH Application**

MH is the most widely used chemical on tobacco grown in the United States. More recently, flumetralin—also a systemic suckercide, as MH is—has become popular among flue-cured growers, particularly in tank mixes with MH. Each product controls sucker growth by inhibiting cell division. Most MH labels stipulate that it must not be applied before the upper leaves are eight inches long to reduce possible stunting, a discoloration called “bronzing,” or both. However, these abnormalities are sometimes observed when MH is applied on leaves longer than eight inches. Growth distortion of upper leaves treated with flumetralin also occurs, but less frequently than that associated with MH. Research suggests that the likelihood of discoloration and stunting from MH applications is greatly reduced when applications are delayed until upper leaves are sixteen inches long.

MH residues can also be reduced when the interval between application and harvest is maximized. The MH label states that you should wait at least seven days between MH application and harvest, with the anticipation that rainfall during this period will wash off some residues. If tobacco is ready for MH application and harvest, make every attempt to harvest first, then apply MH. It will most likely be at least seven days before the crop will be ready for another harvest. This will ensure MH-free first primings.

Once the rainfast period has passed following application of MH (10 to 12 hours), irrigation or rainfall can reduce MH residues without adversely affecting sucker control. After 10 to 12 hours, essentially all of the leaf absorption of MH that will occur has taken place. The residual MH left on the leaf surface contributes greatly to MH residues in cured leaf. Therefore, the washing off of MH through irrigation or rainfall has the effect of reducing overall residues. Table 7-3 illustrates the reduction of MH residues with various levels of irrigation applied 24 hours after application in research trials in 1992 and 1993.

***Consider Using an Alternative Sucker Control Program***

The most effective sucker control programs include proper use of the fatty alcohol contacts, flumetralin, and the labeled rate of MH. All of the newer programs provide better control than the traditional treatment of two contact applications followed by MH application (Table 7-4). These programs offer excellent, season-long sucker control without using more than the recommended rate of MH. The MH-flumetralin tank mix was used on more than 60 percent of the flue-cured acreage in 2002. The delayed use of flumetralin or another fatty alcohol application two to three weeks after MH involves an additional trip over the field but provides excellent late-season sucker control if applied before sucker buds exceed one inch in length. Apply the tank mix like a fatty alcohol contact, i.e., as a coarse spray (20 to 25 psi) using 50 gallons of spray volume per acre. Do not use the delayed flumetralin application if flumetralin was used for sucker control earlier in the season.

***Table 7-4. Sucker number and weight reductions with sucker control programs including Prime+, 1991–1994***

Application <sup>a</sup>		Suckers per Acre (Average/25 On-Farm Tests)	
Third	Fourth	(number)	(lb)
MH alone	None	13,644	1,697
(MH & Prime+) tank mix	None	1,575	380
MH alone	Prime+ (2 to 3 wk after MH)	557	165

<sup>a</sup>Third applications preceded by 4 percent and 5 percent fatty alcohol contact applications. Rates were 1.5 gal/acre for MH and 2 qts/acre for Prime+.

***Topping and Sucker Control Programs That Include MH***

Recommendations in this section for the use of MH are primarily related to achieving acceptable sucker control with minimal MH residues. Most recommendations in this section include 1.5

gallons of MH (2.25 lb ai). MH residues with 1.5 gallons of MH vary greatly across seasons and depend upon rainfall, irrigation, and harvest intervals. Generally, MH residues are lower in years with higher rainfall amounts. Irrigation and extending harvest intervals to wait on rainfall can lower residues in both dry and wet years. Because MH residues vary so greatly across growing seasons, it is not possible to recommend a rate that guarantees residue levels that are acceptable to all customers. However, reducing MH rates below the recommended rate of 1.5 gallons per acre can further reduce MH residues on a relative basis.

Acceptable sucker control can be achieved with rates below 1.5 gallons (2.25 lb ai) but require using contacts wisely (see section on use of contacts) and potentially splitting applications of flumetralin (see section on using flumetralin). Research has shown that if maximum sucker control is achieved with contact applications and application of flumetralin is split (two quarts of flumetralin followed by a second application of flumetralin at one quart five to seven days later), rates of MH can be reduced to one gallon per acre (1.5 lb ai). In this scenario, MH is applied with the second application of flumetralin and after the first harvest. Plucker Plus contains both flumetralin and a fatty alcohol, so rate recommendations will differ compared to products only containing flumetralin.

Several topping and chemical sucker control programs have been developed. Each is based on application of the correct rate of nitrogen (50 to 80 pounds per acre), depending upon soil type, with adjustments for leaching. Excessive nitrogen availability promotes excessive sucker growth as well as leaf drop and breakage. Proper sprayer calibration is important. See the sprayer calibration section in chapter 6, “Managing Weeds,” for information on how to properly calibrate a spray boom with multiple nozzles per row.

Pay particular attention to label instructions regarding worker protection standards (see chapter 11, “Protecting People and the Environment When Using Pesticides”). This information provides specific requirements for personal protective clothing, restricted field reentry intervals, and other restrictions.

### ***Overtop Application***

**Step 1.** Apply an alcohol contact spray before topping when about 50 to 60 percent of the plants reach the button stage. The floral parts help to intercept sprays to increase sucker kill in the upper leaf axils. Use a 4 percent concentration for C<sub>8</sub>–C<sub>10</sub> products or a 3 percent concentration for C<sub>10</sub> products. Using higher concentrations or application pressures than those suggested on the product labels may cause substantial leaf burn, particularly for C<sub>10</sub> products applied on tender tobacco when temperatures are unusually high.

**Step 2.** Top plants that are ready for topping 24 to 48 hours after the first contact alcohol application, making sure to follow label instructions regarding reentry into pesticide-treated fields.

**Step 3.** Make a second alcohol contact application three to five days after the first contact application. Use a 5 percent concentration for  $C_8$ – $C_{10}$  alcohols (2.5 gallons in 47.5 gallons of water per acre) or a 3 percent concentration for  $C_{10}$  alcohols (1.5 gallons in 48.5 gallons of water per acre). Note: Drought-stressed plants or those with irregular growth and flowering may need a third alcohol contact application several days after the second, applied at the same concentration as the second application. An alternative for reasonably uniform plants with tip leaves at least 10 to 12 inches long is 0.5 gallon of flumetralin in 49.5 gallons of water per acre.

**Step 4.** Top any plants that were not topped during the first topping.

**Step 5.** Use one of these alternatives: (Note: Plucker Plus contains flumetralin and a fatty alcohol, so rate recommendations will differ compared to other flumetralin containing products.)

- **Alternative A.** Apply a tank mix of 1.5 gallons of MH (for products containing 1.5 pounds active MH per gallon) and two quarts of flumetralin per acre at the normal stage of leaf development for MH application. Apply as a coarse spray in 50 gallons of total solution per acre, as with contact alcohols (three nozzles per row: TG3-TG5-TG3 or equivalents; see “Nozzle Sizes, Arrangements, and Application Speeds” below). Use no more than three quarts of flumetralin per season to reduce the risk of soil residue carryover to following crops. Allow at least one week between MH application and harvest to minimize MH residues on and in cured leaves.
- **Alternative B.** Apply three gallons of FST-7 or Leven-38 in 47 gallons of water per acre about five to seven days after the second or third alcohol contact. Higher concentrations may cause leaf burn. Allow at least one week between MH application and harvest to minimize MH residues on and in cured tobacco. These products are a combination of a  $C_{10}$  contact alcohol and MH but contain 11 percent less MH than other MH products when used at labeled rates.
- **Alternative C.** Apply 1.5 gallons of MH per acre (for products containing 1.5 pounds active MH per gallon) about five to seven days after the second or third contact alcohol application. Allow at least one week between application and harvest to minimize MH residues on and in cured tobacco. MH alone usually does not provide adequate season-long sucker control compared to the tank mix described in Alternative A, and a fourth application of one of the products in step 6 below is often required to control late-season sucker regrowth.
- **Alternative D.** Instead of the second or third (if applicable) contact alcohol application, apply two quarts of flumetralin per acre mixed in 49.5 gallons of water, as mentioned in step 3, when the crop is at the elongated button to early flower stage. Apply by the dropline method or by tractor-mounted sprayer. With a tractor-mounted sprayer, apply as a coarse spray with low pressure just as you would for a contact application. About five to seven days after this application, apply the labeled rate of MH. Use flumetralin only once per season to reduce the risk of soil residue carryover to following crops. Allow at least one week between MH application and harvest to minimize MH residues on and in cured tobacco.

**Step 6.** Use if sucker regrowth is anticipated late in the season:

- **Alternative A.** Apply a 5 percent C<sub>8</sub>-C<sub>10</sub> contact solution (2.5 gallons in 47.5 gallons of water) using the standard application procedure for contact sprays. Do this about three weeks after MH application, when suckers are small and susceptible to contact burn. Remove suckers longer than one inch by hand before application.
- **Alternative B.** Apply two quarts of flumetralin per acre using the standard application procedure for fatty alcohol contacts (50 gallons of total solution per acre, three nozzles per row, low pressure). Apply about three weeks after MH application. Remove suckers longer than one inch by hand before application. Do not use this option if you applied flumetralin earlier in the season. Allow one week between MH application and harvest.

(Note: Plucker Plus contains flumetralin and a fatty alcohol, so rate recommendations will differ compared to other flumetralin containing products.)

## NOZZLE SIZES, ARRANGEMENTS, AND APPLICATION SPEEDS

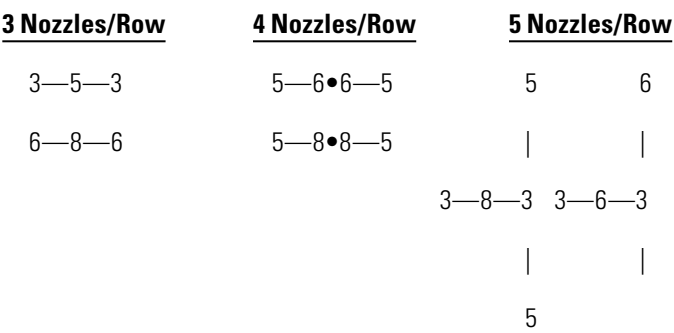
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Except for MH applied alone, all currently labeled suckericides and mixes must be applied by methods that encourage stalk rundown in order to be most effective. When using the standard three-nozzle arrangement (TG3-TG5-TG3), application speed is limited to 2.5 to 3 mph to maintain the spray volume over the center of the row. Application of fatty alcohols and contact-local systemics, including tank mixes of these products with MH, is one of the slowest mechanical operations in tobacco production except for transplanting and perhaps mechanical harvesting of first primings. The ability to apply these products faster without lowering sucker control reduces manual and machine labor, improves timeliness of suckericide application, and allows more acreage to be sprayed when the weather is favorable. The increasing use of more precise application equipment, such as “high-boy” sprayers, may allow many growers to apply suckericides faster without reducing sucker control.

In ten field tests conducted in 1997 through 1999, a “high-boy” sprayer operated at 2.8 or 4.6 mph was used to apply each of several sucker control treatments. All applications at 2.8 mph were made with standard TG3-TG5-TG3 nozzles, and all applications at 4.6 mph were made with TG6-TG8-TG6 nozzles. Each combination of nozzle sizes and speeds delivered 50 gallons-per-acre spray volume per application on 48-inch rows. Sucker number and weight per acre did not increase with any of the sucker control treatments when applied at the faster speed.

In trials conducted in 2001 and 2002, sprayer modifications were made that allowed the same treatments to be applied at 3 and 6 mph. In addition, a number of field experiments were conducted to determine if several other “straight” or “cross” nozzle arrangements with four or five nozzles per row would improve sucker control at the 6 mph application speed. Several of the arrangements are illustrated below. An additional purpose of the 5-8 • 8-5 and both of the five-nozzle-per-row arrangements was to concentrate relatively more of the total spray volume over the row centers as compared to the three-nozzles-per-row arrangements.





The arrangements shown in Table 7-5 provided the best sucker control in these trials. The differences in sucker number and weight among the three arrangements were not statistically significant. The poorest performers on average were the five-nozzle-per-row arrangements, which concentrated a relatively higher percentage of the total spray volume over the row centers (data not shown). This implies that failure to keep these nozzle arrangements directly over the row may reduce sucker control relatively more than arrangements that supply more of the total spray to the sides of the row.

**Table 7-5. Sucker numbers and weights per acre in nine experiments for a good sucker control program applied with three nozzle arrangements or sizes, 2001–2002**

TG Nozzle Sizes (per row)	Gauge Pressure (psi)	Application Speed <sup>a</sup> (mph)	Suckers per Acre <sup>b</sup>	
			(number)	(lb)
Treatment: Contact (4%) + Contact (5%) + (MH & Prime+) <sup>c</sup>				
3—5—3	20	3	1,089	288
6—8—6	18	6	1,480	395
5—6•6—5	18	6	1,477	346

<sup>a</sup> Each speed delivers 50 gal/acre of spray volume for the nozzle sizes and gauge pressures shown.

<sup>b</sup> Averages of nine research and on-farm tests.

<sup>c</sup> Rates were 2 qt/acre Prime+ and 1.5 gal/acre MH.

These results indicate that growers who wish to apply stalk rundown suckericides at faster speeds can do so with confidence if they have uniform row widths, good sprayer equipment, and relatively level land, and if they treat only the number of rows that were transplanted. However, relatively simple three- or four-nozzle-per-row arrangements appear to provide sucker control as good as or better than the more elaborate five-nozzle arrangements tested to date.

No matter what arrangement you choose, be sure to calibrate your own application equipment for the row width, pressure, hose diameter, and strainer sizes to be used. Instructions for calibrating a sucker control boom are given in chapter 6, “Managing Weeds.” After determining the output in gallons per minute (gpm), the speed needed to deliver the appropriate number of

gallons of spray volume per acre (e.g., gpa = 50 gal/a) can be calculated by using the following formula:

$$\text{mph} = (\text{gpm} \times 5,940) / (\text{gpa} \times \text{row width (inches)})$$

## USE OF ETHEPHON

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Ethephon (Prep, Ethephon 6, Mature XL, Oskie, or Super Boll) is the only chemical approved for yellowing tobacco in the field. To use any other chemical for this purpose is illegal. Growers who do so—whether selling by contract or at auction—could cause considerable problems for themselves and for our industry.

Before spraying whole fields of tobacco with ethephon, test-spray some plants uniformly with hand kits available from agricultural chemical dealers, or prepare your own test spray by mixing one teaspoon of product in one quart of water. The purpose of test-spraying is to determine whether the leaves are mature enough to be induced to yellow. Test-spraying a few representative plants at several locations in each field and observing them two to three days later will help you decide if the tobacco will yellow as desired. This may be especially important in fields planted at different times, planted with different varieties, fertilized differently, topped at different heights, or otherwise managed differently. Ethephon should be used on the entire field only if plants respond well to test-spraying; if test leaves do not yellow within 72 hours, the crop is not mature enough to be sprayed or harvested.

Good spray coverage, especially of the leaf butts and uppermost leaves, is essential to achieve uniform yellowing. For over-top applications, apply the chemical in 50 gallons of spray per acre using a three-nozzle arrangement at a pressure of 40 to 60 psi. The finer the spray, the better the chance of it drifting inward toward the stalk and covering the leaf butts; consequently, 60 psi may give better coverage than 40 psi. Be sure to adjust the nozzles to ensure adequate coverage of all remaining leaves. Ethephon works more consistently when applied on warm, sunny days. Treat only the acreage that can be harvested in one day, and guard against leaf drop by not allowing treated tobacco to become overyellow before harvesting. Prep, Ethephon 6, Mature XL, and Super Boll contain six pounds of ethephon per gallon and are labeled to be used at  $1\frac{1}{3}$  to  $2\frac{2}{3}$  pints per acre. Oskie contains three pounds of ethephon per gallon and is labeled to be used at  $2\frac{2}{3}$  to  $5\frac{1}{3}$  pints per acre. Use the lower rate for normal crops and the higher rate for rank crops, particularly when temperatures are lower than normal at application time.

The field reentry time restriction for ethephon is 48 hours after application. Also, allowing 48 hours between spraying of ethephon and harvesting results in larger and more consistent reductions in curing time compared to earlier harvesting.

## **PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENT ON PESTICIDES**

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Pesticides must be used carefully to protect against human injury and harm to the environment. Diagnose your pest problem, and select the proper pesticide if one is needed. Follow label use directions, and obey all federal, state, and local pesticide laws and regulations.

Table 7-6. Yellowing agents for flue-cured tobacco

Purpose	Chemical	Amount of Formulation per Acre	Pounds Active Ingredient per Acre	Precautions and Remarks
Increase the rate of yellowing	Ethephon (Prep) (Super Boll) (Mature XL) (Ethephon 6)	1.33 to 2.67 pt	1 to 2 lb	Use after second or third priming when remaining leaves are physiologically mature. Determine if tobacco is ready to spray by treating several representative plants at several locations with test kit. If test leaves begin to yellow in 24 to 72 hr, apply product to tobacco in 40 to 60 gal water per acre as a fine spray mist (40 to 60 psi). Effectiveness may be reduced by application on cool, cloudy days, poor spray coverage, or rain within 4 hr after application. Harvest leaves as soon as possible after REI on label or when they reach the desired degree of yellowness; prolonged delay in harvest may result in yield and quality loss or leaf drop. Therefore, do not spray more acreage than can be harvested before major rain is expected. DO NOT USE SURFACTANTS!
	(Oskie)	2.67 to 5.33 pt	1 to 2 lb	

**Table 7-7. Chemical control of sucker growth**

Chemical and Formulation	Purpose	Amount of Formulation per Acre	Precautions and Remarks
<b>CONTACT TYPE</b>			
C <sub>8</sub> -C <sub>10</sub> fatty alcohol (various brands) 6.01 lb/gal	Normal sucker control	2 or 2.5 gal (4% or 5%)	Apply in 48 gal of water per acre (4% solution) to plants in button stage with second application 3 to 5 days later at any time of the day, except when plants are wet or temperature exceeds 90°F or plants are wilted. Use two TG-3 nozzle tips plus a TG-5 in the center or equivalents per row with approximately 20 psi operated from 12 to 16 in. above the top of the button or stalk at 2.5 to 3 mph. Rate of second application may be increased to 2.5 gal in 47.5 gal of water (5% solution) unless crop is tender. Will not control suckers more than 1 in. long. Excess nitrogen increases the chance of leaf drop.
C <sub>10</sub> fatty alcohol 5.72 lb/gal	Normal sucker control	1.5 gal (3%)	Apply in 48.5 gal water per acre (3% solution) for both applications. Follow application instructions above for C <sub>8</sub> -C <sub>10</sub> alcohol.
C <sub>8</sub> -C <sub>10</sub> fatty alcohol 6.01 lb/gal	Control of late-season sucker regrowth	2.5 gal (5%)	Apply 3 to 4 weeks after MH application if suckers begin to grow. Apply in 47.5 gal of water per acre. Follow same directions as above. Will not control suckers more than 1 in. long. Do not make more than three applications of a contact per crop per season.
<b>SYSTEMIC TYPE</b>			
Maleic hydrazide (MH) Liquids, various brands 1.5 lb/gal	Normal sucker control	1.5 gal (1 qt/1,000 plants)	Rate varies with plant population. 1.5 gal of the 1.5 lb per gal material assumes 6,000 plants per acre. For plant populations other than 6,000, adjust rate accordingly. Apply to plants 5 to 7 days after the last contact application. Apply in the morning, using 30 to 50 gal of water per acre, two to three cone nozzle tips per row, and 40 to 60 psi. Effectiveness will be reduced if applied to wet plants or those that are drought stressed or wilted from too much rainfall or high temperatures. Do not make more than one application per season. Should wash-off occur within 6 hr, a single repeat application may be made. DO NOT APPLY AT HIGHER THAN SUGGESTED RATES OR WITHIN 7 DAYS BEFORE HARVEST IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE MH RESIDUES.
Maleic hydrazide (MH) Liquids, various brands 2.25 lb/gal	Normal sucker control	1 gal (1 qt/1,500 plants)	
60% water-soluble products Fair 80 SP or Sucker Stuff 60 WS	Normal sucker control	3.75 lb	Rate for 6,000 plants per acre. Adjust rate accordingly for other plant populations.

**Table 7-7. (continued)**

Chemical and Formulation	Purpose	Amount of Formulation per Acre	Precautions and Remarks
<b>SYSTEMIC TYPE (CONTINUED)</b>			
Royal MH-30 SG	Normal sucker control	4 to 5 lb	
<b>CONTACT-LOCAL SYSTEMIC TYPE</b>			
Flumetralin (Prime+, Flupro, or Drexalin Plus) 1.2 lb/gal	Normal sucker control, power sprayer	2 qt	Mix in 49 gal of water per acre and apply as a contact at elongated button to early flower stage with three nozzles per row (TG-3, TG-5, TG-3). Remove suckers longer than 1 in. within 24 hr before application and remove missed suckers as observed later. Excess spray to the point of runoff on the soil increases the risk of carryover residues, which may stunt early growth of next crop, including tobacco if a dinitroaniline herbicide is also used. <b>Do not apply these products through any type of irrigation system, and apply only once per season.</b> Rainfall within 2 hr after application may reduce effectiveness. Follow WPS requirements and other precautions and restrictions listed on product labels.
Flumetralin (Prime+, Flupro, or Drexalin Plus) 1.2 lb/gal	Hand application	1.2 to 2.4 qt (2.5 oz/gal water)	Mix in desired amount of water at rates shown in parentheses and apply mixture as a coarse spray or drench to top of stalk. Apply about 0.5 oz of mixture per plant after topping and removing suckers longer than 1 in., but do not exceed 25 to 30 gal per acre. See remarks above for power sprayer application and follow precautions, restrictions, and WPS requirements shown on product labels.
Flumetralin (Prime+, Flupro, or Drexalin Plus) 1.2 lb/gal	Control of late-season sucker regrowth	2 qt	Apply only if control with MH is beginning to break down. Mix in 49 gal water per acre and apply as a contact at 20 to 25 psi 3 to 4 weeks after MH application; will not control suckers longer than 1 in. TO REDUCE THE RISK OF SOIL RESIDUE CARRYOVER, DO NOT USE FOR LATE-SEASON CONTROL IF USED EARLIER IN THE SEASON.
<b>SYSTEMIC + CONTACT-LOCAL SYSTEMIC</b>			
Maleic hydrazide (MH) +	Normal sucker control	Full rate MH +	See precautions and remarks for MH to determine "full rate" of MH. Mix in sufficient water to total 50 gal per acre, and apply 5 to 7 days after the last contact or when MH alone is normally applied. Apply as a contact, using three nozzles (TG-3, TG-5, TG-3) per row at approximately 20 psi. Follow precautions and restrictions on labels. DO NOT APPLY AT HIGHER THAN LABELED RATES OR WITHIN 7 DAYS BEFORE HARVEST IN ORDER TO REDUCE MH RESIDUES.
Flumetralin (Prime+, Flupro, or Drexalin Plus)		2 qt	

**Table 7-7. (continued)**

Chemical and Formulation	Purpose	Amount of Formulation per Acre	Precautions and Remarks
<b>CONTACT + SYSTEMIC</b>			
C <sub>10</sub> fatty alcohol + MH (FST-7 or Leven-38) 4 lb/gal	Normal sucker control	3 gal	Apply in 47 gal water to plants in early flower stage (1 week after button) any time during the day except when plants are wet or temperatures exceed 90°F or plants are wilted. Use three nozzles per row with tips that deliver a coarse spray and desired rate when operated at 20 psi. Operate sprayer at a speed of 2.5 to 3 miles per hour and spray 50 gal of diluted emulsion per acre. Use a semi-coarse spray covering the top 1/3 to 1/2 of the plant and allowing the liquid to run down the stalk to the bottom of each plant. DO NOT APPLY AT HIGHER THAN SUGGESTED RATES OR WITHIN 7 DAYS BEFORE HARVEST IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE MH RESIDUES. Effectiveness will be reduced if applied to plants that are drought-stressed or wilted from too much rainfall or high temperatures.
<b>CONTACT + CONTACT-LOCAL SYSTEMIC</b>			
C <sub>8</sub> -C <sub>10</sub> fatty alcohol + flumetralin (Plucker-Plus)	Normal sucker control	2.5 gal	Refer to the discussion above on C <sub>8</sub> -C <sub>10</sub> fatty alcohol and flumetralin. Apply in 47.5 gallons of water per acre at normal timing for flumetralin application. Remove suckers longer than 1 in. within 24 hr before application and remove missed suckers as observed later. Excess spray to the point of runoff on the soil increases the risk of carryover residues, which may stunt early growth of next crop, including tobacco if a dinitroaniline herbicide is also used. Do not apply these products through any type of irrigation system. Rainfall within 2 hr after application may reduce effectiveness. Follow WPS requirements and other precautions and restrictions listed on product labels. Do not make more than two applications per season so not to exceed maximum rate of flumetralin.

## 8. MANAGING DISEASES

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*Plant Pathology Extension Specialist—Tobacco*

### THE TOBACCO DISEASE SITUATION IN 2015

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In 2015 normal to above-normal temperatures persisted for most of the spring. For the majority of North Carolina, plenty of precipitation was the highlight in April. Although rainfall was much needed, it created difficulties for tobacco growers willing to fumigate and start transplanting tobacco in the field. Despite the warm, wet spring weather, there were not extensive outbreaks during greenhouse season.

May was warm but nothing like the heat we experienced in June. Dry conditions returned in several tobacco growing areas, although some severe storms found their way to parts of eastern North Carolina. Black shank and Granville wilt were the diseases reported to cause the most losses in tobacco crops again this year. July was also particularly warm, as was the first part of August. As a result, several tobacco diseases continued to be found on tobacco farms, particularly the soilborne ones.

Conditions kept tobacco diseases overall at high levels. In 2015, the Plant Disease and Insect Clinic received 156 tobacco samples, the highest number of samples submitted to the clinic in the past 10 years.

### DISEASE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

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An effective disease management program always integrates a combination of tested and approved practices. No practice alone can be relied upon to manage diseases. Disease management strategies must be developed before the crop is planted. In making crop management decisions, carefully consider the disease problems present, disease severity, and environmental impact.

#### ***Crop Rotation***

Most of the important diseases that occur every year are caused by organisms that persist in the soil and can reproduce only on tobacco and a few other plants. Without tobacco or one of the other host plants, populations of the disease-causing organisms are reduced. Therefore, crop rotation must be emphasized in planning any disease management program. Although growers may have valid reasons for having difficulty in rotating crops, the benefits they can derive in



disease control are great enough to merit careful planning and consideration. Many North Carolina crops are good rotation crops to help control tobacco diseases (Table 8-1).

**Table 8-1. The value of various rotation crops in helping to manage selected diseases**

Crop	Black Shank	Black Root Rot	Granville Wilt	Tobacco Mosaic Virus	Root-Knot
Corn	High	High	Mod.	High	Low
Cotton	High	Low	Mod.	High	None
Fescue	High	High	High	High	High
Lespedeza "Rowan"	High	Low	High	High	High
Milo	High	High	Mod.	High	Low
Peanuts	High	Low	Low	High	None
Pepper	High	High	None	None	None <sup>a</sup>
Potato, white	High	High	None	High	Low
Small grain	High	High	High	High	High
Soybean	High	Low	High	High	Low <sup>b</sup>
Sweetpotato	High	High	Mod.	High	Low <sup>c</sup>
Tomato	High	Mod.	None	None	None <sup>b</sup>

Note: These ratings are based on the assumption that weeds are well-managed in these crops. Ratings range from high to none. High = highly valuable as a rotation crop for this disease; none = no value as a rotation crop, may be worse than continuous tobacco.

<sup>a</sup> Rating may be high for certain root-knot species or races.

<sup>b</sup> Rating is high if a root-knot resistant variety of soybean or tomato is used.

<sup>c</sup> Rating is moderate if a root-knot resistant variety of sweetpotato is used.

**Table 8-2. Stalk and root destruction**

Step	Description
1	Cut stalks in small pieces with a bush hog or similar equipment the day harvest is complete.
2	Plow out stubble the day stalks are cut. Be sure to remove the root system entirely from the soil.
3	Re-disk or harrow the field about 2 weeks after steps 1 and 2 are completed. This provides additional root kill and exposes different areas of the root to the drying action of sun and wind.
4	Seed a cover crop where needed to prevent water and wind erosion. Postpone this seeding until roots are dead.

**Length of rotation.** The longer the rotation, the more beneficial it will be. Thus, a four-year rotation (three alternate crops between tobacco crops) is more effective than a two- or three-year rotation. Similarly, a three-year rotation is superior to a two-year rotation. Nevertheless, a two-year rotation (one alternate crop between crops of tobacco) significantly reduces disease and is far better than continuous culture. Where tobacco is grown continuously, farmers are "feeding" populations of pests, thereby contributing to their buildup and the probability of severe disease problems in the future.

### ***Stalk and Root Destruction***

Roots and stalks from the previous year's crop must be destroyed, regardless of whether diseases have been observed (Table 8-2). To be effective, this must be accomplished as soon after harvest as possible. Completing these tasks quickly and thoroughly reduces populations of several tobacco diseases, including black shank, Granville wilt, root-knot, mosaic, brown spot, and vein banding, as well as certain insects, grasses, and weeds.

Furthermore, destroying old tissue exposes pests living there to adverse environmental elements. For example, root-knot nematodes are very sensitive to drying; if root tissue surrounding them decays, they are exposed to the drying action of the wind and sun. Tobacco mosaic virus (TMV) particles lose their ability to infect after they are freed from tobacco tissue. TMV carryover may be reduced from 5 percent of plants to less than 0.1 percent by destroying tobacco roots and stalks.

### ***Resistant Varieties***

Growers should not depend solely on resistant varieties for disease management. Even resistant varieties are sometimes severely damaged by disease, especially where rotation, stalk and root destruction, and other management tools are not used. Some varieties are highly resistant to only certain races or species of a particular pathogen. For example, root-knot-resistant varieties are only resistant against *Meloidogyne incognita*, races 1 and 3. Some of the varieties listed in Table 8-3 are highly resistant to race 0 of the black shank fungus but quite susceptible to race 1. See the section on black shank for a more complete discussion of resistance to that disease, and see Table 8-4.

**Table 8-3. Resistance ratings of certain varieties to black shank, Granville wilt, and tobacco mosaic virus (TMV). The LOWER the rating, the MORE RESISTANT a variety is.**

Variety	Ph gene	Black shank	Granville Wilt	TMV
CC 13	-c	20	29	S <sup>b</sup>
CC 27	+	34	20	Ra
CC 304	+	14	22	R
CC 33	-	10	22	S
CC 35	-	23	49	S
CC 37	+	18	23	R
CC 65	-	15	44	S
CC 67	+c	17	25	R
CC 700	+	18	39	S
GF 318	+	17	31	S
GF 52	+	31	27	R
GL 338	+	39	33	S
GL 395	-	13	28	S
GL 368	+	12	33	S
GL 939	-	20	15	S
K 326	-	24	40	S
K 346	-	6	24	S
K 394	-	20	40	S
NC 102	+	32	27	R
NC 196	+	13	28	S
NC 291	+	28	31	S
NC 297	+	33	23	R
NC 299	+	27	27	S
NC 471	+	10	20	R
NC 55	-	35	27	S
NC 606	-	11	13	S
NC 71	+	25	27	S
NC 72	+	30	19	S
NC 810	+	4	13	S
NC 92	+	36	25	S
NC 925	-	9	28	S
PVH 1118	+	11	35	S
PVH 1452	+	11	18	S
PVH 2110	-	19	38	S
PVH 2275	+	36	28	R
SP 168	+	13	17	S

**Table 8-3. (continued)**

SP 179	+	22	20	S
SP 210	-	19	13	S
SP 220	+	11	11	S
SP 225	+	2	12	S
SP 227	+	8	6	S
SP 234	+	17	14	S
SP 236	-	3	19	S
SP H20	+	13	17	R
SP NF3	-	13	16	S

**Ratings for these varieties may change as more data become available:**

CC 143	-	8	24	S
CC 1063	-	12	19	S

\*Resistant

\*Susceptible

° - no ph gene; +: ph gene present.

### ***Fumigants, Fungicides, and Nematicides***

Fumigants, fungicides, and nematicides give growers an additional tool to manage diseases.

Fumigants primarily help manage Granville wilt and nematodes. More narrow-spectrum chemicals are also available to help control nematodes, black shank, and some other diseases.

Protectant foliar fungicides are also available for Ridomil-insensitive blue mold management. All disease management chemicals must be applied before the disease is established.

- Pesticides should be used only when cultural practices alone cannot manage the disease satisfactorily.
- For optimum benefit, it is essential to know the disease and its severity.
- It is important to select the appropriate chemical for the disease. It is both useless and expensive to expect effective control of a disease from a material designed for a different problem.
- For soil application, the soil must be in good tilth—not too dry or too wet. Poor soil preparation lessens effectiveness. Soil temperatures must also be within a favorable range.
- The risk of injury to tobacco becomes much greater when soil or climatic conditions are unfavorable.

### ***New Regulations for Fumigant Applications***

#### ***Phase I: 2010 Labels—2011 Implementation***

- Handler respiratory protection
  - New labels will require handlers to stop work or use respirators if air concentrations exceed acceptable limits.

- For most activities, sensory detection triggers respiratory protection requirements.
- PPE or cease work and leave application block.
- At least one to two handlers (depending on product) must have air-purifying respirator available.
- Fit-tested, trained, and medical clearance.
- At least one SCBA on-site and ready for emergency.
- Reentry restrictions
- Tarp perforation and removal restrictions
- Good Agricultural Practices
- Fumigant Management Plans
  - More than 20 Good Agricultural Practice items.
  - Site-specific details.
  - Posting and monitoring procedures.
  - Personnel data and training records.
  - Safety procedures, PPE, and emergency plans.
  - Post application summary.
  - Buffer, notification zone, and DTE information (will be included in phase II).
- RUP classification
- Registrant-provided handler information

### ***Phase II: 2011–2012 Labels—2013 Implementation***

- Buffers and buffer posting
  - The area around the application block where bystanders must be excluded during the buffer zone period, except for people in transit (bicycles and motorized vehicles).
  - The “buffer zone period” starts when a fumigant is first delivered to the soil and is in effect for 48 hours after the fumigant has stopped being delivered to the soil.
- Restrictions near sites that are difficult to evacuate
- Emergency preparedness and response
- Registrant-provided training for applicators and community outreach programs

### ***Additional Helpful Cultural Practices***

The following practices give the plant every possible advantage to enable it to withstand attack by disease-causing agents. Growers will be rewarded by considering carefully the impact of each practice on disease development and by operating in ways that favor the tobacco plant, thereby working to the disadvantage of disease-causing agents.

**Formation of a high, wide bed (row).** Developing a high, wide bed in the field helps provide proper conditions for tobacco roots to develop. This practice conserves soil moisture during dry periods and helps provide drainage for root systems in areas of fields that tend to become waterlogged. Most causal agents that affect the root systems of plants are favored by poor drainage or high moisture.

**Spacing.** Tobacco plants that are spaced too closely often suffer more disease than those planted farther apart in the row. In particular, spacing influences diseases, such as brown spot, target spot, and blue mold. Wider spacing provides for more sunlight, better aeration, and better drying conditions for the foliage on the bottom of the plant.

**Balanced fertilization.** Disease-causing agents are generally favored by imbalanced fertilizer application. Some pests, such as root-knot nematodes, are favored by deficiencies in nutrients such as potassium. Other causal agents, including the black shank fungus, are favored by excessive nitrogen. Usually, a healthy crop is one that has received balanced fertilization—neither excessive nor deficient.

**Order of cultivation when disease is present.** If disease appears in only some fields or certain parts of a field, cultivate these areas last to reduce the chance of spreading the disease organisms to “clean” areas. After cultivation, wash equipment with a detergent at the same strength used to wash clothes.

## MANAGING THE MAJOR DISEASES

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### ***Transplant Diseases***

General information on the successful production of good tobacco transplants is found in chapter 4, “Producing Healthy Transplants in a Float System.” The following section addresses only certain disease problems that may occur in plant beds and greenhouses in North Carolina. Also see the condensed management guide for seedlings at the end of this chapter (Table 8-10).

**Diseases in greenhouses.** The most common diseases in greenhouses are caused by rhizoctonia, sclerotinia (collar rot), pythium, and bacterial soft rot (*Erwinia* spp.). Rhizoctonia causes most of the damping-off observed before clipping begins, and sclerotinia causes the most after clipping. Damping-off caused by pythium is preceded by extensive yellowing of the plants. TMV is rare, but it is devastating where it occurs.

**Sanitation practices.** Mowers can spread mosaic virus and bacteria. Wash and sanitize blades and the underside of the deck with 50 percent household bleach before each clipping of each greenhouse. Furthermore, be sure the mower thoroughly removes clipping debris (usually by vacuum). Clipping too much of the plant in one pass or allowing mower bags to fill too full causes more debris to fall back into the trays. Leaf debris in the trays or on the plants is usually the starting point for collar rot and bacterial soft rot.

Before using trays that have been used before, thoroughly wash them and allow them to dry. Then fumigate the trays with methyl bromide at three pounds per 1,000 cubic feet. *Do not fumigate inside a greenhouse.* Trays may be stacked, criss-crossed up to five feet high, tarped and sealed on concrete or on a tarp, and then fumigated. See the product label, and follow the instructions for space fumigation. Allow at least 48 hours of aeration before filling with media.

Do not depend on dipping trays in any sanitation product, including bleach, to kill pathogens satisfactorily. Steaming trays at 160°F to 175°F for 30 minutes is an excellent alternative to fumigation. Growers who know greenhouse transplants were a source of mosaic should dispose of the trays and purchase new ones.

**Environmental conditions.** Greenhouses should be fully ventilated when temperatures are not cold enough to damage the plants. Furthermore, to remove humidity from the greenhouse, place fans just above the plant canopy to circulate air around the structure. Polytubes or other power ventilators can also be used to remove humidity. Ventilation will help to reduce leaf moisture and subsequent disease. Pythium is most damaging at pH levels above 6.1 and at float water temperatures above 68°F. To keep water temperatures cool as long as possible, do not fill the bays with water until it is time to float the trays. Closing greenhouses during July or August to allow temperatures to reach 140°F for eight hours per day for seven days helps kill pathogens. Heat-sensitive items should be removed, and adequate moisture should be maintained in the house.

**Other precautions: Never dump plants or used media within 100 yards of a greenhouse.** Once diseased plants have been dumped, they may serve as a source for collar rot for up to five years. Walkways and entryways should be made of gravel, asphalt, concrete, or other material that can be easily washed. Boots worn outside the structure should not be worn inside unless they have been sanitized with a 10 percent bleach solution. Use special care in preventing field soil from contaminating water beds in float systems. Also, do not recycle pond water among beds because it can be a source of disease inoculum. Excessive and sloppy watering, poor drainage, plant injury, overcrowding, and excessive humidity most often lead to disease problems in greenhouses. Use only media produced for tobacco transplants. Do not introduce tobacco products into the greenhouse. Do not allow weeds, especially horsenettle, to grow in the greenhouse.

Tobacco should not be grown for any reason during a three-month period between October and February to ensure that blue mold, especially a Ridomil-resistant strain, does not overwinter. Spray Dithane Rainshield weekly after plants reach the size of a quarter to help prevent blue mold.

### **Field Diseases**

The following sections present general information about some of the most common or recently discovered diseases. Diseases are listed in alphabetical order. A condensed disease-management field guide begins at the end of this chapter (Table 8-11).

**Black shank.** Black shank is caused by a soil-inhabiting fungus (*Phytophthora nicotianae*) that belongs to a group of the most destructive fungi that attack plants. These fungi thrive in high-moisture areas. The black shank fungus produces three types of spores, including a swimming spore that infects tobacco roots and sometimes infects stalk stems at leaf scars (where leaves fall off). Some leaf infection can be observed after rains that splash soil onto the leaves.

The symptoms of black shank are well-known to tobacco growers. Once infection occurs, death usually follows quickly. In highly resistant varieties, the symptoms on the stalks are usually confined to near-ground level. When stalks are split, the pith often appears blackened and separated into discrete discs. Discing can occur because of other factors; likewise, not all plants suffering from this disease exhibit this symptom. Rotation, varietal resistance, and chemicals are usually integrated into a management program (Table 8-4).

There are two sources of resistance used in available varieties. The FL 301 resistance has been the predominant form of resistance for many years. It is effective to varying degrees against both race 0 and race 1 of black shank fungus. All commercial flue-cured varieties have some level of FL 301 resistance. For example, K 346 has a high level, while K 326 has a low level. A more recently incorporated form of resistance imparts complete resistance (immunity) to race 0 of the pathogen but is susceptible to race 1. This complete resistance is controlled by a single gene (ph). Any tobacco variety containing this gene will be completely resistant to race 0. However, varieties with the ph gene may vary in their resistance to race 1, depending on how much FL 301 resistance is in their heritage. Currently, most varieties with the ph gene have little FL 301 resistance, which means they will be more susceptible to race 1 than older varieties, such as K 346, that have high levels of FL 301 resistance. Most new varieties released over the past five to 10 years have the ph gene, similar to the proportion of varieties that currently have the MI gene for races 1 and 3 of the southern root-knot nematode. Therefore, over time, the ph gene has become a less effective tool. Whenever varieties with the ph gene are planted crop after crop, race 1 becomes very aggressive, even if it was not the predominant race at first.



**Table 8-4. Chemical recommendations for fields with recurring economic losses to black shank caused by race 0 of *Phytophthora nicotianae***

Variety Rating <sup>1</sup>	2-Year Rotation	1-Year Rotation	Continuous Tobacco (not recommended)
0–10	No chemical <sup>2</sup> or Ridomil Gold <sup>3</sup> 1+0+0 <sup>4</sup> or Ultra Flourish 2+0+0	Ridomil Gold 1+0+0 or 1+0+.5 or Ultra Flourish 2+0+0 or 2+0+1	Ridomil Gold 1+0+0 or 1+0+.5 or Ultra Flourish 2+0+0 or 2+0+1
11–21	Ridomil Gold 1+0+.5 or Ultra Flourish 2+0+1	Ridomil Gold 1+0+1 or Ultra Flourish 2+0+2 or Telone C-17, 10.5 gal + Ridomil Gold 0+1+0 or Ultra Flourish 0+2+0 or Chloropicrin, 3 gal + Ridomil Gold 0+1+0 or Ultra Flourish 0+2+0	Ridomil Gold 1+0+1 or Ultra Flourish 2+0+2 or Telone C-17, 10.5 gal + Ridomil Gold 0+1+0 or Ultra Flourish 0+2+0 or Chloropicrin, 3 gal + Ridomil Gold 0+1+0 or Ultra Flourish 0+2+0
22+	Ridomil Gold 1+0+1 or Ultra Flourish 2+0+2 or Telone C-17, 10.5 gal + Ridomil Gold 0+1+0 or Ultra Flourish 0+2+0 or Chloropicrin, 3 gal + Ridomil Gold 0+1+0 or Ultra Flourish 0+2+0	Ridomil Gold 1+1+1 or Ultra Flourish 2+2+2 or Telone C-17, 10.5 gal + Ridomil Gold 0+1+0 or Ultra Flourish 0+2+0 or Chloropicrin, 3 gal + Ridomil Gold 0+1+0 or Ultra Flourish 0+2+0	Losses likely even with: Ridomil Gold 1+1+1 or Ultra Flourish 2+2+2 or Telone C-17, 10.5 gal + Ridomil Gold 0+1+1 or Ultra Flourish 0+2+2 or Chloropicrin, 3 gal + Ridomil Gold 0+1+1 or Ultra Flourish 0+2+2

Note: Within each box, choose lower rates and lower-cost treatments for fields where losses to black shank have been minimal.

<sup>1</sup> From Table 8-3. If a variety with the ph gene is planted where a variety with the ph gene was planted in the previous tobacco crop, use the center row of the table rather than the top row.

<sup>2</sup> Where disease levels are consistently below 6 percent.

<sup>3</sup> If field has a root-knot history, select an option that includes a fumigant (see Table 8-7).

<sup>4</sup> Ridomil Gold and Ultra Flourish rates are lb for 50 WSP and pt for EC and SL in the format: preplant + first cultivation + four weeks after transplanting. Preplant is within four days of transplanting.

Use of a variety with the ph gene for two or more tobacco crops results in the black shank population changing progressively, or in some cases rapidly, from race 0 to race 1. When this occurs, varieties with ph gene will appear to have little resistance, and fungicides, such as mefenoxam (Ridomil Gold), will be needed (Table 8-5). When applying Ridomil Gold, keep in mind the following:

- Timing is very important for mefenoxam (Ridomil Gold) application.
- Early applications (i.e., within the first seven to 10 days after transplant) are the most critical for effective control.
- Do not wait to see plants with black shank symptoms to apply Ridomil. Most likely there are several infected plants that have not shown symptoms yet, and Ridomil Gold will not provide the best possible control at that point.
- Ridomil Gold should be incorporated in the soil by cultivation. The tobacco plant absorbs it only through the root system.

In 2015 a second fungicide, fluopicolide (Presidio), became available to tobacco growers for control of black shank (and blue mold).

Additional factors, such as irrigation, damage from nematodes, and number and depth of cultivations may influence the severity of black shank in a field.

**Table 8-5. Percentages of surviving plants and percentages of surviving plants required to pay the cost of Ridomil Gold application. Data are based on 25 farm tests (1997–2004, NC State University) with K 326.**

Application (1 pint Ridomil Gold per application)	Surviving Plants (% per acre)	Surviving Plants Required to Pay Cost Difference (% per acre)*
Preplant + 1st cultivation + layby vs. nothing	50–75	6
Preplant + 1st cultivation vs. nothing	30–50	4
Preplant + layby vs. nothing	31–50	4
1st cultivation vs. nothing	31–50	2
1st cultivation + layby vs. nothing	50–75	4
Preplant + layby vs. layby	10–30	2
Preplant + 1st cultivation + layby vs. layby	10–30	4
1st cultivation + layby vs. 1st cultivation	10–30	2

\* Percentages were calculated under the assumptions that a tobacco plant yields 0.5 pound, 6,000 plants are planted per acre, and average price/pound is \$1.65.

**Blue mold.** Blue mold is caused by an airborne fungus (*Peronospora tabacina*), and it caused widespread losses in North Carolina during 1979 and 1980. During those years, the disease occurred in fields as well as in plant beds. The fungus also spreads when infected seedlings are shipped. Its occurrence was sporadic until 1995, when it became widespread again.

Ridomil-insensitive strains were first identified in North Carolina flue-cured tobacco in 1995. All greenhouses should be treated with Dithane Rainshield (0.5 lb/100 gal. spray) every week after plants are the size of a quarter.

The foliar infection is characterized by the development of round, yellow spots with gray or bluish-gray mold on the undersides of the leaves. These spots rapidly multiply in a favorable environment and coalesce to kill entire leaves. Old spots are tan to white. When systemic, the fungus penetrates the plant, interfering with normal plant growth and resulting in stunting, distortion, and eventual death. Either type of infection can cause severe losses under certain environmental conditions (usually high moisture and cool temperatures).

Because air currents disperse this fungus, crop rotation and stalk and root destruction do not affect this disease in North Carolina. The fungus does not overwinter in North Carolina, so we do not know if future infestations will be sensitive to Ridomil Gold or Ultra Flourish. It is likely that

some blue mold will be sensitive, and Ridomil Gold application will be of some benefit. Acrobat MZ, foliar-applied protectant fungicides, or Actigard are needed for Ridomil-insensitive blue mold. Acrobat MZ is no longer manufactured and has been replaced with Acrobat 50WP. Acrobat 50WP has also been replaced with a liquid formulation of dimethomorph (Forum). The label requires application of Forum only in tank mixtures with Dithane DF Rainshield (mancozeb). In 2015 a second fungicide, fluopicolide (Presidio), became available to tobacco growers for control of blue mold.

Additional information on the disease and control recommendations is available on the Blue Mold Forecast website: <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/pp/bluemold>.

**Brown spot.** Brown spot is caused by an airborne fungus (*Alternaria* spp.). It may be considered an “opportunistic” disease-causing agent. It does not usually become a problem in varieties tolerant to this disease if good cultural practices are followed. However, during periods of extended rainfall late in the harvest season, it can become destructive. Brown spot is a disease of senescent (old) tissue.

**Fusarium wilt.** Fusarium wilt, although not destructive in all parts of the state, is significant in certain areas. It is caused by a fungus that lives in the soil (*Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *nicotianae*) and is well adapted for survival there. It can live well on decaying organic matter in the soil and can form spores that are very resistant to adverse conditions. Fusarium wilt is not as aggressive as some other diseases, such as Granville wilt or black shank, but it might also be considered an “opportunistic” disease. If tobacco plants are stressed in certain ways, such as by root wounding or nematode infection, significant fusarium wilt may develop. Although crop rotation and stalk and root destruction are beneficial to some extent, these practices do not drastically reduce fusarium wilt development because of the fungus’s ability to live on organic matter and form resistant spores.

**Granville wilt.** Granville wilt appears first as a wilting on one side of the plant. As the disease progresses, the entire plant wilts and dies. When plants survive they are usually stunted, and their leaves may be twisted and distorted. The stalk usually becomes dark, especially at the ground level. At this stage, Granville wilt may be easily confused with other diseases, such as black shank. A diagnostic characteristic of Granville wilt is the streaks that extend up the stalk just beneath the outer bark.

Granville wilt is caused by a tiny bacterium (*Ralstonia solanacearum*) that inhabits the soil. Infection occurs when these microscopic bacteria enter wounds or openings in the root system. Hence, cultivation and nematode damage can increase the incidence of this disease. Also, roots may “wound” themselves as they grow through the soil. Therefore, Granville wilt bacteria usually have no difficulty locating a suitable entry point into the plant.

It is important to remember that Granville wilt bacteria are soil inhabitants. In fact, anything that moves soil containing the bacteria will spread them from place to place. This can happen in many

ways: by moving soil on machinery and other equipment, by water washing soil from one part of the field to another, by moving transplants with infested soil around the roots, and by any other means by which infested soil is moved.

Relatively high soil temperatures and adequate to high moisture levels in soil favor Granville wilt bacteria. In fact, wet seasons greatly increase infection by these organisms. Infection may not be noticed immediately because wilting symptoms may not appear until plants undergo a moisture stress. Thus, it is not unusual to observe symptoms of Granville wilt several weeks after infection actually occurs.

**Table 8-6. Granville wilt management**

<b>Cultural</b>			
1. Rotate with fescue, small grains, or soybeans. Control weeds.			
2. Use varieties with high levels of resistance.			
3. Destroy stalks and roots immediately after harvest.			
4. Avoid root wounding.			
5. Manage nematodes.			
6. Fumigate in the fall or spring with one of the following treatments.			
<b>Fumigants—Allow three weeks from application to transplanting</b>			
<b>Chemical</b>	<b>Rate (gal/acre)</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Relative Control Rating*</b>
Chloropicrin	5–6	Broadcast	Very Good
Chloropicrin	3	Row	Good
Pic +	4	Row	Good
Telone C-17	10.5	Row	Good
Telone C-17	13–15	Broadcast	Good

\* Actual control varies depending on other control practices and environmental conditions.

Granville wilt bacteria also can infect tomatoes, white potatoes, peppers, eggplants, and peanuts. Ragweed, common to most of North Carolina, can also be infected and should be controlled. See Table 8-6 for management recommendations.

**Hollow stalk (soft rot).** Hollow stalk or soft rot (caused by *Erwinia* spp.) usually appears first near topping and suckering time. It may begin at any stem wound and is often seen in the pith at the break made by topping. Soon after infection, a rapid browning of the pith develops, followed by general soft rot and collapse of the tissue. Top leaves often wilt, and the infection spreads downward; the leaves droop and hang down or fall off, leaving the stalk bare. Diseased areas may appear as black bands or stripes that may girdle the stalk. In another phase of the disease, a soft decay appears at the junction where leaf petioles are attached to the stalk.

Causal bacteria are usually present in soil and on plant surfaces. They may also be present on workers' hands as they top, sucker, or harvest the crop. These bacteria are often unimportant unless there is frequent rainfall and high humidity. These conditions favor their infection and subsequent development. The use of some contact sucker control agents may lead to an increase in hollow stalk, especially if leaf axil tissue is damaged.

Remember that if affected leaves are harvested when wet and carried to the barn, they often develop barn rot during curing. Infection is most likely if ventilation is inadequate.

**Pythium stem rot.** This disease is caused by a group of pythium species that include *Pythium aphanidermatum* as the most important and aggressive species, followed by *P. ultimum* var. *ultimum* and *P. myriotylum*. Pythium was believed to affect only tobacco seedlings in the early stages of growth after being transplanted in the field, causing damping-off, root and stem rot, and feeder root necrosis. In the last several years, pythium was also detected affecting tobacco at different growth stages in the field (stages 4 to 8). Symptoms of pythium stem rot are very similar to those caused by black shank, making loss estimates difficult. In most cases, pythium stem rot affects some roots at the soil line level and most of the lower stem, causing a sunken black lesion that will continue to grow upward in the stem. Wilting of plants and chlorosis are also observed in plants affected by pythium.

The predominant pythium species (*P. aphanidermatum*) has not been detected on tobacco transplants produced in greenhouses in North Carolina; thus, the potential of carrying pythium-infected transplants with this pathogen from greenhouses is minimal. However, other *Pythium* species can be carried on infected transplants from the greenhouse and cause seedling blight. Spores of *P. aphanidermatum* can survive in the soil and plant debris in the field. *P. aphanidermatum* can infect a large number of host plants, including peppers, tomatoes, corn, cucumbers, and peanuts, among others.

Since 1997, pythium stem rot has been more frequently detected in tobacco cultivars with resistance to race 0 of black shank, especially in fields where cultivars with this resistance have not been used before. In recent studies it was demonstrated that cultivars carrying the ph gene are not more susceptible to pythium root rot. Therefore, the increase in incidence may be due to a reduction in competition from the black shank fungus or a reduction in application of mefenoxam in fields planted with cultivars carrying the ph gene. High temperatures and soil moisture favor the development of pythium stem rot. Other pythium species that only cause root rot have been detected, including *P. dissotocum* and *P. Group Hs*. Because the incidence of this disease depends on environmental conditions, the development of control strategies is very difficult to generalize. Management of this disease may be similar to that for black shank, although resistance to this disease has not been identified.

**Root-knot nematodes (and other nematode problems).** Nematodes are microscopic roundworms that live as "obligate parasites," which means they require living plant tissue to survive and complete their life cycle. Nematodes that attack tobacco live in the soil and are spread when infested soil is moved. Because nematodes are highly specialized organisms, knowledge of their biology and of how plants respond to them is necessary to develop a profitable management plan. The key to nematode control is to keep populations at nondestructive levels. Although a single nematode is not harmful, high populations have a devastating effect. Root-knot nematodes complete their life cycle, under favorable conditions, in

only three weeks. Thus, in North Carolina they can produce as many as seven generations during one tobacco-growing season.

The most important nematode on tobacco in North Carolina is the root-knot nematode, *Meloidogyne incognita*. However, other *Meloidogyne* species are increasing in this state, especially *M. arenaria*, *M. javanica*, and *M. hapla*. Both of these latter species are severely damaging. The spread of these two species is a threat to root-knot control in the state because of the lack of resistance to them and the possibility that some nonfumigant nematicides may not effectively control them. Also, certain races of *M. incognita* that can attack root-knot resistant varieties appear to be increasing in the state.

To determine the infestation level of root-knot nematodes, examine the roots and have soil assays completed. A combination of these techniques provides excellent insight. First, observe the roots at random just after fall stalk and root destruction (immediately after harvest). You can estimate the infestation level by observing the area galled and using the following index:

- Low infestation—0 to 10 percent of root area covered with galls
- Moderate infestation—11 to 25 percent of root area covered with galls
- High infestation—26 to 50 percent of root area covered with galls
- Very high infestation—51 to 100 percent of root area covered with galls

The risk posed by moderate to high infestations is often equal to or greater than the risk posed by very high infestations. Even low to moderate infestations on a nematode-resistant variety warrant rotation to a nonhost crop. The higher the gall index, the higher the infestation level. You can learn much about the root-knot population in each field by systematically assessing such indices. This information will prove valuable when making decisions about soil nematicide treatments or the use of a root-knot resistant variety.

To obtain nematode assays, take soil samples from the field and send them to the Agronomic Division, Nematode Assay Section, North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, 4300 Reedy Creek Road, Raleigh, NC 27607-6465. Contact your county Cooperative Extension Service agent for help. These samples must be taken in the fall (before December 1) to provide reliable information. No more than four acres should be represented by one sample, which should consist of at least 20 cores or subsamples from six to eight inches deep. Samples must not be allowed to dry or heat above 80°F. The counts obtained from samples taken in the spring are usually much lower and are therefore not nearly as reliable.

As with other tobacco diseases, control of root-knot and other nematodes must be based on a combination of suitable practices; no one approach can provide adequate, long-term control. Recommendations for nematicides are presented in Table 8-7.

**Table 8-7. Nematicides for root-knot nematode control on flue-cured tobacco**

Material <sup>a</sup>	Rate/Acre	Method of Application	Waiting Period	Control Rating
Telone C-17 (1,3-d+chloropicrin)	7–10.5 gal	Fumigant—row <sup>b</sup>	21 days	Excellent
Chloropicrin 100 (chloropicrin)	3 gal	Fumigant—row <sup>b</sup>	21 days	Excellent <sup>c</sup>
Chlor-O-Pic 100 (chloropicrin)	3 gal	Fumigant—row <sup>b</sup>	21 days	Excellent <sup>c</sup>
Pic + (chloropicrin 86%)	4 gal	Fumigant—row <sup>b</sup>	21 days	Excellent <sup>c</sup>
Telone II (1,3-d)	6 gal	Fumigant—row <sup>b</sup>	21 days	Excellent

<sup>a</sup> Most nematicides can damage plants under certain conditions. Greenhouse-produced plants may be more sensitive to this type of injury.

<sup>b</sup> Apply 6 to 8 inches deep. Fumigants work best and cause the least injury when applied at soil temperatures above 50°F and when the soil is moist but not wet. Form a high, wide bed immediately after application.

<sup>c</sup> Control may be variable, and numerous galls may be found on roots later in the season.

**Target spot.** Target spot (*Rhizoctonia* spp.) has been prevalent in North Carolina since 1984, especially in plant beds and greenhouses. In 1995, it caused the greatest losses of any disease since 1959. The fungus that causes target spot lives in many North Carolina soils. Saturated soils and leaf moisture favor sporulation of the fungus and germination of the spores into the tobacco leaves.

Target spot symptoms are quite similar to those of brown spot. With target spot, the centers of the lesions rapidly become very thin and papery and shatter if only slight pressure is applied. The concentric rings that characterize brown spot lesions may look similar to those caused by target spot. Because target spot lesions are so fragile, the necrotic areas usually drop from the leaf, leaving a ragged appearance. Target spot may occur on leaves at any plant position and, where conditions favor the problem, may cause considerable destruction. Target spot, like brown spot, is favored by frequent rainfall and high humidity.

Removing the lower leaves and ensuring adequate nitrogen are recommended management tactics. In 2006 Quadris (Azoxyastrobin) was registered for control of target spot. Quadris is a “locally systemic” product (i.e., it can move only a short distance from the point where a drop lands on a leaf). Therefore, drop nozzles are highly recommended for Quadris application in the field to ensure uniform coverage of the foliage.

**Tobacco mosaic virus.** Tobacco mosaic is the most contagious tobacco disease that growers encounter in North Carolina. The virus that causes it is a large, complex chemical molecule that, like all other viruses, requires living tissue to multiply. Once a tobacco mosaic particle enters the plant, it becomes a part of that plant and will persist until the plant dies. The tobacco mosaic virus is spread in the sap of diseased plants. Anything that moves sap or juice from a diseased plant to a healthy plant will move the virus. That includes machinery used during cultivation and the hands or clothing of workers. It is not spread through air currents or by other carriers associated with most other diseases.

Mosaic is not as sensitive to weather conditions as most other tobacco diseases. However, it is easier for plants to become infected when there is moisture on them and when they are succulent and growing rapidly. Damage is most severe when infected plants suffer during hot, dry conditions.

The symptoms of tobacco mosaic are well-known to most producers. The most common is leaf mottling, which is alternating areas of light and dark green tissue. This symptom is especially noted in the top of the plant or in younger tissue. During periods of high temperatures and high light intensity, affected portions of leaves may die, resulting in “mosaic burn.”

Because of the virus’s unique nature, control of tobacco mosaic must be approached differently from that of other diseases. No chemicals are labeled for mosaic control, although the milk-dip treatment is beneficial as workers perform tasks within the crop. New resistant varieties are very valuable control tools (see Table 8-3).

Also, you should rotate fields, clean equipment, and discard seedling trays (if tobacco mosaic virus was at least 20 percent by layby in any field). In addition, you should wash greenhouse clippers, transplanters, tractor bottoms and tool bars, and any other equipment that came in direct contact with the foliage and sanitize them with a 25 to 50 percent bleach solution.

**Tomato spotted wilt virus.** Tomato spotted wilt (TSW) is a potentially devastating disease of tobacco in North Carolina caused by tomato spotted wilt virus (TSWV). This virus also causes disease in North Carolina tomatoes, peppers, peanuts, and white potatoes. The host range is large, including many weeds and ornamentals. TSWV is moved from plant to plant by tiny insects called thrips. In most years, the tobacco thrips is apparently the most important vector of TSWV in the early season. However, the western flower thrips was abundant early in the season in 2002. TSWV was first detected in North Carolina tobacco in 1989. Because the virus can infect more than four hundred species of plants, including many native and introduced plants found in North Carolina, it is entrenched in our agricultural landscapes and is unlikely to disappear. Planning for TSWV management is crucial for growers in areas where the virus is firmly established; growers in other areas must remain vigilant against this disease (Figure 8-21).

Symptoms of TSWV vary with plant age, virus strain, and environmental conditions. Newly transplanted seedlings die rapidly, then swiftly decay. Therefore, seedling infections are often misdiagnosed as other seedling diseases or transplanting problems. Plants that are ankle-high and taller will show some characteristic foliar symptoms. On small plants, dark reddish-brown specks and leaf distortion are common on the youngest leaves. Slightly older plants will show classic reddish-brown necrotic spots or ringspots, often with star-like projections into the green leaf tissue. Necrosis of tissue running adjacent to leaf veins is common and characteristic. Despite the term wilt in the name, older plants only appear wilted because of the twisting and distortion the virus causes. Symptoms are usually most severe on one side of the plant and in the bud. Infected plants near flowering may have black streaks running down one side of the stem, often resembling burn from contact suckercides. Streaks also occur within the pith. Plants



that get infected near, during, or after flowering suffer little loss. Symptoms on these plants are generally local, being restricted to the leaf or leaves that were initially infected.

Although TSWV symptoms are somewhat characteristic, the disease can be confused with other seedling diseases, as mentioned earlier. It also can be confused with other viruses, especially tobacco streak virus (TSV). TSWV is usually randomly distributed throughout a field, whereas TSV is usually very concentrated near a particular field border. The only way to be sure which virus or viruses are present is to use a reliable assay procedure to identify the virus.

Many plant species can be infected by TSWV. However, some are much better hosts than others. Research indicates that the most important sources for infection of tobacco are several species of winter weeds. Some of these include the annual smallflower buttercup, mouseear chickweed, common chickweed, and spiny sowthistle, as well as the perennials dandelion and Rugel's plantain. As the winter annuals begin to die in the spring, adult thrips are forced to move to alternative plants, including tobacco. If the plant on which they developed was infected, they carry the virus with them. The virus can also move back and forth between winter annuals and summer annuals and perennials.

The movement of TSWV into tobacco is complex and, in a sense, difficult. Several things must go just right (or just wrong, from the farmer's point of view) for transmission to occur. First, there must be infected plant hosts in the area that harbor the disease. Second, these plants must also be hosts of one of the thrips species that can carry the disease. Third, these thrips must be one of the species that attack tobacco. Fourth, there must be some reason for the adult thrips to move from the host to tobacco. Finally, this movement must take place when the tobacco is in the field and in a susceptible stage.

Why, then, do we see so much TSWV in tobacco in some years (such as 2002) and so little in others? We can only speculate. However, we think several factors are at work:

- TSWV has gradually built up in weed hosts in North Carolina, especially in certain areas. This allows movement of the virus over short distances.
- A relatively warm winter before the field season allows thrips to be active during much of the winter, spreading the disease among weed hosts. This weather may also help thrips survive and build up in higher numbers than usual. Colder winters may suppress thrips numbers and the spread of the disease among weeds, resulting in a smaller source in the spring.
- An early, dry spring causes winter hosts to yellow and die earlier than usual. Thrips begin moving off these dying weeds at just the time tobacco is being transplanted. Generally, tobacco seems to be most susceptible to infection at transplanting. As the crop ages, it is progressively less likely to be infected by a virus-carrying thrips. If winter weeds remain green and healthy until well after tobacco is in the field, thrips have less need to move to newly set tobacco.
- Most winters and springs will fall between these extremes.

While no current management practices will completely control the effects of TSWV on tobacco crops, some tools that can help moderate the disease have emerged in the last few years. Proper application of these strategies can significantly reduce TSWV incidence in tobacco fields, but they may not provide adequate suppression under extremely high virus pressure. See chapter 9, “Tobacco Insect Management,” for more information.

Thrips are able to transmit TSWV very quickly, and most of these virus-carrying thrips come from outside the tobacco field. Over-the-top insecticides do not kill these thrips quickly enough to stop the spread of the virus. This type of spraying has not been successful in reducing disease incidence. However, some disease suppression has been noted on Admire-treated plants in Georgia and North Carolina. Therefore, applying Admire in the greenhouse to control aphids and other insect pests may help suppress TSWV. The suppression varies from year to year and is related to the timing of thrips flight and amount of available virus (Table 8-8).

**Table 8-8. Suppression of TSWV with Actigard and Admire Pro, North Carolina**

County, Year	Percentages of Plants Infected by Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus			
	Untreated Control	Admire Pro 0.8 oz/1,000 Plants	Admire Pro 0.8 oz/1,000 Plants + Actigard 10 ppm float water	Admire Pro 0.8 oz/1,000 Plants + Actigard 1 oz/50,000 Plants
Duplin, 2008	38	10	4	4
Craven, 2008	20	11	5	3
Duplin, 2005	54	36	22	36
Onslow, 2005	29	20	9	12
Average	35.3	19	10	14

Note: The Actigard and Admire Pro treatments were applied in the greenhouse seven to 14 days before transplanting. Actigard was applied to trays as a foliar spray and then drenched with a sufficient amount of water to move the material to the root zone, or it was applied in the water bed followed by thorough circulation of the water in the bed to ensure uniform distribution of the material.

The application of Actigard, alone or in combination with Admire or Platinum, to seedlings in the greenhouse shows promise for being an effective and economical management tactic. Most economically important TSWV infections apparently occur within the first week or two after transplanting; many may occur during the first few days. Thus, protection should be in place before transplanting. Application of any chemicals after the virus has infected the plant will be of little, if any, benefit. The best treatment in our studies (examples in Table 8-8) averaged about 50 to 70 percent control. This level of control is comparable to the control levels obtained with pesticides for other tobacco diseases.

Use of pesticides of any type usually comes at a price. Our tests have shown that treatment in the greenhouse with Actigard and higher rates of Admire may result in early season leaf damage

and stunting and that this effect is greatest when both materials are used. This is usually a temporary effect and has not resulted in significant loss of yield in our tests. However, such losses are possible. For that reason, we recommend that growers use both chemicals only when they have had at least 10 percent losses from TSWV in the past. Where TSWV levels have been significant but lower, Admire alone is recommended at 0.8 to 1.2 ounces per thousand plants (Admire 2F at 1.8 oz/thousand plants) in the greenhouse. Lower rates of Admire are adequate if only insect control is needed. If you use a generic version of imidacloprid instead of Admire Pro or Admire 2F, make sure you read the label to determine the appropriate rate before treating. Injury is most likely when the plants are stressed. If Actigard is used, take great care in ensuring that the product is precisely measured and applied according to label directions. Actigard can be applied as a foliar spray and then drenched to the root zone with water or applied in the float bed water. If application in the float bed water is chosen, use Table 8-9 to calculate the quantity needed. In our tests, Platinum used alone in the greenhouse at 1.3 ounces per thousand plants has not reduced TSWV significantly. However, the combination of Platinum and Actigard has been as effective as the combination of Admire and Actigard.

**Weather fleck.** Weather fleck is not an infectious disease, but it causes dark, metallic-like, sunken leaf spots (flecks) that gradually fade to white with age. Symptoms are most obvious on older leaves of young plants or on middle-aged leaves of older plants. Spots are often more common near leaf tips. Damage can be severe enough to blight bottom leaves. Weather fleck is an injury caused by the common air pollutant ozone. Ozone is heavy oxygen ( $O_3$ ) and is produced by internal combustion engines and by certain manufacturing processes. During periods of cloudy, overcast, or rainy weather, the concentrations of ozone that would normally escape into the stratosphere are held closer to ground level. Most important, it is during these conditions that leaf pores (stomata) remain open the longest and the leaves absorb the most ozone. Some varieties are much less sensitive to weather fleck than others, and growers who experience chronic difficulty should select a variety that is more tolerant.

**Table 8-9. Conversion of ppm to grams of Actigard based on float bed size**

Gallons per Bed	Actigard Rate (ppm)			
	10.0	15.0	20.0	25.0
3,000	4.0	6.0	7.9	9.9
3,200	4.2	6.4	8.5	10.6
3,400	4.5	6.8	9.0	11.3
3,600	4.8	7.2	9.5	11.9
3,800	5.0	7.6	10.1	12.6
4,000	5.3	7.9	10.6	13.2
4,200	5.6	8.3	11.1	13.9

Note: ppm = parts per million.  
HOW TO READ THE TABLE: If a bed has 3,000 gal of water and you wish to apply 15 ppm of Actigard, then this is equivalent to 6 grams of the product.  
This table shows the rate of Actigard product (IN OUNCES) to add to obtain the desired ppm rate. Use the lower rate (10 ppm) in areas of moderate TSWV risk and the highest rate (25 ppm) in areas of severe TSWV risk.  
A waiver of liability must be signed to obtain an Actigard label. To obtain this waiver and label, growers must visit [www.farmassist.com](http://www.farmassist.com) and register (email address required).  
Apply Actigard three to five days before transplanting. For best results, dilute the Actigard in a small volume of water, and then add this volume to the float water. Ensure adequate and uniform circulation of the product within the bed.

### SOME TIPS ON PLANNING DISEASE MANAGEMENT

No single practice can be expected to provide protection from every disease, much less from the many different diseases that might attack tobacco during a growing season. Tobacco growers urgently need to assess the disease problems within each of their fields and plan management strategies well before the crop year. A “tobacco disease map” of each field is of great benefit. To develop such a map, sketch the field and mark areas of disease infestation. Update the map each time tobacco is in the field, noting any change in location and in level of infestation. Over time, growers who do this can plan control practices that should benefit them immensely as they develop production plans from season to season. For black shank and Granville wilt, the average percentage of plants diseased within a field gives a good indication of the level of that disease in the field.

### OTHER REFERENCES

Tobacco disease information notes on collar rot, control of tobacco mosaic virus on flue-cured tobacco, Granville wilt, brown spot, black shank, blue mold, Pythium root rot in greenhouses, Pythium root rot in the field, Rhizoctonia diseases in the greenhouse, tomato spotted wilt virus, and tobacco disease management in greenhouses are available from [http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/plantpath/extension/clinic/fact\\_sheets/index.php?do=plant&id=3](http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/plantpath/extension/clinic/fact_sheets/index.php?do=plant&id=3).

*Compendium of Tobacco Diseases*, 68 pp., is available from the American Phytopathological Society. Call (800) 328-7560 to order.

## **A PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENT ON PESTICIDES**

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Pesticides must be used carefully to protect against human injury and harm to the environment. Diagnose your pest problem, and select the proper pesticide if one is needed. Follow label-use directions, and obey all federal, state, and local pesticide laws and regulations.

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**Table 8-10. Condensed management guide for seedlings (for more information, contact your county Cooperative Extension center)**

<b>Disease</b>	<b>Cultural Management</b>	<b>Chemicals (read and follow the label)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Anthrachnose ( <i>Collectotrichum gloeosporioides</i> )	Clip beds frequently to allow foliage to dry.	Dithane Rainshield (mancozeb) Greenhouse 0.5 lb/100 gal (sprayed)	Spray foliage to runoff, and maintain thorough coverage with fungicide when weather is cool and damp. Fungicide may be sprayed twice a week.
Blue mold ( <i>Peronospora tabacina</i> )	Clip beds frequently to allow foliage to dry.	See Anthracnose	Spray Dithane Rainshield weekly from the time plants are the size of a quarter.
Collar rot ( <i>Sclerotinia sclerotiorum</i> )	Don't seed more than 60 days before plants are needed. Thoroughly ventilate and use air-circulating fans. Do not dump soil or plants near greenhouses. Reduce the amount of debris left on seedling beds after clipping.	Aliette WDG 0.5lb/50 gal water	Apply preventively or at the first sign of blue mold. Do not exceed 2 applications.
Damping-off ( <i>Pythium</i> spp.)	Plant bed: Select warm, well-drained site. In greenhouses, keep pH below 6.2. Place trays in float beds as soon after filling with water as possible.  Plant bed: Select warm, well-drained site.	Terramaster (etridiazole) 35W 2 oz/100 gal float water Terramaster (etridiazole) 4E 1.4 fl oz/100 gal float water	Thoroughly mix into float water 2 to 3 weeks after seeding.
Soilborne diseases (Root-knot, Granville wilt, black shank, some damping-off)	Greenhouse trays: Wash trays. Steam at 160°F–175°F for 30 min.	Methyl bromide 98% 9 lb/100 sq yd  Methyl bromide 98% 3 lb/1,000 cu ft	Thoroughly prepare bed. Fumigate if temperature is higher than 50°F and soil is moist but not wet. Wait 24 to 48 hours after cover removal before seeding.  Stack trays criss-cross up to 5 ft. Tap and seal over airtight surface. Fumigate for 24 hours. Aerate for 48 hours.
Target spot ( <i>Rhizoctonia</i> sp.)	Clip plants frequently to allow foliage to dry.	Quadris 0.14 ml/100 sq ft	See blue mold. Make only one application prior to transplant.

**Table 8-10. (continued)**

<b>Disease</b>	<b>Cultural Management</b>	<b>Chemicals (read and follow the label)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Tobacco Mosaic Virus	Do not touch plants. Use new trays if previous seedlings were infected. Control horsetail around seedlings. Keep tomato and pepper plants and fruits out of area.	Household bleach  Milk (any type) 5 gal/1,000 sq ft of bed or 5 lb dry skim milk in 5 gal water/1,000 sq ft	Wash and sanitize mower with 25 to 50 percent household bleach and/or steam clean mower.  Spray plants within 24 hours of transplanting.

**Table 8-11. Condensed management guide for field diseases (for more information, contact your county Cooperative Extension center)**

<b>Disease</b>	<b>Cultural Management</b>	<b>Chemicals (read and follow the label)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Angular leafspot ( <i>Pseudomonas syringae</i> )	If disease is severe, avoid working in fields when foliage is wet.	None	Control is not usually necessary.
Barn rot ( <i>Erwinia</i> sp.)	Harvest tobacco dry. For wet tobacco, run fans for 24 hours with vents open to dry tobacco before increasing temperature.	None	
Black root rot ( <i>Thielaviopsis basicola</i> )	Rotate (Table 8-1). Maintain soil pH near 6.0.	Chloropicrin at 3 gal/acre Pic + at 4 gal/a Telone C-17 at 10.5 gal/acre	Observe 21-day waiting period between application and transplanting.
Black shank ( <i>Phytophthora nicotianae</i> )	Rotate (Table 8-1). Use resistant varieties (Table 8-3). Destroy stalks and roots (Table 8-2). Plant on high, wide bed. Cultivate infested fields last. Manage nematodes.	Ridomil Gold EC, 1.5 (WSP) at 1+5 pt (lb)/acre 1+1 pt (lb)/acre 1+1+1 pt (lb)/acre Ultra Flourish (2x Ridomil Gold rates) Ridomil Gold, 1 pt (lb)/acre + Telone C-17 at 7 gal/acre Ridomil Gold, 1 pt (lb)/acre + Chloropicrin at 3 gal/acre Ridomil Gold, 1 pt (lb)/acre + Pic + at 4 gal/acre	In fields with histories of black shank, use all cultural practices. Use Ridomil just before transplanting. Apply again at first cultivation and/or lay-by if risk of disease is high. Ultra Flourish 2E brand of mefenoxam used at 2 times the rates of Ridomil may be used in place of Ridomil Gold 4EC brand of mefenoxam. When using a fumigant apply mefenoxam at first cultivation, not preplant. See Table 8-4.
		Presidio at 4 fl oz/acre	Soil directed spray.



**Table 8-11. (continued)**

<b>Disease</b>	<b>Cultural Management</b>	<b>Chemicals (read and follow the label)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Blue mold ( <i>Peronospora tabacina</i> )	Destroy unused seedlings as soon as possible. Avoid planting in shaded areas. Avoid close plant spacings.	Acrobat 50WP at 2.5 lb/100 gal  Actigard 50W at 0.5 oz/a in 20 gal water  Dithane Rainshield at 1.5–2 lb/100 gal  Aliette WDP at 2.5–4 lb/acre  Quadris at 6–12 fluid oz/acre  Revus at 8 fluid oz/acre  Presidio at 4 fl oz/acre	Spray at first threat of blue mold and every 7–10 days. See label for spray volumes.  Apply after plants are 18 in. tall. Repeat in 10 days. See label for precautions.  Spray foliage weekly for complete coverage. Stop spraying all products 21 days before harvest.  Apply preventively or at first sign of blue mold. Apply until 3 days before harvest  See label for spray volumes.  Do not apply within 7 days before harvest.  See label for spray volumes.
Brown spot ( <i>Alternaria alternata</i> )	Avoid close plant spacing. Control suckers. Do not apply excess nitrogen. Manage nematodes. Use tolerant varieties.	None	Harvest as often as necessary to save tobacco.
Charcoal rot ( <i>Macrophomina phaseolina</i> )	Avoid overapplication of contact sucker chemicals.	None	Rare, but occurs during hot and dry periods.
Etch Tobacco Etch Virus		None	No control available.
Fusarium wilt ( <i>Fusarium oxysporum</i> f. sp. <i>nicotianae</i> )	Rotate. Destroy stalks and roots (Table 8-2). Avoid root wounding. Use resistant varieties. Manage nematodes.	None	Significant problem only when root-knot or root injury is present.

**Table 8-11. (continued)**

<b>Disease</b>	<b>Cultural Management</b>	<b>Chemicals (read and follow the label)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Granville wilt ( <i>Ralstonia solanacearum</i> )	Rotate (Table 8-1). Destroy stalks and roots (Table 8-2). Use resistant varieties (Table 8-3). (All varieties may be severely damaged.) Avoid root wounding. Plant on high, wide bed. Manage nematodes.	Chloropicrin at 3 gal/acre Pic + at 4 gal/acre Telone C-17 at 10.5 gal/acre See Table 8-6.	Use all cultural practices and a fumigant (fall or spring) where Granville wilt has recently occurred. Observe 21-day waiting period for fumigants. Use higher rates for broadcast application.
Hollow stalk (Bacterial soft rot) (Erwinia sp.)	Avoid getting soil on hands or stalks while topping and suckering.	None	
Lesion nematodes (Pratylenchus spp.)	Destroy stalks and roots (Table 8-2). Rotate with fescue.	None usually required. See Table 8-7.	Not a problem year after year.
PVY (vein-banding) (Potato Virus Y)	Avoid transplants from areas with high incidence of PVY.	None	No practical control.
Ringspot (Tobacco ringspot virus)	Avoid problem fields.	None	No remedial control.
Root-knot ( <i>Meloidogyne incognita</i> ) ( <i>M. arenaria</i> ) ( <i>M. javanica</i> ) ( <i>M. hapla</i> )	Destroy stalks and roots (Table 8-2). Rotate (Table 8-1). Use resistant varieties (Table 8-3). Take and submit fall nematode samples.	For nematocides see Table 8-7.	Rotation usually requires two or more years. Resistant varieties are resistant only to races 1 and 3 of <i>M. incognita</i> . Other species and races are now common in North Carolina. Observe 21-day waiting period for fumigants.
Soreskin ( <i>Rhizoctonia</i> sp.)	Pull and handle plants carefully to avoid wounding or bruising.	None	Plant on high, wide bed to provide adequate drainage. Avoid placing nitrogen too close to stalk.
Southern stem rot ( <i>Sclerotium rolfsii</i> )	Avoid wounding stalk.	None	

**Table 8-11. (continued)**

<b>Disease</b>	<b>Cultural Management</b>	<b>Chemicals (read and follow the label)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Target spot ( <i>Rhizoctonia</i> sp.)	Harvest or remove bottom leaves as soon after disease begins as possible. Maintain recommended nitrogen levels. Maintain sucker and weed control.	Quadris at 6–12 fluid oz./acre (8 fl oz/acre has given consistently good results)	Easily confused with brown spot.
Tobacco cyst (Osborne's cyst) ( <i>Globodera tabacum</i> )	Rotate (avoid tomato and pepper). Destroy stalks and roots (Table 8-2).	Temik at 20 lb/acre Telone C-17 at 10.5 gal/acre	
Tobacco mosaic virus (Field)	Do not plant infected seedlings. Rotate (Table 8-1). Destroy stalks and roots (Table 8-2). Use resistant varieties (Table 8-3). Practice good sanitation. Manage horse nettle. Irrigate during dry periods.	None	Wash hands with soap or milk after handling tobacco. Disinfect equipment with 25 to 50 percent household bleach.
Tomato spotted wilt virus	Check with county Extension centers for extensive publications and recommendations.		
Weather fleck (Ozone air pollution)	None	None	No practical control.

## 9. TOBACCO INSECT MANAGEMENT

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The extreme, prolonged heat experienced during the 2015 growing season produced moderate insect populations throughout much of North Carolina flue-cured tobacco. Warm weather resulted in pretopping hornworm populations in several eastern North Carolina fields, but caterpillar damage was generally lower than average.

Growers are becoming more familiar with Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) requirements, including the importance of economic thresholds in reducing unnecessary insecticide applications, and our program has focused on identifying ways our economic threshold and scouting recommendations can be improved. Additional information on insect pest biology, along with images of pests and their damage, can be found at [tobacco.ces.ncsu.edu](http://tobacco.ces.ncsu.edu).

### PROTECTING SEEDLINGS IN GREENHOUSES

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Insects seldom threaten to destroy all the plants in a greenhouse, but they can reduce the number of usable plants produced. Insect pests may also be carried on transplants to the field, where they are more challenging to control. The most common greenhouse pests are crickets and aphids, but ants, slugs, and others may also infest greenhouses. Greenhouse insect management requires a systematic approach that starts with careful planning and close observation.

#### **Sanitation**

Sanitation in and around greenhouses is essential. Keep houses free of trash, supplies, equipment, or other unnecessary items. Insects and other pests can hide in or feed on materials in the greenhouse. Keep the area surrounding the greenhouse clear of such debris, as well. A strip of bare ground, sand, or gravel around the house may help reduce the number of insect pests entering the house. Once transplanting is complete, remove and destroy excess plants in the greenhouse as soon as practical. Otherwise, they can serve as a nursery for pests moving into fields.

#### **Fallow Periods**

If possible, use greenhouses only for tobacco production. Growing other plants, such as ornamentals or vegetable seedlings, can introduce or sustain insect pests. Some of these may be uncommon tobacco pests for which no labeled pesticides are available or that are very

difficult to control. If greenhouses are used for other purposes, they should be kept empty (fallow) whenever possible. A long empty period just before introduction of tobacco is especially important in breaking the life cycle of pests. Growing other plants in the greenhouse from seed is preferable to bringing in seedlings from another location. The latter practice increases the chance of introducing pest problems.

### ***Cold***

Keeping the empty greenhouse open during cold periods helps reduce populations of insects wintering inside. Do not leave any materials (such as trays) in the greenhouse to provide pests insulation.

### ***Solarization***

Closing the greenhouse during the summer and bringing the temperature up to 140°F (but not higher) for several days may also help reduce insect numbers. Again, you should remove any insulating material (such as trays) that protect insects. Also remove any materials that can be damaged by high temperatures.

### ***Insecticides***

Watch plants carefully and treat with an insecticide if insects threaten an adequate supply of healthy plants. Few insecticides are labeled for use in tobacco greenhouses. Acephate is one of the few materials available for pest management in tobacco greenhouses. Acephate 97UP can be used at  $\frac{3}{4}$  tablespoon per 3 gallons of water for each 1,000 square feet (Acephate 75 EP at 1 tablespoon). Uniform coverage is important. Check your nozzle spacing and be sure the nozzles are not worn or damaged. A spray table should be used to check for unevenness in your spray pattern on an annual basis. A metaldehyde bait (Deadline Bullets) is labeled for control of slugs in tobacco greenhouses, and Sluggo (iron phosphate) baits are an organically acceptable (i.e., Organic Materials Review Institute listed) slug treatment. To avoid injury, do not put baits directly on plants.

Several other insecticides are labeled for use around the outside of structures or within the greenhouse on crops other than tobacco. Check with your county agent or the *North Carolina Agricultural Chemicals Manual* for specific recommendations. Fire ants can carry off seeds and germinating plants from large areas of a house and may be problematic in warm springs. These pests should be controlled before seeding by using an insecticide bait. Baits may act more slowly than other pesticides, so start bait use early. Extinguish is a fire ant bait that is also labeled for use on cropland. Bait treatments typically provide longer-acting control than mound drenches with insecticides like acephate, although these two methods can be combined by first treating with a bait and then applying a drench treatment a few days later.

## PROTECTING TOBACCO IN THE FIELD

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### ***Management of Soil Insects***

**Wireworms.** Wireworms are already present in the soil at transplanting. Eggs are laid on the soil in the summer and early fall of the previous year, and larvae can live in soil for several years. They damage tobacco by tunneling into the stalk below the soil surface. This may kill or stunt plants and may open even resistant varieties to soilborne diseases. Stunting and the need to reset plants can result in an uneven, difficult-to-manage crop. Under good growing conditions, tobacco usually recovers from wireworm damage with no yield loss. However, if conditions are less favorable or if certain diseases are present, yield may be reduced.

It is not possible to control wireworms in tobacco with post transplant rescue treatments; you must decide in advance whether you need to use soil-applied insecticides (Table 9-1). If there is a history of wireworms, if the field was weedy or fallow, or if the field is heavily infested with soilborne diseases such as black shank and Granville wilt, a preventive treatment may be justified. In other cases, preventative management is not recommended. Insurance treatments for wireworms add to the costs of production and add pesticides to the environment.

Either contact insecticides (Lorsban/Warhawk, Capture) or systemic insecticides (Admire, Platinum, Brigadier) can be used for wireworm control. Both types have provided good control in tests, but systemic materials also provide control of aphids and flea beetles. Use either a contact or a systemic insecticide for wireworms, ***not both***. Whether you choose a contact or a systemic, the following application techniques are important:

- Broadcast materials should be thoroughly incorporated into the soil. (This usually requires two passes with incorporation equipment.) It is also important to give broadcast insecticides time to work before transplanting; at least two weeks are recommended, unless the label says otherwise.
- For systemic greenhouse applied insecticides, apply materials evenly and wash them off thoroughly to move the insecticide to the potting soil.
- Transplant water treatments should only be applied if application equipment can be accurately calibrated. Pressurized tanks fitted with nozzles to apply transplant water treatments are advised, and growers are cautioned not to apply transplant water treatments using gravity flow tanks.

When choosing soil-applied insecticides, always consider the possible effect on groundwater and surface water. See chapter 11, "Protecting People and the Environment When Using Pesticides," for information on leaching and runoff potentials.

**Table 9-1. Selected soil-applied insecticides for wireworm control**

Insecticide and Formulation	Amount/Acre	Remarks
Lorsban Advanced	2 qt	Apply prior to transplant and cultivate into the top 6 in. of soil.
Capture LFR <sup>a</sup>	3.4–6.8 fl oz	Apply at transplant in transplant water or incorporate pretransplant into the top 6 in. of soil.
Brigadier <sup>a,b</sup>	3.8–6.8 fl oz.	Apply in transplant water.
Admire Pro	1.2 fl oz per 1,000 plants	Apply to plants in greenhouse followed by immediate wash-off, OR apply in transplant water. Note that wireworm rates are higher than aphid and flea beetle rates. Only use wireworm rates in fields with history of wireworm injury.
Platinum	1.3 fl oz per 1,000 plants	

<sup>a</sup> Capture LFR and Brigadier wireworm control data are limited.

<sup>b</sup> Brigadier is a combination of bifenthrin, a pyrethroid, and imidacloprid.

**Cutworms.** Preventive chemical control is not recommended for cutworms. Cutworms are occasionally a problem post transplant, and effective rescue treatments are available. Growers can reduce the likelihood of cutworm problems by preparing the soil four to six weeks before transplanting and should scout fields for damage regularly during the first three to four weeks after transplant. Cutworm feeding first presents as small, webless holes on young leaves. As the larvae grow, they begin their typical cutting behavior. Cutworm larvae can be distinguished from other caterpillars because they curl into a circle when disturbed. Because most cutworm species are active only at night, suspected damage should be confirmed with evening observations to determine if caterpillars are present.

Treat with a foliar spray (Table 9-5) if 5 percent or more of the plants are damaged and live caterpillars are observed. Stand losses below 5 percent will not reduce yields. Fields are more likely to be infested if they were weedy the previous fall and winter or if they are low-lying with heavier soils.

**Other pests.** Growers may have occasional problems with sod webworms. These caterpillars tunnel in the underground stem much like wireworms, but they are almost always found in the stem, and they line the cavity with silk. These strands of silk, covered by dirt particles, often hang out of the entry hole. Problems with webworms are rare but sometimes occur in fields recently converted from sod. Other uncommon soil pests are white-fringed beetles and vegetable weevils. The white-fringed beetle is an introduced pest whose larvae (grubs) are white or cream colored and C shaped. The grub has no legs, but it does have a distinct head capsule. Damage is similar to that of wireworms but can be more severe. Vegetable weevil larvae may feed on tobacco seedlings and are light green legless grubs. Adult vegetable weevils may also feed on tobacco leaves following transplant and are grey-brown with a v-shaped mark on their wings. Soil-dwelling pests can be controlled after transplant, but growers should note

fields where damage has occurred to develop preventative management strategies the next time they plant tobacco.

### ***General Steps in Managing Leaf-Feeding Insects***

The goal of insect management is not to kill insects but to reduce damage and maximize profits. Thus, it is not only necessary to protect the crop but also to keep the costs of protection as low as is practical. The decision to use pesticides and selection of the appropriate pesticide should include considerations of environmental impact, worker health, and residue minimization. Growers stand the best chance of meeting these goals by combining a variety of tools. There are four basic types of control that may be used against insects in tobacco: (1) cultural control, (2) biological control through conservation of beneficial insects, (3) preventive chemical treatments applied to the soil, and (4) insecticides applied after a problem develops (remedial treatment). Biological control is important and should be allowed to reduce pest populations whenever possible. Calendar-based, over-the-top spray schedules add costs and often lead to more problems than they control. They should be avoided.

1. **Cultural control.** Several production practices can reduce the risk and extent of insect problems. These practices work to reduce the numbers of an insect pest in a wide area, make individual fields less attractive to insects, or help the plant tolerate insect attack with less loss. Most of these practices (listed below) are also important in good crop management, and most add little or nothing to the cost of production:
  - Destroy overwintering sites and hosts of aphids and flea beetles near greenhouses or plant beds (garden greens, wild mustard, dock).
  - Destroy unused plants as soon as transplanting is complete. Plants left intact may become breeding sites for several insect pests and sources for diseases such as blue mold.
  - Practice weed control to reduce sources of tobacco thrips, the main vector of tomato spotted wilt virus (TSWV), at least two weeks prior to transplant to prevent flushing thrips into a susceptible tobacco crop. Encouraging grassy vegetation surrounding fields can also minimize thrips habitat. Grasses are poor hosts for TSWV and do not support vector species of thrips.
  - If cutworms are a regular pest, prepare fields as early as is practical.
  - Choose a transplanting time to minimize your most important (or difficult-to-control) insect pests. Early planting reduces the chance of hornworm problems, early or late planting helps manage aphids, and late planting reduces budworm numbers. However, late-planted tobacco usually yields less.
  - Do not use nitrogen at rates higher than those recommended. Aphids, budworms, and hornworms are attracted to plants high in nitrogen.
  - Practice timely topping and good sucker control to reduce the attractiveness of the crop and to deny a source of food to budworms, hornworms, and aphids.
  - To reduce grasshopper and cricket invasion, keep borders clean and avoid haying grasshopper-infested grass strips near tobacco.



- Destroy stalks and roots immediately after harvest to reduce pest overwintering sites. This is important for budworms, hornworms, tobacco splitworm, and flea beetle management. It is also very important in control of diseases.
- Use good production practices to give the crop a good start, keep it healthy, and get it out of the field (where it is exposed to pests) quickly.

2. **Biological control.** Biological control is the use of a living organism to control another living organism. In general this includes nematodes, pathogens, predators, and parasites. In tobacco specifically, naturally occurring predators and parasites comprise our biological control agents. The importance of these beneficial organisms in controlling insect pests is hard to exaggerate. For example, as a group, parasitic wasps, predatory stilt bugs, and other beneficial insects can kill 80 to 90 percent of budworms and hornworms in a field. To make the most use of this free, natural control, follow these practices:

- Minimize or avoid using systemic insecticides that may reduce the populations of beneficial insects.
- Do not use insecticides after transplanting unless pest populations are at economic threshold. Many insecticides reduce the number of predators and parasites in a field. This can result in more pests later on. Even a few untreated areas can provide a refuge for beneficial insects. Beneficials can leave untreated areas to reinvade treated fields once pesticides are no longer active.
- If insecticide is necessary, choose the one most likely to target the pest and not harm beneficial insects. One way to tell if a pesticide is likely to harm beneficial insects is to compare the number of pest groups on the label. An insecticide that kills beetles, caterpillars, and flies is more likely to be harmful to beneficial insects than one that only kills caterpillars. Avoid IRAC (Insecticide Resistance Action Committee) modes of action (MOAs) 1 and 3, when possible; these are broad-spectrum materials.

**Table 9-2. Effectiveness of soil-applied insecticides**

Material	Wireworm	Aphid	Flea Beetle <sup>a</sup>	TSWV Suppression <sup>b</sup>
Admire and generic imidacloprids	Intermediate	Best	Best	Best
Lorsban	Intermediate	No	No	No
Orthene (TPW)	No	Inconsistent	Best	No
Platinum	Intermediate	Best	Best	Low

Note: No = Not recommended.  
<sup>a</sup>Ratings for flea beetle control are for early season populations.  
<sup>b</sup>Imidacloprid suppresses TSWV by altering thrips feeding behavior.

3. **Preventive chemical treatments applied to the soil.** Systemic insecticides are applied to the soil and taken up by the plant to control leaf-feeding insects. Several systemics that control aphids and flea beetles and suppress TSWV are available (Table 9-2). There are several reasons you might use one of these materials:

- They offer some insurance against loss to insect pests and against the need to apply rescue treatments.
- They may slow the development of aphid populations and provide more time to detect and react to this pest.
- They may do other things besides control leaf-feeding insects—for example, they may control nematodes or wireworms or reduce tomato spotted wilt infection—and this may increase yield or quality even when leaf-feeding insects are absent.

On the other hand, there are disadvantages to using systemic insecticides:

- Most offer protection against only one or two pests (usually aphids and early season flea beetles). Use will not reduce budworm and hornworm numbers and sometimes actually increases them.
- Protection is not always season-long, and it may not be adequate to keep pests from reaching damaging levels.
- Systemics may reduce the numbers of beneficial insects in the field and may actually increase pest pressures.
- Each year many untreated fields never reach threshold for the pests controlled by a systemic insecticide (e.g., aphids and flea beetles). In those cases, treatment would have been an unneeded expense.
- All pesticides pose some risk to humans and the environment.
- The public is concerned about pesticide use in their communities and on the commodities they buy.
- There is always a risk that a systemic will injure tobacco and reduce yield or quality (Table 9-3).
- As with any pesticide, widespread use of systemics over time may result in the development of resistance.

There is no advantage in using two chemicals that do similar jobs, and the likelihood of crop damage is increased. Combining systemic insecticides is not recommended.

Growers may consider using a systemic insecticide for early season tobacco budworms and hornworms. Coragen is labeled for application in transplant water against pretopping caterpillar pests. This primarily refers to tobacco budworms, but hornworms can also occur pre-topping. NC State field trials show that transplant water applications can have some efficacy against tobacco budworms very early in the season (four to six weeks post transplant), although long activity has been observed against hornworms. Hornworms are infrequent pre-topping pests and are easily

controlled with other materials, so a preventive treatment targeted toward them is not advised. If growers are interested in using Coragen in a transplant water application, they should carefully follow the label, use at least one hundred gallons of water per acre, and use equipment that ensures that each plant receives the correct rate of pesticide in the appropriate amount of water.

4. **Remedial control.** To determine if any insect pest population requires remedial treatment, you must know the pest level in each field. To get this information, scout fields weekly. To scout a field, walk through it (being sure to cover all areas) making stops at random. Make eight stops in a small field (1 to 3 acres) and 10 stops in fields 4 to 8 acres. For each 4 acres that a field exceeds 8 acres, add two stops. At each stop, check five plants in a row for insects. The exact pattern of stops is not critical, but be sure your path covers all parts of the field. You should not take samples near field borders (within 30 feet) because pests are often more numerous there.

Do not bias your sample by stopping to count when you see a damaged plant. Instead, determine where you will stop before you get there. Count the number of hornworms, budworms, and aphid-infested plants, and estimate the number of flea beetles per plant. Also note any other insects or damage. It is possible to reduce profits by applying insecticides that are not needed. The point at which it pays to treat is called an economic threshold.

**Table 9-3. Post transplant impacts of systemic neonicotinoid insecticides, summarized data from field trials, 2009. Values followed by the same letter are not significantly different. Plant stunting effects of systemic insecticides are often transient, as illustrated by the increase in plant height relative to the untreated control 6 weeks after transplant.**

				Plant height (inches)	
Insecticide	Rate	Phytoxicity rating (0-4)	% plants stunted (3 weeks after transplant)	5 weeks after transplant	6 weeks after transplant
Imidacloprid (Admire Pro)	0.6 fl oz/ 1,000 plants	0.25 b	6 b	8.49 ab	28.11 ab
	1.2 fl oz/ 1,000 plants	0.78 a	23 a	6.43 c	28.76 a
Thiamethoxam (Platinum)	0.8 oz/ 1,000 plants	0.61 a	8 b	7.70 b	27.26 b
Untreated control		0.05 b	1 c	8.96 a	27.24 b

**Table 9-4. Economic thresholds for key tobacco insect pests. Based on a minimum of 40 plants randomly sampled per field (for fields less than 3 acres).**

Insect Pest	Scouting Period	Economic Threshold
Tobacco budworms	Before button	10% infested plants. Do not count damaged plants as infested!
Tobacco/tomato hornworms	All season	1 or more larvae at least 1 inch long per 10 plants; parasitized larvae count as 1/2 of larva
Flea beetles	Post transplant	4 or more beetles per plant
	Preharvest and harvest	60 or more beetles per plant
Aphids	Pretopping	10% of plants with 50 or more aphids on upper leaves
Japanese beetles, loopers, grasshoppers	All season	10% damaged plants with live insects active in fields (note that this threshold is a suggestion and is not based on research)
Cutworms, vegetable weevils, mole crickets, slugs	Post transplant	5% or more small plants are killed or injured
Tobacco splitworm	Posttopping	10% or more of plants with greater than 10 mines per plant (note that this threshold is under development)

Consider each field independently, as pest populations will differ between fields. Do not treat all fields based on the pest population in one or two locations.

Scouting is your insurance against pest damage; it must be done on a regular basis. If you think a field may soon reach the threshold level for a pest (for example, if you find many newly hatched hornworms less than 1 inch long or many small aphid colonies), check the field again in two to three days. It is better to check again than to treat below threshold because beneficial insects and weather may eliminate the problem. For example, young hornworm larvae are easily washed from plants during rainstorms or killed by predators.

When you leave the field, compare your results with the treatment thresholds that have been established for each pest (Table 9-4) to determine whether you should initiate remedial treatment. These thresholds were developed as guidelines for average conditions. In unusual situations (drought stress or multiple pests), use your judgment in applying thresholds. Also keep in mind that thresholds were developed based on relatively high-priced tobacco. When the value of the crop goes down, the point at which it pays you to begin control goes up. Thus, the same thresholds are even more conservative now than in the past.

When choosing an insecticide, remember that no single insecticide is best for all pests or even for a single pest under all conditions. Choose an insecticide that fits your conditions and needs when the pest problem occurs. To make this choice, ask yourself the following questions:

**What insect pest or pests need to be controlled?** To do a good job of management, you must know which pests are in your fields. This is achieved through regular scouting and correct pest identification.

**What are the most effective insecticides to use against the pest or pests you are trying to control?** If two or more insects are damaging a field, the best choice would be an insecticide providing good control of all the pest insects. This does not mean you should always look for broad-spectrum insecticides. Narrowly targeted materials, which are usually less detrimental to beneficials and the environment, often are the best choice. Table 9-5 shows the effectiveness of insecticide sprays against major leaf-feeding insects, and Table 9-6 shows general insecticide recommendations.

**Table 9-5. Effectiveness of foliar insecticides against insect pests**

Insecticide	Insect Pest Control Levels			
	Aphid <sup>a</sup>	Budworm	Flea Beetle	Hornworm
Actara	Excellent	No	Excellent	No
Admire Pro	Excellent	No	Excellent	No
Assail <sup>b</sup>	Excellent	No	Excellent	NR
Belt	No	Good	No	Excellent
Brigade <sup>c</sup>	No	Good	No	NR
<i>B. thuringiensis</i>	No	Moderate <sup>c,d</sup>	No	Excellent
Coragen	No	Good	No	Excellent
Denim	No	Good	No	Excellent
Fulfill	Excellent	No	No	No
Lannate <sup>e</sup>	Fair	Moderate <sup>a</sup>	Good	Excellent
Pyganic	Fair	NR	Good	NR
Orthene <sup>e</sup>	Good	Moderate <sup>a</sup>	Good	Excellent
Blackhawk	No	Good	No	Excellent
Warrior <sup>e</sup>	Fair	Good <sup>a</sup>	No	Excellent

Note: *Moderate* also means the insecticide may be less consistent.

NR = Not recommended or too limited data to recommend.

<sup>a</sup> Aphid control ratings are based on maximum labeled rates.

<sup>b</sup> Aphid rating for Assail is based on limited data. Assail acts an ovicide for tobacco budworm.

<sup>c</sup> *B. thuringiensis* is sold under a variety of trade names.

<sup>d</sup> *B. thuringiensis* products seem to be more effective against budworms as the season progresses.

<sup>e</sup> There are residue concerns associated with these materials. Check with your purchaser before using.

**Table 9-6. Remedial treatments for insect control in the field**

Insect	Insecticide and Formulation	Rate per Acre	Reentry Interval (hrs)	Remarks
Aphids	Acephate (Acephate 97UP)	¾ lb	24	Good coverage is essential with any product.
	Imidacloprid (Admire Pro)	0.6 fl oz per 1,000 plants (greenhouse) 0.7-1.4 fl oz (field foliar)	12	
	Lambda-cyhalothrin (Warrior) (Karate Xeon)	2.5–3 oz 0.96–1.92 fl oz	24	Note long preharvest interval.
	Thiamethoxam (Actara 25WDG)	2 oz	12	
	Pymetrozine (Fulfill 50WG)	2¾ oz	12	
	Acetamiprid (Assail 30SG)	1.5–4 oz	12	
	Methomyl (Lannate 2.4LV)	1½ pt	48	Initial control is fair to good, but numbers rebound quickly.
Budworms	Spinosad (Blackhawk)	1.6 oz	4	Use one or three solid cone nozzles no more than 12 inches above the bud. Apply 25–50 gal water/acre with at least 40–60 lb pressure.
	Emamectin benzoate (Denim 0.16EC)	8 oz	48	
	Methomyl (Lannate 90SP) (Lannate 2.4 LV)	½ lb 1½ pt	48	
			48	
	Acephate (Acephate 97UP)	¾ lb	24	
	<i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> (Agree) (Biobit HP) (Crymax) (Deliver) (DiPel ES) (DiPel DF) (Javelin WG) (Lepinox WDG)	2 lb 1 lb 1–1½ lb 1–1½ lb 2 pt ½–1 lb 1–1¼ lb 1–2 lb	4 4 4 4 4 4 4 12	
Chlorantraniliprole (rynaxypyr) (Coragen)	3.5–5 fl oz	4		
Flubendiamide (Belt SC)	2–3 fl oz	12	14-day preharvest interval.	

**Table 9-6. (continued)**

<b>Insect</b>	<b>Insecticide and Formulation</b>	<b>Rate per Acre</b>	<b>Reentry Interval (hrs)</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Cutworms	Acephate (Acephate 97UP)	¾ lb	24	In late afternoon, apply in 25–50 gal water.
	Flubendiamide (Belt SC)	2–3 fl oz	12	
	Chlorantroniliprole (rynaxypyr) (Coragen)	3.5–5 fl oz	4	
Flea beetles	Acephate (Acephate 97UP)	½ lb	24	For best control with any product, spray entire plant.
	Imidacloprid (Admire Pro and many generics)	0.6 fl oz per 1,000 plants (greenhouse) 0.7-1.4 fl oz (field foliar)	12	
	Thiamethoxam (Actara 25WDG)	2–3 oz	12	
	Methomyl (Lannate 90SP) (Lannate 2.4LV)	¼–½ lb 1½ pt	48 48	
Grasshoppers	Acephate (Acephate 97UP)	½ lb	24	
Hornworms	Acephate (Acephate 97UP)	½ lb	24	If applications are necessary during harvest, make them immediately after priming rather than before.
	Spinosad (Blackhawk)	1.6 oz	4	
	Methomyl (Lannate 90SP) (Lannate 2.4LV)	¼–½ lb	48	
		¾–1½ pt	48	
	<i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> (Agree) (Biobit HP) (Crymax) (Deliver) (DiPel DF) (DiPel ES) (Javelin WG) (Lepinox WDG)	1–2 lb	4	
		¼–½ lb	4	
		½–1 lb	4	
		½–1 lb	4	
		¼–½ lb	4	
		½–1 pt	4	
		⅙–¼ lb	4	
		1 lb	12	
	Enamectin benzoate (Denim 0.16EC)	8 oz	48	Denim has a 14-day preharvest interval.
	Flubendiamide (Belt SC)	3 fl oz	12	14-day preharvest interval.
	chlorantroniliprole(rynaxypyr) (Coragen)	5 fl oz	4	

**Table 9-6. (continued)**

<b>Insect</b>	<b>Insecticide and Formulation</b>	<b>Rate per Acre</b>	<b>Reentry Interval (hrs)</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Japanese beetles	Lambda-cyhalothrin (Warrior) (Karate Xeon)	2.5–3 oz 0.96–1.92 fl oz	24	Do not use Warrior within 40 days of harvest.
	Thiamethoxam (Actara 25WDG)	2–3 oz	12	
	Acephate (Acephate 97UP)	½ lb	24	
Loopers	<i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> (Agree)	2 lb	4	Good coverage, especially of lower leaves, is essential.
	(Biobit HP)	1 lb	4	
	(Condor OF)	1½ qt	4	
	(Crymax)	1–1½ lb	4	
	(Deliver)	1–1½ lb	4	
	(Dipel DF)	½–1 lb	4	
	(Dipel ES)	1–2 pt	4	
	(Javelin WG)	1 lb	4	
	(Lepinox WDG)	2 lb	12	
Slugs	Flubendiamide (Belt SC)	2–3 fl oz	12	Apply at dusk. Do not put bait on plants. Organically acceptable.
	Chlorantroniliprole (rynaxypyr) (Coragen)	3.5–5 fl oz	4	
	Metaldehyde (Deadline Bullets)	12–40 lb	12	
Splitworms	Iron phosphate (Sluggo)	0.54-1 lb	0	Do not put bait on plants. Organically acceptable.
Splitworms	Flubendiamide (Belt SC)	2–3 fl oz	12	14-day preharvest interval.
	Chlorantroniliprole (rynaxypyr) (Coragen)	3.5–5 fl oz	4	
Stink bugs	Bifenthrin (Capture LFR)	3.4–6.8 fl oz	12	Do not apply after layby.
	Bifenthrin + imidacloprid (Brigadier 2SC)	6.4 fl oz	12	
	Lambda-cyhalothrin (Warrior 1CS) (Karate Xeon)	2.5–3 oz 0.96–1.92 fl oz	24	



**What are the hazards to the applicator and other workers?** When choosing pesticides, consider the hazard presented by each and the abilities of the person doing the application. It is best to use less hazardous materials when workers will be entering fields frequently. Labeling regulations require that all pesticides bear signal words to indicate relative hazards of use. Products bearing the words Danger—Poison are highly hazardous, those bearing Warning are moderately hazardous, and those bearing Caution range from slightly hazardous to relatively hazardless. You also need to consider the protective equipment requirements imposed by worker protection standards (see chapter 11, “Protecting People and the Environment When Using Pesticides”).

**What are the hazards to groundwater and surface water?** Insecticides vary in their potential for leaching into groundwater or running off in surface water. If your farm has leachable soils or fields with high runoff potentials, you should choose remedial (and soil-applied) chemicals carefully (see chapter 11, “Protecting People and the Environment When Using Pesticides”).

**What restrictions on field work will there be?** Worker protection standards prohibit workers from entering treated areas for a period of time after treatment. The length of time depends on the chemical used and is given on the label. Restricted entry periods generally range from 4 to 48 hours.

**Do tobacco buyers have concerns about insecticide residues?** The number of materials which buyers have residue concern about is increasing. Because of such concerns for certain materials, such as carbaryl (Sevin), we no longer suggest using them in tobacco. Communicate with your intended buyer to ensure that you are using only acceptable materials. Also, take care to prevent drift of any unregistered pesticides onto tobacco when they are being applied to an adjacent crop.

**Will use of the insecticide restrict time of harvest?** Regulations require a waiting period between application of insecticides and harvest. The length of time varies with the insecticide and is given on the label. For example, the pyrethroid lambda-cyhalothrin (Warrior) has a 40-day preharvest interval restriction, and bifenthrin (Brigade 2EC, etc.) cannot be applied after layby.

**What effect will various insecticides have on beneficial insects?** Some insecticides are more detrimental to beneficial insects than others. The *Bacillus thuringiensis* products (DiPel, etc.) do minimal harm to predators and parasites of tobacco pests. Fulfill is very specific to aphids and should have very little effect on beneficial insects. Tests in cotton indicate that spinosad (Blackhawk, Tracer) is somewhat detrimental to beneficials, but few data are available in tobacco. Ongoing research on imidacloprid indicates that foliar applications may affect wasp parasitoids of caterpillars.

**Is rotation between chemical classes an option?** The answer to this is almost always yes. To prevent the buildup of insecticide resistance and minimize residues, it is best to avoid using the same insecticide over and over. Codes assigned by the Insecticide Resistance Action

Committee (IRAC) allow growers to determine which insecticides have different modes of action and therefore can be used for rotation. See chapter 11 for an explanation of IRAC codes.

**How much does the material cost?** Cost is always a consideration. Remember, though, that the cost of the insecticide is not the only cost associated with insecticide use. An inexpensive but poorly chosen insecticide can actually increase pest problems and control costs. Other long-term costs, such as environmental damage and human health risks, should also be considered.

***Tobacco splitworm biology***

The tobacco splitworm, more accurately known as the potato tuber-worm, has been a minor pest of tobacco for many years. Splitworm moths are small (their wingspan is about half an inch) and grayish brown, and the back edges of their wings are heavily fringed; but you are much more likely to see the larvae and their damage. The larvae mine or tunnel between the upper and lower surfaces of tobacco leaves, creating a thin, irregular window in the leaf and destroying the leaf tissue in the mined area. If you hold a damaged leaf up to the light, you may be able to see the silhouette of the caterpillar moving within the window in the leaf. When infestations begin early in the growing season, splitworms may affect all leaves of the plants nearly at once. If the infestation begins after topping, as has been the case in recent years, it more typically starts on the lower leaves and moves up the stalk.

**Table 9-7. Reductions in budworm damage in North Carolina tests, 1998–2010**

Insecticide <sup>a</sup>	Percentage Reduction in Leaf Loss <sup>b</sup>	Number of Trials <sup>c</sup>
Belt SC, 3–4 fl oz	87	5
Coragen, 3–7 fl oz foliar applications	80	5
DiPel 10G, bait	87	11
Denim 0.16EC, 6–8 oz	84	9
DiPel ES, 2 pt	51	9
Lannate LV, 1.5 pt	52	5
Orthene 97, 0.77 lb	56	18
Tracer, 1.4–2.0 oz	79	20
Warrior, 1CS, 2.5 oz <sup>d</sup>	73	7

<sup>a</sup> Rates are in units of formulated product per acre. All treatments were over-the-top sprays except for hand-applied DiPel 10G. All insecticides were not included in all tests.

<sup>b</sup> Percentage reductions in the leaf area lost are in comparison to the untreated check in each test in which the treatment was included and averaged over these tests. Control in general was poor in most tests including Lannate and good in most tests including Denim. Thus, these comparisons may underrate Lannate somewhat and slightly overrate Denim.

<sup>c</sup> Numbers indicate the number of trials in which the treatment was included.

<sup>d</sup> Lambda-cyhalothrin, tested as Warrior 1CS in five tests and as Karate Z in two others.

There is no formal threshold for tobacco splitworm, but if 10 percent or more of plants are heavily infested (10 or more mines per plant), control is probably justified because populations of this insect can increase rapidly (Table 9-5). There are few good options for control. Plants should be scouted for any mines just after topping. If no mines are present midseason, it is unlikely that tobacco splitworm populations will be economically significant in that field. However, if mines are present midseason, this field should be carefully scouted for new mines on a weekly basis by examining the lower leaves of at least 40 plants per acre. If new mines with live larvae are developing, treat the infested plants to prevent a late-season infestation.

Limited tests with Warrior have provided good results in North Carolina and Virginia, but its very long preharvest restriction (40 days) limits its use to the first few weeks of the season. Denim is also somewhat effective but also has a long preharvest restriction (14 days). Belt and Coragen are registered for tobacco splitworm, but efficacy data are limited. If a splitworm infestation occurs during the harvest period, growers may be able to reduce populations by harvesting leaves with mines and following with insecticide sprays. This is not a recommendation to harvest unripe tobacco.

### ***Impact of Budworms on Tobacco***

Budworms (actually a complex of tobacco budworms and corn earworms) are among our most difficult insect pests to control because they spend much of their time in the tightly rolled leaves of the bud. On the other hand, because tobacco can compensate for budworm damage, budworms may cause less loss than many growers may expect. Tests on North Carolina flue-cured tobacco in 1998 and 1999 examined the effect of budworm infestation on yield. Infestation levels of 40 percent (1998) and 100 percent (1999) did not significantly reduce yields compared to tobacco kept budworm free. Tests in 2002 and 2003 looked at the impact of budworm feeding on a plant-by-plant basis. In only one of six trials did a 100 percent budworm infestation significantly reduce yield, and then only when the infestation occurred early and there was an unusually high incidence of topping. It is clear that the treatment threshold (10 percent of plants budworm-infested) is a very conservative and safe threshold. Do not rush into making a treatment.

If insecticides are used, apply them carefully. Budworms are often hidden in the bud; as a result, sprays are sometimes not very effective. It is very important to treat when the bud is most open (usually in the early morning or at night). Direct the spray into the bud and onto the upper one-third of the plant, and use a high volume (25 to 50 gallons per acre). The spray nozzles should be as low over the bud as practical, no more than 12 inches above the bud (or about six inches above the uppermost leaf tips). Do not treat after topping except in very unusual cases.

### ***Thrips and Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus***

TSWV is moved from plant to plant by tiny insects called thrips. Tobacco thrips, the main vector in tobacco, are usually brown or black as adults and have delicate fringed wings that look a bit like an individual feather. Thrips are thin, much longer than broad, but are not more than an eighth of an inch long. Young thrips are smaller, wingless, and usually yellow. If you want to check for the presence of thrips, it's best to use a hand lens or other magnifying device. Alternatively, you

may slap a leaf or flower head against a white surface. If some of the “dust” transferred to the white surface is elongated and moving around, your tobacco probably has thrips.

Thrips usually spend the winter as adults or as pupae in the soil. Adults may hibernate in sheltered areas, but in mild winters (or at least during mild periods) they may be active on host plants, such as winter weeds. In the spring, thrips begin to move more actively and can spread to other hosts, including tobacco. Most of this movement is over distances that may reach several hundred yards, but thrips can sometimes be carried hundreds of miles by the wind. Generations are short, about two weeks when the weather is warm, and there may be several generations during the growing season.

Not every thrips you see on your tobacco is spreading TSWV. (Yes, the word thrips is both singular and plural.) Although many species of thrips exist, most of them either cannot carry TSWV or do not feed on tobacco. Moreover, even thrips that are able to carry the disease may not have picked up the virus from a diseased plant. Two species that do carry the virus and do feed on tobacco are the tobacco thrips (*Frankliniella fusca*) and the western flower thrips (*Frankliniella occidentalis*). In most years, the tobacco thrips is apparently the most important vector of TSWV in the early season.

TSWV is carried from plant to plant inside the insect vector and not just on the outside of the insect’s mouthparts. Thus, there is a delay between acquisition of the virus from one plant and transmission to another plant. The virus must be picked up by a very young thrips within a day or two of its hatching. The same thrips cannot move the disease to another plant until the thrips matures into an adult.

**Pesticides.** Thrips are able to transmit TSWV very quickly, and most of these virus-carrying thrips come from outside the tobacco field. Over-the-top insecticides do not kill these thrips quickly enough to stop the spread of the virus. This type of spraying has not been successful in reducing disease incidence. Imidacloprid (Admire Pro and others) is effective at reducing TSWV transmission by altering thrips’ feeding behavior. The application of Actigard, alone or in combination with Admire or Platinum, as a foliar spray (drench) to seedlings in the greenhouse may also reduce TSWV in certain years. (See chapter 8, “Managing Diseases,” for details.) In addition to greenhouse treatments, Actigard can also be applied as a foliar treatment in the field. Tests in 2007, 2008, and 2009 using the Morsello-Kennedy thrips flight models (<http://climate.ncsu.edu/thrips/>) to time foliar Actigard applications reduced TSWV incidence.

**Cultural practices.** Field selection and the transplanting date affect disease, but the transplanting date’s effect is not consistent enough from year to year to include in a management plan. TSWV is most severe in early planted fields in most years, but in some years late-planted tobacco is most affected. Thrips flight timing is weather dependent.

**Weed management.** A few management considerations are important for TSWV control:

- Weedy small grain fields and fallow fields destined for no-till soybeans or cotton may

be important sources of virus-carrying thrips. Be careful not to disrupt these fields (for example, do not use a broad-spectrum herbicide) just before or during transplantation of tobacco. Thrips will be forced from the dying weeds into a very susceptible tobacco crop. Weeds in these fields should be dead for at least three weeks before transplanting.

- Movement of the virus from summer annuals back to winter annuals is an important step in the virus cycle. If summer annuals can be killed before the winter annuals emerge, the cycle might be disrupted. This is another argument for a vigorous, early stalk-and-root destruction program in tobacco (including cultivation) and for good general weed control in late summer and early fall. Pay particular attention to fields with substantial carpetweed populations because this plant generates large numbers of thrips and is a reservoir for the virus.
- Whenever possible, manage your field borders to favor grassy vegetation over broad-leaf weeds. Grasses don't generate vector species of thrips and are poor hosts for the virus.

### ***Organic Insect Management***

There is increasing grower and industry interest in organic and Pesticide Residue Clean tobacco production. Fortunately, we have many tools available for insect management in organic systems. Some of these insecticides are staples from conventional production that are also organically acceptable (Bt for budworm and hornworm control). Others are materials not previously used in tobacco and about which we have little information. One material, Pyganic EC (1.4, 5.4; MGK Company), has been tested on a limited basis for aphid and flea beetle control in tobacco. The label rate range for Pyganic EC 1.4 is 16 to 64 fluid ounces, and we do not currently have information to narrow this range. Organically acceptable materials for insect control in tobacco are listed in the *2016 North Carolina Agricultural Chemicals Manual*.

## **PROTECTING STORED TOBACCO**

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Stored tobacco is subject to two insect pests: the cigarette beetle and the tobacco moth. Both of these pests are more active during warm weather, but they live through our winters in protected areas. Damage caused by the cigarette beetle resembles the small holes chewed by flea beetles in green tobacco. Cigarette beetles leave behind a powdery waste that can give tobacco an unpleasant flavor. Damage by tobacco moths ranges from irregular holes about the size of a quarter to leaves completely stripped except for major veins. Damage by moths may also reduce the grade of tobacco to NOG due to silk webbing, droppings, and insect skins and bodies in the tobacco.

Controlling an established insect infestation is difficult at best. The best strategy is to prevent it through good sanitation and vigilance. If the tobacco to be stored is from the final harvest, it is best to leave it in the barn because the barn will have been heat-sterilized and may be reasonably tight. Also, if an infestation occurs, the barn can be heated to kill the pests. The tobacco should be first dried at a low heat before the temperature is raised above 100°F. A temperature of 140°F maintained for two hours is sufficient to destroy any pests and has the

added advantage of lowering the moisture content of the tobacco. A possible disadvantage to leaving the tobacco hanging is that it will likely come in and out of order with changing weather conditions. This tends to darken the tobacco over time.

If the tobacco is removed from the bulk barn for storage, be sure to thoroughly clean the storage area first. Move discarded tobacco and other organic refuse well away from the pack house and burn it. Tobacco and storage areas can be treated with *Bacillus thuringiensis* to help prevent tobacco moth infestation. Apply a fine spray to loose tobacco as it is being sheeted or baled. Rates for treatment with DiPel or Biobit are as follows:

- Tobacco: 2½ teaspoons DiPel DF or Biobit HP per quart of water per one hundred pounds of tobacco.
- Storage area: 6 teaspoons DiPel DF or Biobit HP per 2½ gallons of water. Use half a gallon per one thousand square feet of surface area.

Check stored tobacco periodically for signs of insects and new damage. Both insect pests are active primarily from April through October. Pests may also be active during warm spells in the winter, and tobacco should be checked then as well.

If tobacco moths are found, the tobacco should be treated with *Bacillus thuringiensis* as described above. Simply treating the outside of the bundles or bales may help but probably will not control an established infestation. Sheets should be opened and the tobacco treated as loose leaves as much as possible. If cigarette beetles are found, the only effective option is fumigation. Fumigation should be done by a professional because fumigants are very hazardous and must be carefully handled to be effective. Furthermore, regulations make it difficult for farmers to legally fumigate on their own. Fumigation controls both the cigarette beetle and the tobacco moth, but remember that it controls only those insects that are present in the fumigated area; it is not a preventive measure. Reinfestation can soon occur. Thus, sanitation in and around the storage area is essential.

Cigarette beetle and tobacco moth damage can greatly reduce the grade and desirability of tobacco. Thus, it is probably cost-effective (at least for loose or sheeted tobacco) to carefully sort out and discard damaged tobacco and other signs of damage before offering the tobacco for sale. If there has been a cigarette beetle infestation, even undamaged portions of a bundle should be shaken to remove any of the residues that impart off-flavors.

## **A PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENT ON PESTICIDES**

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Pesticides must be used carefully to protect against human injury and harm to the environment. Diagnose your pest problem, and select the proper pesticide if one is needed. The information presented here is not a substitute for pesticide label information. Follow label use directions, and obey all federal, state, and local pesticide laws and regulations.

## 10. CURING AND MECHANIZATION

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Energy efficiency is an integral part of sustainable agriculture. With the continued uncertainty in future energy costs, it remains important that growers apply all the recommended strategies to decrease energy usage and minimize production costs associated with curing. The best way to reduce energy costs is by improving and maintaining the energy efficiency of your existing curing infrastructure. Principally the heat exchanger retrofit systems require annual maintenance and adjustments to ensure they are operating correctly and efficiently. The information provided in this chapter can help you make the most efficient use of fuel and electricity while maintaining the highest cured leaf quality.

### LOAD UNIFORMLY AND MAINTAIN ADEQUATE AIRFLOW

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Green leaf loading systems improve the handling efficiency and incorporate a weighing system to ensure that boxes are loaded with the same quantity of tobacco. Overloaded boxes can result in scalded tobacco, particularly on lower-stalk tobacco. More often, however, improperly cured tobacco results from uneven loading, which allows air to pass through less densely loaded areas while bypassing more densely loaded areas. This differential drying can occur within a given box and between adjacent boxes in the same barn. Uneven drying results in longer curing times, thus increasing the electricity and fuel consumed. The bulk density—the pounds of green leaf per unit volume—significantly affects the airflow through the packed bed of tobacco. As the amount of green leaf per box (bulk density) increases, the resistance the fan must overcome to produce a desired airflow also increases. Thus, an accurate green weight measurement will assist with determining the optimum loading rates for your particular barns.

Many growers increase the quantity of tobacco loaded per box as harvesting advances from the lower-stalk leaves to the upper-stalk leaves. Typical loading varies from 1,800 to 2,000 pounds for lower-stalk leaves; 2,000 to 2,200 pounds for mid-stalk leaves; and 2,200 to 2,400 pounds for upper-stalk leaves. Depending on the green leaf quality and barn airflow capacity, some growers may load more than 2,400 pounds with upper-stalk leaves. The loading rates discussed are typical for Long, Powell, or Taylor size boxes. DeCloet barn boxes have less volume and as a result are loaded with less green leaf for a given stalk position. Typical loading for a DeCloet box ranges 1,200 to 1,600 pounds from lower-stalk to upper-stalk leaves. Although the quantity of green leaf loaded varies with the box volume for a given stalk position, the resulting bulk density will be similar. Regardless of the box volume, typical bulk densities vary from approximately 9

pounds to 13 pounds per cubic foot as harvesting advances from the lower to upper-stalk leaves. The barn airflow capacity and quality of the harvested tobacco are important factors that affect the quantity of tobacco loaded per box for any stalk position. As a result, the loading rate for any size box may vary each growing season and between growers with similar make barns.

## PRACTICE GOOD CURING MANAGEMENT

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Proper control of temperature and relative humidity is essential for efficient tobacco curing. For most growers, the relative humidity is indirectly monitored by measuring both the dry- and wet-bulb temperatures. However, many of the automated ventilation control systems are now using a relative humidity sensor (dry sensor) that has eliminated using a wet-bulb thermometer. Although relative humidity is measured directly with this sensor, the wet- and dry-bulb temperatures are displayed. A benefit of the dry sensor is the elimination of the routine maintenance required when using a wet-bulb thermometer to ensure accurate measurements. The feedback from growers using the relative humidity sensor continues to be positive. If you have concerns about the relative humidity sensor accuracy, compare the wet-bulb temperature displayed with a wet-bulb thermometer positioned in the barn. Additionally, ask the ventilation system or barn manufacturer about any calibration requirements.

### ***Dry-Bulb Temperature, Wet-Bulb Temperature, and Relative Humidity***

The dry-bulb temperature, which is the actual air temperature, is measured with a conventional thermometer and is controlled by the thermostat. A wet-bulb thermometer is simply a dry-bulb thermometer that has its bulb wrapped in a cloth wick that is kept saturated with water.

As a result of the evaporative cooling process, the wet-bulb temperature will be lower than the dry-bulb temperature. The amount of cooling depends on the relative humidity. The relative humidity is a ratio: the actual weight of the water vapor in the air relative to the maximum weight of water vapor the air can hold for a given dry-bulb temperature. The higher the relative humidity, the slower the evaporation rate, and vice versa. The difference between the dry-bulb and wet-bulb temperatures determines the relative humidity of the air. As the difference between the dry-bulb and wet-bulb temperatures increases, the relative humidity decreases, and a smaller difference indicates an increase in the relative humidity. If the air were completely saturated, which would mean the relative humidity was 100%, the dry-bulb and wet-bulb temperatures would be equal. Table 10-1 shows the relative humidity (%) for varying dry-bulb and wet-bulb temperatures. The relative humidity is read at the intersection of a given wet-bulb temperature row and dry-bulb temperature column. For example, given a dry-bulb temperature of 144°F and a wet-bulb temperature of 112°F, the relative humidity is 37%.



Table 10-1. Relative humidity (%) for given dry-bulb and wet-bulb temperatures

		Dry-Bulb Temperature (°F)																													
		92	94	96	98	100	102	104	106	108	110	114	118	120	124	128	130	134	138	140	144	148	150	154	158	160	164	168	170		
Wet-Bulb Temperature (°F)	80	60	55	50	46	42	36	33	30	28	25																				
	82	66	60	55	51	47	43	39	36	33	31																				
	84	72	66	61	56	52	48	44	40	37	34	29																			
	86	78	72	67	62	57	52	48	45	41	38	32																			
	88	85	79	73	67	62	58	53	49	45	42	36	31																		
	90	92	86	79	73	68	63	58	54	50	46	40	34	32																	
	92	100	93	86	80	74	68	63	59	55	51	44	38	35																	
	94		100	93	86	80	74	69	64	59	55	48	41	38	33																
	96			100	93	86	80	75	69	64	60	52	45	42	36	32	30	26	22	21	18	16	15	13	11	10	9	8	7		
	98				100	93	86	80	75	70	65	56	49	46	40	35	32	28	25	23	20	18	16	14	13	12	10	9	8		
	100					100	93	87	81	75	70	61	53	50	43	38	35	31	27	25	22	19	18	16	14	13	12	10	9		
	102						100	93	87	81	76	66	58	54	47	41	38	34	30	28	24	21	20	18	16	15	13	11	11		
	104							100	93	87	81	71	62	58	51	45	42	37	32	30	27	23	22	19	17	16	14	13	12		
	106								100	93	87	76	67	63	55	48	45	40	35	33	29	26	24	21	19	18	16	14	13		
108									100	94	82	72	67	59	52	49	43	38	36	31	28	26	23	21	19	17	15	14			
110										100	88	77	72	63	56	52	46	41	38	34	30	28	25	22	21	19	17	16			
112											94	82	77	68	60	56	50	44	41	37	33	31	27	24	23	20	18	17			
114												100	88	83	73	64	60	53	47	45	40	35	33	30	26	25	22	20	19		
116													94	88	78	69	65	57	51	48	42	38	36	32	28	27	24	21	20		
118													100	94	83	73	69	61	54	51	46	41	38	34	31	29	26	23	22		
120														100	88	78	74	65	58	55	49	43	41	37	33	31	28	25	24		
122															94	83	78	70	62	58	52	47	44	39	35	33	30	27	25		

## ***Curing Phases***

Typically the curing schedule is divided into three phases defined as yellowing, leaf drying, and stem drying. The actual curing schedule used will deviate due to factors such as tobacco ripeness and maturity, weather conditions during the growing and harvest seasons, airflow, and other influences. Tobacco harvested from different fields on the same farm may cure differently when exposed to the same curing environment. Use a temperature schedule based on your curing experience and the tobacco's response to the curing environment.

Yellowing involves a delicate balance between maintaining a high relative humidity and removing as much moisture as possible without excessive drying. The goal is twofold: to allow completion of the biological and physiological processes occurring in the leaf and to avoid overdrying. Removal of as much water as possible during yellowing while maintaining the proper humidity can reduce fuel consumption, thus improving energy efficiency. Likewise, as sufficient moisture is removed during yellowing, drying will help to improve airflow through the tobacco.

As curing progresses, the difference between the dry-bulb and wet-bulb temperatures increases, and the relative humidity decreases. When air is heated without changing the moisture content, both the dry-bulb and wet-bulb temperatures will increase. The dry-bulb temperature will increase more than the wet-bulb temperature, thus decreasing the relative humidity. The maximum dry-bulb temperature advance rate recommended is 2°F per hour during leaf drying and no more than 3°F per hour during stem drying. This gradual increase allows sufficient time for the moisture removal to keep up with the temperature increase, therefore minimizing the possibility of leaf scalding.

As long as the leaf retains sufficient moisture, the wet-bulb temperature and leaf temperature are approximately the same. If the leaf temperature exceeds approximately 113°F, the cells die, which produces browning or scalding. This is a result of too high a wet-bulb temperature and a slow drying rate. Therefore, after yellowing, the wet-bulb temperature should never exceed 105°F until the leaf lamina is completely dry. Once the leaf is dry enough to advance the dry-bulb temperature above 135°F, maintaining a wet-bulb temperature of 110°F will reduce fuel consumption. Many growers rely on experience to manage ventilation, but accurate control and minimizing fuel consumption requires monitoring the relative humidity.

Detailed curing guidelines from a late-'70s Powell Manufacturing bulk barn manual is posted on the Tobacco Growers Information Portal. Typical dry- and wet-bulb temperature schedules and adjustments for both that are potentially required for multiple kinds of tobacco or curing problems encountered during a growing season are discussed. Additionally, for more details concerning the curing schedule, contact your local county Extension center for assistance.

## ***Controlling the Wet-Bulb Temperature—Ventilation***

One of the most cost effective energy-saving strategies is the proper use of a wet-bulb thermometer. Measuring the wet-bulb temperature also allows the grower to monitor the actual leaf temperature during early phases of the curing process and will help to avoid the

curing problems mentioned previously in this chapter. To control the wet-bulb temperature and therefore the relative humidity, adjust the fresh air intake damper. This is typically done in small increments manually or by the automatic ventilation system. Opening the damper increases the fresh air intake or ventilation rate, which decreases the wet-bulb temperature and relative humidity. Closing the damper decreases the ventilation rate and increases the wet-bulb temperature and relative humidity.

Growers who do not measure or monitor the wet-bulb temperature are almost certain to overventilate to avoid browning or scalding the tobacco. Curing with a wet-bulb temperature that is lower than recommended will increase the quantity of wasted heat. Additionally, overventilation during yellowing may result in accelerated drying, setting the color green, especially on the bottom of the boxes or racks that are in contact with the air first. As the intake damper is opened more, the ventilation rate and fuel consumption increase. Additionally, less air is recirculated inside the barn, and more air is exhausted out of the vents. The air that exits the top of the boxes will seldom be saturated (100% relative humidity), which means that some of the available heat energy in the air will be lost to the outside. Additionally, the dry-bulb temperature of the air above the boxes or racks will be less than the air below the tobacco due to evaporative cooling.

Excessive air leaks in the barn may make it difficult to maintain the desired wet-bulb temperature. Leaks increase the infiltration of fresh air pulled in by the fan to compensate for the air exhausted. This wastes fuel and energy because the air is exhausted out of the barn before it passes through the tobacco.

Automatic damper control provides continuous monitoring of the wet-bulb temperature or relative humidity, resulting in more accurate ventilation control, which can decrease fuel consumption during curing. Ambient conditions also change, and as a result, ventilation adjustments may be required more frequently later in the curing season to maintain the desired curing environment and improve fuel efficiency. The amount of fuel savings associated with using any automatic damper control will depend on how well a grower is currently managing the ventilation process.

During the 2007 season, multiple on-farm locations were used to compare automatic ventilation and manual ventilation control. At each location gas meters were installed on two identical curing barns to measure fuel consumption during each cure. An automatic ventilation control was installed on one barn at each location, and ventilation was controlled manually at an adjacent barn. For most locations, manual ventilation control did not include using a wet-bulb thermometer. The fuel savings and economic benefits associated with improved ventilation are summarized in Table 10-2. The fuel savings reported is the difference between the two barns at the end of the curing season (minimum of six cures) expressed as a percentage and gallons of LP gas. Averaged across all locations, the fuel savings was approximately 13%. At a few locations the growers did use a wet-bulb thermometer to assist with manual ventilation; as a result, the fuel savings were marginal. Although the automatic ventilation controllers used a wet-bulb

**Table 10-2. Annual fuel savings comparing ventilation control during the 2007 season**

	Location						
	1*	2	3	4	5	6	7*
Fuel savings (%)	1.43	12.63	12.15	16.42	28.33	16.50	2.23
Fuel savings (gals)	43	349	400	456	947	366	36
Savings per barn <sup>1</sup>	\$62	\$506	\$580	\$661	\$1,373	\$531	\$52

\* Grower used a wet-bulb thermometer with manual control

<sup>1</sup> \$1.45 per gallon LP gas

thermometer during this on-farm evaluation, most have eliminated the wet-bulb sensor and now measure relative humidity.

Many of the automatic ventilation control systems also have an optional monitoring system that transmits the dry-bulb and wet-bulb temperatures to a centralized location. This allows the grower to observe the real-time curing conditions of each barn from an internet connected device (PC, laptop, smartphone). The remote monitoring capability has a significant time management benefit. Additionally, alarm conditions can be established that will notify the grower when problems occur during curing. Although automatic curing control systems can help improve curing management, the desired dry and wet-bulb temperatures and when to change both remain inputs based on curing experience.

**Wet-Bulb Thermometer Location**

Regardless of whether damper control is manual or automatic, if a wet-bulb thermometer is used a few maintenance steps are required to ensure accurate measurements. Keeping the wet-bulb wick from becoming dry during curing is critical to proper ventilation control. Theoretically, the wet-bulb temperature should be the same below and above the tobacco. However, the closer the wet-bulb thermometer is located to the heating system output, the more likely it is that small differences in the wet-bulb temperature may be observed when comparing this location to others in the barn. To obtain the most accurate wet-bulb temperature, a few guidelines are suggested:

1. Place the wet-bulb thermometer far enough away from the burner output to ensure adequate mixing of the air but in a location with sufficient air movement across the wick. Typically, the wet-bulb thermometer is positioned on the floor below the curing containers, near the front of the curing barn. This allows easy access and is in an environment with sufficient airflow.
2. Monitor the wet-bulb thermometer reservoir, and maintain it with water to keep the wick wet at all times. Change or wash wicks frequently due to the decrease in water absorption that commonly occurs. Impurities in the water and the unforgiving curing environment contribute to the decreases in moisture absorption.

3. In some cases the airflow around the wick may be excessive, and at higher temperatures the increased evaporation rate will result in inaccurate measurements. Placing a piece of thin-gauge sheet metal on the floor beneath the wick and reservoir to shield the airflow has minimized this problem for some growers.

## **MAKE SURE YOUR EQUIPMENT AND BARN ARE ENERGY-EFFICIENT AND WELL-MAINTAINED**

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It is important to follow any annual maintenance requirements recommended by the heat exchanger, burner, and barn manufacturers to ensure they are functioning at optimum levels. The burners should be annually inspected and adjusted by a qualified barn service technician at the beginning of the curing season. Also, all electronic curing controls and temperature sensors should be inspected and recalibrated if needed to ensure proper operation.

The U.S. Tobacco Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Program currently requires all curing barn heat exchangers to be tested for combustion product leaks every three years. Barn testing can be conducted by independent third-party companies or individual growers that have attended a Cooperative Extension training. The optimum time to check your heat exchangers for leaks would be immediately after the curing season, before the electrical and fuel supply are shut down during the off season. This would also allow sufficient time to correct any heat exchanger issues prior to next season. Additional information about the recommended barn testing equipment and procedures can be obtained from your county Extension center or viewed on the Tobacco Growers Information Portal.

### ***Burner Efficiency***

The single greatest reason for burner inefficiency is too little or too much air. When too little air is present, the burner will produce partially unburned fuel or smoke. Smoke not only wastes fuel but can deposit soot inside the heat exchanger, where it acts as insulation that can reduce the heat exchanger's efficiency.

Although an approximately correct burner air-fuel ratio may be set by eye (a blue flame instead of an orange one), the proper air-fuel ratio can best be achieved with a combustion analyzer. Refer to the burner manual or manufacturer for additional information on recommended excess air values. The manual may list the fan shutter setting for a given burner firing rate (BTUs/hour), but a combustion test should always be performed to verify the excess air percentage. Most fuel dealers or barn service technicians have some type of combustion analyzer and the experience to assist with burner adjustments.

Thermal efficiency is a measurement of how well the heating system is converting the fuel into usable heat energy at a specific period of time in the operation of the heating system. The thermal efficiency is complicated by the performance of the burner and heat exchanger acting as a single unit. Because some of the heat will always be lost up the exhaust stack, a thermal efficiency of at least 80 percent should be targeted. An ideal stack temperature is in the range

of 350°F to 450°F. A properly tuned burner can result in significant improvements in the heat exchanger performance. A barn service technician can evaluate the burner performance and make any necessary adjustments.

### ***Heat Exchanger Efficiency***

The energy efficiency of the heat exchanger is the percentage of the total heat entering from the burner that is extracted (exchanged) for practical use inside the barn. For the heat to be exchanged from the burning flue gases, it must pass through the walls of the heat exchanger. Many factors influence the exchange capacity and hence the efficiency of the heat exchanger. These include the shape and size of the heat exchanger, structural material type and thickness, the rate of hot gases flowing inside the heat exchanger, and the rate of air flowing over the outside surfaces of the heat exchanger. Additionally, the burner firing rate (BTUs/hour) can greatly influence the efficiency of a particular heat exchanger.

Growers should have their barn service technician check the burner-firing rate on every barn prior to each curing season. Typical burner-firing rates range from 325,000 to 450,000 BTUs/hour, depending on the amount of green tobacco loaded, heat exchanger design, fan output, and other factors. The heating system will operate most efficiently when the burner is operating at the lowest capacity that will allow the barn to maintain the desired temperature. The most heat is required during leaf drying, when the barn temperature is typically between 130°F and 150°F. Adjust the heat output of the burner so that the burner is operating nearly continually during this time. At a minimum, you should know the burner-firing rate on all your barns to accurately evaluate the heating system performance.

### ***An Energy-Efficient Barn***

A bulk curing barn is less of a structure than it is a piece of equipment. Like any piece of equipment, it requires (and deserves) periodic maintenance to keep it in good shape. A good barn maintenance plan should consider the whole barn.

Most bulk barns are situated on a 4-inch-thick pad of concrete. Some are insulated, but most are not. Typical fuel savings from on-farm studies comparing insulated and non-insulated barn pads ranged 3% to 6%. Even fuel savings in this range can result in a simple payback of three years or less, depending on the price of fuel. It may be too late to do much about an uninsulated pad now, but if you are thinking of putting in a new barn or moving an old one, you should consider placing an inch of extruded polystyrene foam board under the concrete to minimize heat losses through the ground.

Even a well-constructed barn will develop cracks and gaps over time. The natural daily cycle of heating and cooling will loosen screws, nails, and staples that secure the roofing and siding. Doors are particularly noticeable sources of maintenance problems. Hinges work loose, and gaskets get hard and torn, causing them to need periodic replacement. It is also a good idea to reseal the barn perimeter around the concrete pad with a good grade of butyl caulking compound. Additionally, there are self-adhesive foam rubber gasket materials available that can

be attached to the barn perimeter prior to positioning on the pad. Contact your local Extension agent for more information about this material.

## **CURING ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

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Curing energy efficiency is the system's energy efficiency (barn plus burner and heat exchanger) and bottom line that can be quantified in pounds of cured leaf (marketed leaf) per unit of fuel consumed. For example, if you take out three thousand pounds of cured leaf and consumed three hundred gallons of LP gas for a given cure, the curing efficiency would be ten pounds of cured leaf per gallon of LP gas (3,000 divided by 300) for that barn. These numbers may vary considerably, even in the same barn over a curing season, because they are affected by the quantity and quality of the green leaf loaded, stalk position, ambient conditions, heat exchanger and barn efficiency, and curing management.

Table 10-3 shows the estimated cost per pound cured for varying curing efficiencies and fuel costs. The fuel cost is expressed as dollars per unit and can be used for natural gas, LP gas, and No. 2 diesel. The greater the system energy efficiency, the lower the curing cost. As an example, if two growers were paying \$1.00 per gallon for LP gas but their curing efficiencies averaged over the season were 10 pounds/gallon and 13 pounds/gallon respectively, the difference is approximately \$0.023 (0.100 minus 0.077) per pound cured. Multiplying this difference by the total pounds cured can run into thousands of dollars over a season. As the price of fuel increases, the cost savings will also increase for a given difference in efficiencies.

It should be noted that this curing cost is for the fuel usage only. The total energy cost will also include the electrical energy used, most of which is consumed by the fan's electric motor. The electrical energy cost will depend upon your electric service provider, but rates can range from \$0.08 to \$0.13 per kilowatt-hour (kWh).

**Table 10-3. Estimated curing cost (fuel only) for varying barn energy efficiencies and fuel cost**

Fuel Efficiency (lbs/gal)	Fuel Cost (\$/unit)						
	0.80	1.00	1.20	1.40	1.60	1.80	2.00
	\$ / lb Cured Leaf						
8	0.100	0.125	0.150	0.175	0.200	0.225	0.250
9	0.089	0.111	0.133	0.156	0.178	0.200	0.222
10	0.080	0.100	0.120	0.140	0.160	0.180	0.200
11	0.073	0.091	0.109	0.127	0.145	0.164	0.182
12	0.067	0.083	0.100	0.117	0.133	0.150	0.167
13	0.062	0.077	0.092	0.108	0.123	0.138	0.154
14	0.057	0.071	0.086	0.100	0.114	0.129	0.143
15	0.053	0.067	0.080	0.093	0.107	0.120	0.133
16	0.050	0.063	0.075	0.088	0.100	0.113	0.125
17	0.047	0.059	0.071	0.082	0.094	0.106	0.118
18	0.044	0.056	0.067	0.078	0.089	0.100	0.111

**Energy Content of Fuels**

Although most growers use LP gas, Table 10-4 shows the approximate higher heating value of the fuels used to cure tobacco. Natural gas is typically sold in therms, and one therm is approximately the energy equivalent of burning 100 cubic feet of gas. A therm of natural gas has approximately 10% more energy than a gallon of LP gas. The heating value of wood reported is for seasoned or dried wood, which has a wet-basis moisture content of approximately 15%. Green wood is approximately 50% water, and the heating value is approximately half the value of seasoned wood. As a result of the differences in energy density (energy per unit volume), a grower using natural gas or fuel oil may consume fewer units in the same size barn loaded with the same quantity of tobacco compared with a grower using LP gas.

**Table 10-4. Approximate heating value of fuels used for curing**

Fuel (units)	BTU/Unit
LP gas (gal)	91,500
#2 fuel oil (gal)	139,000
Natural gas (therm)	100,000
*Wood (lb)	7,000

\* Seasoned wood



To obtain the highest curing efficiency and significantly reduce curing costs, all the energy-saving guidelines for bulk curing need to be applied. Typically, curing efficiencies will be less with lower-stalk leaf and will increase with middle- and upper-stalk leaf. It takes significantly more fuel per pound of cured leaf to cure lower-stalk leaf compared to upper-stalk leaf. This is because lower-stalk tobacco has a higher moisture content than upper-stalk tobacco, and the quantity of green leaf loaded per box is typically less with lower-stalk tobacco, resulting in less cured weight. Although many growers can estimate their seasonal fuel consumption, cured weights, and resulting curing energy efficiency, installing a gas meter on a single barn can provide accurate fuel consumption information to assist with evaluating your heating system performance and curing management. An LP gas meter costs approximately \$500 installed, but it might pay for itself in one season. Contact your local fuel supplier or barn service technician for more information on installing a gas meter.

Over the past several years, the cost of conventional fuels has fluctuated significantly. As fuel prices change, a common question is which fuel is the most economical to use? The answer depends on price, fuel energy density, heating equipment efficiency, availability, and other factors. Table 10-5 compares the equivalent fuel cost per unit sold for several fuels used to cure tobacco. Note that the table values for wood chips are cost per ton since this fuel is typically sold by weight. The costs determined are based on the heating values shown in Table 10-4, and the heating system efficiency is assumed to be the same for all fuels. Most heat exchanger burners when properly tuned operate at thermal efficiencies of 80% or higher. However, if not properly tuned they can operate at much lower values. Modern wood-fired boilers have heating system efficiencies of 80% or higher also as a result of the control technologies implemented and equipment design. Table 10-5 is arranged so that for a given fuel type and price selected, the equivalent costs for the additional fuels will be in the same row. For example, if you are paying 50 cents per therm for natural gas, the equivalent cost for LP gas is 46 cents per gallon, 70 cents per gallon for fuel oil, and \$70 per ton for wood chips. During the 2014 season, some growers were paying 70 cents per therm for natural gas and \$1.10 or more per gallon for LP gas. The price of LP gas would need to decrease to 64 cents per gallon to be equivalent to 70 cents per therm for natural gas, assuming the heating system efficiencies are the same. Table 10-5 can be used to compare fuel types and can be helpful in deciding which fuel is the most cost effective to use as prices for each type change. Keep in mind that any comparison of heating costs must also include the capital and labor costs, if applicable, in addition to the fuel cost. The actual heating system efficiency needs to be taken into account also, if different, when comparing fuel types.

### ***New Curing Barn Performance Assessment***

During the 2014 season, we were able to collect energy- and other performance-related information from four different makes of new curing barns (Long, World Tobacco, Taylor, and Tytun) at the same on-farm location. Seven new barns and two existing barns were monitored for comparisons. The primary research objective was to provide growers with independent on-farm barn performance information to assist with curing infrastructure decisions. Instrumentation was implemented to monitor the total energy consumption (fuel and electricity),

**Table 10-5. Fuel cost comparison**

<b>Natural Gas (\$/therm)</b>	<b>LP Gas (\$/gal)</b>	<b>No. 2 Fuel Oil (\$/gal)</b>	<b>Wood Chips (\$/ton)</b>
0.20	0.18	0.28	28
0.30	0.27	0.42	42
0.40	0.37	0.56	56
0.50	0.46	0.70	70
0.60	0.55	0.83	84
0.70	0.64	0.97	98
0.80	0.73	1.11	112
0.90	0.82	1.25	126
1.00	0.92	1.39	140
1.10	1.01	1.53	154
1.20	1.10	1.67	168
1.30	1.19	1.81	182
1.40	1.28	1.95	196
1.50	1.37	2.09	210
1.60	1.46	2.22	224
1.70	1.56	2.36	238
1.80	1.65	2.50	252
1.90	1.74	2.64	266
2.00	1.83	2.78	280
2.10	1.92	2.92	294
2.20	2.01	3.06	308

Note: Heating system efficiency is assumed equal for each fuel type.

static pressure, and cure duration each cure for all nine barns. Automatic ventilation control was used on all the barns, new and existing. Green leaf and cured leaf weights were also recorded each cure. The total number of cures was identical for most of the barns, but the pounds of green leaf loaded varied due to differences in box size and box quantity of each barn make. The barn performance information is summarized in Table 10-6. For each barn listed, the total number of boxes and the approximate volume (ft<sup>3</sup>) of a single box are shown. It should be noted that cures one through three for the Taylor barn do not include fuel usage due to burner problems that were corrected. As a result, a seasonal average and an average without the lower-stalk cures are provided for all of the barns for better comparisons. The lower-stalk cures are typically the least efficient for any barn.

The new barn season average for all stalk positions not including the Taylor barn was 14.5 pounds of cured leaf per gallon of LP gas. The existing barns averaged 11.6 pounds per gallon of LP gas. That is approximately a 25% increase in curing energy efficiency averaged over the season. Overall, the new curing barns are better insulated and have fewer structural air leaks that are factors contributing to improvements in energy efficiency. It should be noted that the

**Table 10-6. New barn on-farm energy performance summary**

Cure	Time (hrs)	LPG (gals)	kWh	Green Wt. per Box (lbs)	Bulk Density (lbs/ft <sup>3</sup> )	Total Green Wt. (lbs)	Cured Wt (lbs)	lbs Cured /gal LPG
<b>World Tobacco (15 Box - 128 ft<sup>3</sup>)</b>								
1	192	322	1412	1150	9.5	17,250	2800	8.70
2	183	325	1356	1216	9.5	18,240	2583	7.96
3	204	363	1677	1280	10.0	19,200	3592	9.90
4	173	341	1291	1400	10.9	21,000	4400	12.90
5	218	410	1563	1500	11.7	22,500	5160	12.59
6	183	366	1373	1400	10.9	21,000	4572	12.49
7	170	410	1290	1500	11.7	22,500	4704	11.47
8	154	371	1159	1500	11.7	22,500	4825	13.01
9	189	352	1400	1500	11.7	22,500	4900	13.92
10	207	393	1531	1500	11.7	22,500	5116	13.02
<b>Avg.</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>1,405</b>		<b>Total or Avg.</b>	<b>209,190</b>	<b>42,652</b>	<b>11.6</b>
<b>Cures (4-10)</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>378</b>						<b>12.8</b>
<b>World Tobacco BASIC (12 Box - 128 ft<sup>3</sup>)</b>								
1	144	220		1400	10.9	16,800	2300	10.45
2	168	253		1600	12.5	19,200	3086	12.20
3	157	220		1500	11.7	18,000	3780	17.18
4	165	217		1600	12.5	19,200	3992	18.40
5	144	212		1550	12.1	18,600	3610	17.03
6	144	217		1600	12.5	19,200	4170	19.22
7	169	245		1600	12.5	19,200	4211	17.19

Table 10-6. (continued)

Cure	Time (hrs)	LPG (gals)	kWh	Green Wt. per Box (lbs)	Bulk Density (lbs/ft <sup>3</sup> )	Total Green Wt. (lbs)	Cured Wt (lbs)	lbs Cured /gal LPG
World Tobacco BASIC (12 Box - 128 ft <sup>3</sup> ) (continued)								
8	156	187		1600	12.5	19,200	4124	22.05
Avg.	156	221			Total or Avg.	149,400	29,273	16.7
Cures (2-8)	158	222						17.6
Long (10 Box - 193 ft <sup>3</sup> )								
1	203	330	1699	1860	9.6	18,600	2805	8.50
2	190	338	1642	1800	9.3	18,000	2585	7.64
3	191	330	1759	1960	10.2	19,600	3584	10.86
4	168	305	1543	2200	11.4	22,000	4747	15.56
5	183	341	1628	2200	11.4	22,000	5010	14.69
6	168	385	1486	2400	12.4	24,000	5354	13.91
7	165	325	1446	2300	11.9	23,000	4830	14.86
8	149	333	1314	2300	11.9	23,000	4903	14.72
9	170	322	1520	2300	11.9	23,000	4998	15.52
10	207	393	1740	2500	13.0	25,000	5695	14.49
Avg.	179	340	1,578		Total or Avg.	218,200	44,511	13.1
Cures (4-10)	173	343						14.8
Long Prototype (10 Box - 193 ft <sup>3</sup> )								
1	171	300	1893	1862	9.6	18,620	2880	9.61
2	183	297	2094	1800	9.3	18,000	2640	8.89
3	173	314	2064	1960	10.2	19,600	3602	11.47
4	156	275	1781	2400	12.4	24,000	5109	18.58

Table 10-6. (continued)

Cure	Time (hrs)	LPG (gals)	kWh	Green Wt. per Box (lbs)	Bulk Density (lbs/ft <sup>3</sup> )	Total Green Wt. (lbs)	Cured Wt (lbs)	Ibs Cured/gal LPG
Long Prototype (10 Box - 193 ft <sup>3</sup> ) (continued)								
5	156	314	1907	2350	12.2	23,500	5055	16.12
6	188	322	2190	2400	12.4	24,000	5086	15.80
7	167	261	1932	2500	13.0	25,000	5357	20.52
8	170	297	1681	2300	11.9	23,000	5095	17.15
9	159	325	1855	2400	12.4	24,000	5260	16.18
10	181	382	2016	2700	14.0	27,000	5840	15.29
Avg.	170	309	1,941		Total or Avg.	226,720	45,924	15.0
Cures (4-10)	168	311						17.1
Taylor (10 Box - 193 ft <sup>3</sup> )								
1	168	na	1328	1862	9.6	18,620	2850	na
2	166	na	1324	1800	9.3	18,000	2630	na
3	158	na	1352	1960	10.2	19,600	3599	na
4	158	266	1224	2200	11.4	22,000	4841	18.23
5	156	345	1265	2400	12.4	24,000	5050	14.64
6	192	330	1571	2400	12.4	24,000	5086	15.43
7	167	280	1323	2500	13.0	25,000	5257	18.78
8	141	274	1123	2300	11.9	23,000	5021	18.32
9	150	245	1192	2200	11.4	22,000	4718	19.26
10	171	286	1371	2400	12.4	24,000	5231	18.29
Avg.	163	289	1,307		Total or Avg.	220,220	44,283	17.6

Table 10-6. (continued)

Cure	Time (hrs)	LPG (gals)	kWh	Green Wt. per Box (lbs)	Bulk Density (lbs/ft <sup>3</sup> )	Total Green Wt. (lbs)	Cured Wt (lbs)	lbs Cured /gal LPG
Tytun (14 Box - 143 ft <sup>3</sup> )								
1	192	330	1483	1360	9.5	19,040	3011	9.12
2	158	305	1230	1360	9.5	19,040	2950	9.66
3	172	297	1347	1475	10.3	20,650	3682	12.40
4	148	267	1099	1700	11.9	23,800	4997	18.73
5	156	349	1231	1800	12.6	25,200	5584	15.99
6	192	355	1514	1850	12.9	25,900	5539	15.60
7	167	297	1284	1850	12.9	25,900	5449	18.35
8	141	300	1092	1700	11.9	23,800	4990	16.63
9	151	333	1177	1850	12.9	25,900	5690	17.09
10	174	377	1341	1700	11.9	23,800	5230	13.87
Avg.	165	321	1,280		Total or Avg.	233,030	47,122	14.7
Cures (4-10)	161	325						16.6
Tytun (18 Box - 143 ft <sup>3</sup> )								
1	204	421	2330	1360	9.51	24,480	3955	9.40
2	190	385	2210	1360	9.51	24,480	3790	9.84
3	157	410	1679	1700	11.9	30,600	6737	16.44
4	156	407	1700	1800	12.6	32,400	7452	18.31
5	192	448	2054	1850	12.9	33,300	7309	16.31
6	167	369	1795	1850	12.9	33,300	7429	20.13
7	164	432	1767	1800	12.6	32,400	7186	16.63
8	166	396	1788	1850	12.9	33,300	7317	18.48

Table 10-6. (continued)

Cure	Time (hrs)	LPG (gals)	kWh	Green Wt. per Box (lbs)	Bulk Density (lbs/ft³)	Total Green Wt. (lbs)	Cured Wt (lbs)	lbs Cured /gal LPG
Tytun (18 Box - 143 ft³) (continued)								
9	169	498	1808	2050	14.3	36,900	7906	15.88
10	182	426	1900	2000	14.0	35,000	7900	18.54
Avg.	175	425	1,903		Total or Avg.	37,160	66,981	16.0
Cures (3-10)	169	423						17.6
Existing Long (10 Box - 193 ft³)								
1	243	363	1483	1860	9.6	18,600	2792	7.69
2	228	402	1673	1800	9.3	18,000	2590	6.45
3	206	386	1561	1960	10.2	19,600	3950	10.23
4	173	377	1337	2200	11.4	22,000	4822	12.79
5	218	396	1623	2000	10.4	20,000	4390	11.09
6	183	415	1410	2100	10.9	21,000	4410	10.63
7	205	481	1592	2200	11.4	22,000	4620	9.60
8	192	344	1435	2100	10.9	21,000	4600	13.37
9	213	382	1585	2200	11.4	22,000	4760	12.46
Avg.	207	394	1,522		Total or Avg.	184,200	36,934	10.5
Cures (4-9)	197	399						11.7
Existing DeCloet (13 Box - 128 ft³)								
1	181	300	990	1150	9.0	14,950	2390	7.97
2	184	327	963	1150	9.0	14,950	2425	7.41
3	158	289	913	1200	9.4	15,600	2596	8.98

Table 10-6. (continued)

Cure	Time (hrs)	LPG (gals)	kWh	Green Wt. per Box (lbs)	Bulk Density (lbs/ft <sup>3</sup> )	Total Green Wt. (lbs)	Cured Wt (lbs)	Lbs Cured /gal LPG
Existing DeCloet (13 Box - 128 ft <sup>3</sup> )								
4	158	239	824	1300	10.2	16,900	3749	15.67
5	159	292	873	1500	11.7	19,500	4373	15.00
6	184	281	963	1400	10.9	18,200	3992	14.23
7	176	264	916	1500	11.7	19,500	4095	15.51
8	168	256	817	1300	10.2	16,900	3197	12.49
9	164	283	851	1500	11.7	19,500	4280	13.17
10	169	314	869	1600	12.5	20,800	4509	14.36
Avg.	170	284	898		Total or Avg.	176,800	35,606	12.7
Cures (4-10)	168	275						14.6



existing DeCloet barn is still operating at a high efficiency. In addition to fuel consumption differences, there are differences in the average cure duration and material capacity when compared to the existing barns. The largest new barn capacity was approximately 50% more than the two existing barns. There was also a difference in cure duration among the new barns for a similar quantity of green tobacco. The shortest cure time was approximately 156 hours (6.5 days) and the longest cure time was approximately 187 hours (7.8 days) averaged over the season. Factors contributing to a decreased curing time include airflow, heat exchanger efficiency, and barn design. Reducing the length of cure decreases the total energy consumed and allows a grower to reload the barn faster, possibly reducing the number of barns needed for a given acreage. Increased material capacity will also reduce the number of barns required for a given acreage. Grower feedback indicated limited differences, if any, observed in the cured leaf quality from any of the new barns. Additionally, there were no differences in management requirements for the new barns.

Although energy performance alone is not necessarily the justification for selecting a given barn make, it is an important factor because of the production costs associated with curing and the uncertainty of future energy prices. Other factors include the new barn cost, green leaf capacity, make and model of the existing barn infrastructure, existing material handling system components, barn serviceability, and maintenance requirements. This independent performance-based information can also assist manufacturers with developing and implementing technologies to improve overall barn performance.

## **MOISTURE ADDITION IN CURED TOBACCO**

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Green tobacco is approximately 80% to 90% water. At the end of the curing cycle, the tobacco is essentially 0% water. At this stage, tobacco is much too brittle to handle without shattering. Therefore, moisture must be added back into the tobacco at the end of the cure to enable handling and market preparation. Too much moisture, however, can cause the tobacco to heat, darken, and decay and will ultimately ruin its desirable qualities.

Cured tobacco, like many organic materials, is hygroscopic. Hygroscopic materials have a physical (as opposed to a chemical) affinity for moisture. In the case of tobacco, this moisture is usually absorbed from the water vapor in the air surrounding the leaf. The absorption of water by cured tobacco leaves is a complex process that depends on many biological and physical factors. Biological factors include leaf properties that vary with variety, cultural practices, stalk position, and weather. The important physical factors include ordering temperature and humidity, air velocity around the surface of the leaf, and quantity and arrangement of the leaves.

It is well-known that the rate of moisture absorption (usually expressed as a percentage of moisture increase per hour) increases with increasing relative humidity. At higher relative humidity, more water is in the air and available for absorption by the tobacco. It is probably less well-known that moisture absorption rates also increase with increasing temperature. In addition, stalk position and leaf quality affect the rate of water absorption. Lower-stalk or thin,

poor-quality tobacco has a faster absorption rate than thicker, upper-stalk, or better-quality tobacco.

### ***Accurate Conditioning of Tobacco at the End of the Cure***

The rapid and satisfactory ordering of flue-cured tobacco after curing is essential to both efficient use of barn space and leaf quality. Purchasing companies have established upper moisture limits that, if exceeded, will result in rejection of the baled tobacco, but some companies also have a price incentive for tobacco delivered within a specified moisture content range. The several methods or combinations of methods that are now used to add moisture back into the tobacco often result in wide variations in moisture content from barn to barn and even within the same barn.

Many growers use the existing water supply that operates at low pressure with a group of nozzles positioned in the barn. This is a slow and uneven method that often wets the tobacco in some places while increasing the moisture very little in others. Some growers rely exclusively on the moisture content in the ambient air, which can vary significantly as weather conditions change. Running the fan with the vents fully open brings moist outside air past all the tobacco in the barn but, depending on the weather, this process can vary significantly with time. To properly order tobacco, the addition of water at the end of the cure must follow certain guidelines, outlined below.

Research has demonstrated that the best time to start ordering is immediately after the end of curing, while the barn and tobacco are still warm. However, you should allow the heat exchanger time to cool down before adding water. Some growers may refrain from this practice because they mistakenly fear that moisture will darken the tobacco. Moisture will indeed darken warm tobacco, but only if the moisture is liquid water.

Decrease the water droplet size to increase the rate of water absorption into the leaf. The droplet size must be small enough to allow the water to evaporate before it encounters leaves of tobacco. Also, more water remains as vapor in the air circulated through the tobacco. This usually requires special nozzles and line pressure at 500 pounds per square inch (psi) or higher. Water introduced into the air in droplets too large to evaporate will stick to the first surface the droplets encounter (usually the floor or bottom leaves in the barn) and go no further. Some growers assume that the moisture will migrate and even out when these tobaccos are mixed when baling. Pockets of high-moisture tobacco inside a generally lower-moisture bale will heat and decay long before the moisture has had a chance to migrate. At the end of ordering, turn off the water, close the vents, and operate the fans for at least another hour to allow the moisture in the tobacco to even out and enter the midribs.

Most experienced growers have a good estimate of how much cured tobacco they can expect from their barns. If a grower knows the cured weight target moisture content, it is simple to determine how much water to add. For example, if a grower expects to remove 2,600 pounds of tobacco from his barn at 15% moisture content, 2,600 multiplied by 0.15 equals 390 pounds of water.

**Table 10-7. Gallons of water required to bring flue-cured tobacco to a given moisture content**

Cured Leaf Weight (lb)	Moisture Content of Tobacco (% Wet Basis)						
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
2,000	29	31	34	36	38	41	43
2,200	32	34	37	40	42	45	47
2,400	35	37	40	43	46	49	52
2,600	37	41	44	47	50	53	56
2,800	40	44	47	50	54	57	60
3,000	43	47	50	54	58	61	65
3,200	46	50	54	58	61	65	69
3,400	49	53	57	61	65	69	73
3,600	52	56	60	65	69	73	78
3,800	55	59	64	68	73	77	82
4,000	58	62	67	72	77	82	86
4,200	60	65	71	76	81	86	91
4,400	63	69	74	79	84	90	95
4,600	66	72	77	83	88	94	99
4,800	69	75	81	86	92	98	104
5,000	72	78	84	90	96	102	108

Thus, 390 pounds of water must be added to the tobacco at the end of the cure. Because one gallon of water weighs approximately 8.34 pounds, 390 pounds of water equals approximately 47 gallons. If the pump can atomize 30 gallons of water per hour (so that essentially all the water enters the tobacco), then it should theoretically take approximately 1.6 hours (47 divided by 30) to bring the barn of tobacco into order. However, actual ordering systems are much less than 100% (< 50%) efficient and require additional time.

Some growers have constructed homemade ordering systems out of PVC or steel pipe with a group of nozzles. If the waterline pressure and the nozzle size are known it is easy to estimate the gallons per hour introduced into the barn. For example, a typical water supply pressure is 40 psi. Using four hollow-cone TX-2 nozzles at 40 psi will deliver approximately 0.132 gallons per minute or 7.92 gallons per hour (0.132 multiplied by 60). Nozzle capacity can be found in the manufacturer's catalog and is rated in gallons per minute (gpm) for a given pressure. To deliver 45 gallons of water into the airstream would thus require approximately 5.7 hours (45 divided by 7.92). Knowing the gallons required for a desired moisture content and the ordering system output capacity can assist growers with more consistent and accurate moisture addition. Table 10-7 lists the approximate gallons of water required for varying cured weights and moisture contents.

Some commercially available portable ordering units increase the existing line pressure significantly to increase atomization of the water. These units increase the water supply pressure to 600 psi and higher, which results in decreasing the water droplet size and increasing leaf absorption efficiency. Some units have an electromechanical or digital timer to operate the pump continuously or intermittently. Intermittently operating the water pump allows more time for the fan to move the moisture upward through the tobacco and minimize excessive wetting of the tobacco in the bottom of the containers. A typical cycle operates the pump for one hour on and 30 minutes off, but the actual duty cycle can be customized.

On-farm tests conducted in recent years comparing commercial high pressure units operated intermittently with existing systems at a given location resulted in reducing the quantity of water used and time required to complete the process. The ordering system output flow rate ranged 0.75 gpm to 1 gpm. Growers using the intermittent operation observed an improvement in moisture uniformity throughout the barn and consistency with the time required to complete the ordering process compared to their existing ordering method. However, some barns do not have a convenient location to insert the nozzle boom; in this case, growers might have to modify the unit boom configuration or the barn accessibility. Some growers use a high-pressure sprayer pump that will significantly increase water atomization, but the output flow rate may be significantly higher than 1 gpm, causing water to be added much faster than the leaf absorption rate. As a result, most of the water collects on the barn floor and saturates the area around the barn.

Any ordering system output can be measured using a procedure similar to calibrating spray equipment. Simply collect each nozzle output with a volumetric measuring cup for one minute of operation. To determine the ordering unit total volume output in gallons per minute, add the measurements for each nozzle and convert from ounces to gallons (128 ounces equals 1 gallon), if needed. Comparing the measured nozzle output with the flow rates listed in the manufacturers catalog for a new nozzle will also help identify those with significant wear problems that need replacing. Typically, as the nozzles wear, the flow rate will increase for a given operating pressure. Introducing water into the airstream at excessive rates will saturate the tobacco in the bottom of the containers first, which may cause quality problems. A targeted system output of approximately 1 gpm may improve any ordering system efficiency and uniformity. Increasing the system operating pressure to improve atomization will assist with increasing leaf absorption efficiency while avoiding excessive flow rates at any pressure. Additionally, implementing a timer for continuous or intermittent operation will assist with improving the ordering process control and management.

## SAFE FARM MACHINERY OPERATION

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Modern agriculture has become increasingly more mechanized to reduce labor and improve efficiency, but this has also increased exposure for both operators and bystanders to machinery hazards. Agriculture continues to rank as one of the most hazardous industries in the United States, and farmers are at a very high risk for fatal and nonfatal injuries. Additionally, farming is one of the few occupations in which family members and bystanders are also at risk. The fact that agricultural machinery uses tremendous power makes operation a potential hazard for both the operator and bystanders. For families and communities involved in a farming accident, the toll is huge. Even though manufacturers try to ensure that machinery is as safe as possible, the nature of the work creates inherent hazards that cannot be completely removed. Knowledge of some general safety procedures and the importance of learning specific safety information about each piece of machinery used could save lives and greatly reduce pain and expense.

Flue-cured tobacco production is mechanized extensively and as a result, many machine hazards are present. Using tobacco harvesters, balers, leaf handling systems, forklifts, and tractors results in specific machinery hazards during operation. Harvest season is a busy time for farm operations, and time means money when it comes to yields, production schedules, and operating costs. Unfortunately this is also a very dangerous season. Accidents can occur as a result of taking shortcuts to perform routine tasks, operator physical or mental condition, or failing to follow safety practices. The typical operating environment can have extreme temperatures, excessive noise and vibration, slippery conditions, etc. that are all accident factors. Accidents are preventable, but all farm employees and family members should learn to recognize machine hazards and take precautions to avoid injury.

### ***Machinery Safety***

There are many different kinds of agricultural machinery, but they all have similar characteristics and similar hazards. Most have cutting edges, gears, chains, belts, rotating shafts and blades, pinch points, high pressure hoses, and other similar hazards. Many contain multiple hazards of the types just listed. Familiarize yourself with specific hazards associated with all machinery used on your farm. The following information is provided to increase your safety awareness and injury prevention.

- Ensure that the operator's manual is on hand and all operators are familiar with the contents, especially the safe operating procedures.
- Ensure that all machinery operators receive training. Document any safety training provided and be sure to keep these records on file.
- Make sure that equipment is properly maintained and that all safety devices (shielding, guards, etc.) are functioning properly. Never override manufacturer-included safety technologies to save time. Replace or add safety warning labels that are missing or illegible.
- Always wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when operating machinery. Refer to the owner's manual for a list of the machine-specific requirements.
- Keep the operator station clean and free from debris, trash, etc.

- Do not get on or off machinery while the engine is running. Turn the engine off and remove the key before dismounting. Some machinery includes safety devices that turn off the engine or disengage engine power when the operator is not positioned in the seat. This should never be removed or bypassed for any purpose.
- Never attempt to adjust, clean, or unclog any part of a machine while the engine is running.
- Do not allow passengers on the machine at any time for any reason, unless a designated and approved second operator seat is provided by the manufacturer. The “No seat, no rider” rule is always in effect.
- Always wear close fitting clothing with no loose ends or strings that could easily be caught in moving parts.
- Always leave adjustable height components on machinery (front end loaders, combine heads, defoliator units, forklift mast, etc.) in the lowered position when not in use.

### ***Tractor Safety***

Tractors are used frequently throughout the year to perform tillage operations, harvesting, planting, spraying and other operations that have contributed greatly to increasing farm productivity. This frequent use requires that tractor operators must be aware of tractor safety concerns. Tractor rollovers account for more than half of all farm fatalities. A tractor can roll over in any direction: rear, front, or either side. Power take-off (PTO) entanglements and run overs are the other accidents that can occur with tractor use. The following recommended safe work practices are provided to help prevent injuries when operating tractors.

- Ensure that all tractor operators are properly trained. A good place to start is with the operator’s manual. Document the training provided and be sure to keep records on file.
- Make sure all maintenance requirements are performed as specified by the manufacturer. Perform a visual inspection of the tractor and implement prior to each use.
- Ensure that all tractors are equipped with a rollover protective structure (ROPS) and a seat belt. Always wear the seat belt with a ROPS. Seat belts ensure that the operator stays within the ROPS zone of protection during a tractor rollover. ROPS are not designed to prevent a rollover.
- Limit the use of tractors not equipped with a ROPS. Seat belts should not be used on tractors without a ROPS. A seat belt eliminates the operator’s chances of being thrown clear of an overturning tractor.
- Where possible, avoid operating tractors near ditches, embankments, and holes.
- Avoid crossing slopes whenever possible and use appropriate speeds for operating conditions.
- Pay attention, especially at row ends, on highways, and around trees.
- Do not allow others to ride. No seat, no rider.
- Hitch loads only to the drawbar and hitch points recommended by the tractor manufacturer.
- Always start the tractor from the operator’s seat. Never bypass start a tractor.
- Always check that all PTO shielding, on the tractor and attached implement, is correctly installed and properly maintained.

- Never attempt to repair, adjust, remove debris, or step over a PTO while it is operating. Disengage the PTO, turn the tractor engine off, and remove the key before dismounting.
- Make sure the tractor and implement have a properly mounted slow moving vehicle (SMV) emblem and front and rear lighting that is clean and in working order.

Preventing and controlling farm hazards and risks is a management issue. Managing farm safety and your health requires a proactive attitude toward the elimination, prevention, and control of work related hazards. The information provided is to assist you with generating safer work conditions when operating agriculture machinery. Additional resources on farm safety topics can be viewed on the N.C. Department of Labor Ag Safety and Health Bureau website (<http://www.nclabor.com/ash/ash.htm>) or the Tobacco Growers Information Portal.

## 11. PROTECTING PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT WHEN USING PESTICIDES

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Despite their usefulness, agricultural chemicals pose varying degrees of risk to people and the environment. We need to make choices that minimize these risks. Of particular concern are keeping nutrients and pesticides out of surface water and groundwater and reducing human and wildlife exposure to pesticides. The following sections describe some measures that tobacco producers and professional applicators can take to minimize the threat to people and water quality and reduce pesticide exposure to humans and wildlife.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Worker Protection Standard regulates actions by employers to protect agricultural workers and pesticide handlers by reducing pesticide exposure and the risk of pesticide-related illness or injury. To protect your employees, you must be aware of the Worker Protection Standard and comply with its requirements. In addition, several tobacco purchasers now require that growers comply with Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) standards, which include worker training and protection standards.

To fulfill the requirements imposed by the Worker Protection Standard, you must protect agricultural workers (who provide hand labor in the production of agricultural plants) and pesticide handlers (who mix, load, or apply pesticides or directly come into contact with pesticides through other tasks) in three ways:

1. **Provide training on pesticide safety and information about the specific pesticides used on the farm.** Pesticide safety training should occur before workers and handlers begin working and every five years at a minimum. Information that must be posted in a central location includes a safety poster, information about the nearest emergency medical facility, and specifics on recent pesticide applications (location of application, name of the pesticide, EPA registration number, active ingredient, date and start and end times of application, restricted-entry interval, and the time when workers may reenter the field).



2. **Ensure protection against exposure.** For handlers, employers must provide personal protective equipment and be sure it is properly used and cleaned. They must also warn workers about treated areas (through oral warnings, posting of the Worker Protection Standard sign in fields, or both, depending on label requirements) and make sure that workers do not enter treated fields during restricted-entry intervals (REIs). This requires careful scheduling of pesticide application and field work so they do not conflict. Personal protective equipment requirements vary from pesticide to pesticide and may be different for applicator/handlers and mixer/loaders. REIs also vary by pesticide and are given on labels. Protective equipment requirements for fumigant labels have recently changed; as with all pesticide labels, check carefully for specific requirements, even if you have used the product in previous years.
3. **Provide ways for workers to minimize and mitigate impacts of pesticide exposure.** This includes ensuring that decontamination sites and emergency assistance in case of exposure are available. Decontamination sites must be within ¼ mile of all workers and handlers and must contain water for washing, eye-flushing, and drinking; soap; single-use towels; and clean coveralls. In case of pesticide poisoning or injury of a worker or handler, you must provide transportation to a medical facility and pesticide information to medical personnel.

The following resources can help you comply with the Worker Protection Standard:

- For more information on the Worker Protection Standard, including how to conduct training, visit <http://pesticidestewardship.org>.
- You can find detailed information on the Worker Protection Standard and a link to the entire document here: <http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/htc.html>.
- To help growers comply with Worker Protection Standard and GAP requirements, North Carolina State University provides the following:
  - pesticide applicator training opportunities (<http://ipm.ncsu.edu/pesticidesafety/>) and
  - a tobacco-specific Worker Protection Standard resource for training agricultural workers called the Pesticides and Farmworker Health Toolkit (<http://go.ncsu.edu/pesticide-toolkit>).

Table 11-1 lists products, common names, registration numbers, manufacturers, signal words, restricted-entry intervals, and posting/notification requirements for the major pesticides and growth regulators used in tobacco. This should help you to properly record and post pesticide use and to plan field operations. However, the information in this table is presented in good faith as a reference and is not an exhaustive list. This information does not take the place of the product label; changes to label information can occur without notice. Always read and follow label directions. The label on the container you are actually using must be followed, even if there has been a change on newer labels.

## **MINIMIZE PESTICIDE AND FERTILIZER USE WHERE POSSIBLE**

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Pesticide use should be only one part of an overall pest management program for insects, diseases, suckers, and weeds. It makes good environmental and economic sense to rotate crops, destroy stalks and roots early, use thresholds where available, promote a healthy and vigorous crop with good cultural practices, and fertilize properly. Fertilizer use can also affect pest problems and water quality. Be sure to have your soil tested field by field and to apply only those nutrients recommended. This protects the environment and also saves money by reducing pesticide and fertilizer use. Refer to chapter 5, "Managing Nutrients," for guidelines. Refer to the sections on insect, disease, weed management, and sucker control for proper management of these pests.

## **SELECT PESTICIDES CAREFULLY**

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Cultural practices are important parts of a sound pest management program, but pesticides often must still be used to prevent economically significant losses. When this is the case, take care to match the pesticide with the pest. First, identify the pest, and then select an effective pesticide, rate, and application method, carefully considering potential effects on water and safety to humans and wildlife.

A measurement called an LD<sub>50</sub> is used to measure pesticide toxicity to humans and other mammals. The LD<sub>50</sub> is the amount of a substance that will cause death in 50 percent of a target population (rats, mice, or rabbits are most commonly used in studies). The lower the number, the more acutely toxic the substance is. An LD<sub>50</sub> can be used only to measure acute toxicity or the immediate health effects experienced within the first few days after a brief exposure to a substance. The LD<sub>50</sub> is not a measure of chronic toxicity or of the long-term consequences (including cancer) resulting from a long time period of exposure. In general, it is best to choose the least toxic pesticide that will do the job. Use extreme caution with pesticides that have low LD<sub>50</sub> ratings. Note that proper handling of pesticides (including the use of appropriate personal protective equipment) minimizes the risk of acute and chronic effects of all pesticides—even those with low LD<sub>50</sub> values. Information on acute toxicity can be found in Table 11-1. Information on chronic toxicity can be found on Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) provided by your pesticide dealer. Both the pesticide label and the MSDS should be on hand when a pesticide is being used.

## **APPLY PESTICIDES CAREFULLY**

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Care must be taken to make sure that pesticides are applied only to the tobacco crop and not the field borders. Field borders consist of ditches, hedgerows, and woods, which are all vital habitat for wildlife. Imprecise application can be detrimental to these areas, and contaminated water in ditches may find its way into larger bodies of water, such as ponds, lakes, and rivers, or into groundwater. Precise application is especially important with aerial pesticide applications. Virtually all pesticides used in tobacco are more effective when applied via ground equipment, and aerial applications are not recommended.

Human exposure to pesticides occurs in one of the following three ways: (1) exposure through the skin or eyes (dermal), (2) exposure through eating, drinking, and other hand-to-mouth behaviors (ingestion), or (3) exposure through breathing vapors and dusts (inhalation). The use of protective clothing by handlers and applicators is the best defense against exposure to pesticides and is specified on each pesticide label. These requirements should be followed exactly. The potential for harmful pesticide exposure is greater when handling concentrated pesticides (those not mixed with water) than with using a diluted solution (mixed with water in a sprayer). Thus, be especially careful in the mixing and loading process. For example, pesticides should not be added to a spray tank by lifting the pesticide container above one's head to pour into the tank. If pesticide poisoning is suspected, contact the Carolinas Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 (<http://www.ncpoisoncenter.org/>) and seek immediate medical attention, bringing the pesticide label with you. The Carolinas Poison Center provides 24-hour services for diagnosing and treating human illness resulting from toxic substances.

## **ROTATE PESTICIDE MODES OF ACTION**

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Applying pesticides with the same mode of action (MOA) multiple times or successively can eventually result in pest resistance to these tools. To aid growers in rotating pesticide mode of action, three organizations have developed MOA categories. These codes are listed on newer pesticide labels: FRAC (Fungicide Resistance Action Committee), IRAC (Insecticide Resistance Action Committee), and HRAC (Herbicide Resistance Action Committee). When it becomes necessary to treat a tobacco pest with more than one insecticide application (for example, if multiple tobacco hornworm treatments are required per season), pesticides with different MOAs should be chosen for the applications. Note that pesticide trade names and active ingredients may share the same MOA; for example, acephate (Orthene) and carbaryl (Sevin) are both in IRAC group 1A. Therefore, following a Sevin application with an Orthene application does not represent a pesticide MOA rotation. To assist in chemical selection, FRAC, IRAC, and HRAC codes are listed in Table 11-1.

## **MINIMIZE SOIL MOVEMENT AND LEACHING**

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As soil particles become dislodged, they carry pesticides and nutrients that may eventually find their way into a water source. To minimize contamination of our water resources, be sure to follow sound soil conservation practices, such as avoiding unnecessary cultivation and using cover crops, waterways, and strip-cropping. Consult your local Natural Resources Conservation Service and Cooperative Extension agents for advice.

Pesticides commonly used on tobacco differ in their potential to contaminate surface water and groundwater. Predicting which pesticides may reach groundwater and where this is most likely to occur is very difficult because of differences in soil chemical and physical characteristics and in water table depth. Generally, rolling soils in the piedmont have more potential for surface water contamination through runoff, whereas the porous soils of the sandhills and coastal plain

may be more susceptible to groundwater contamination through leaching. However, surface water contamination can occur even on slightly sloping soils in the coastal plain. The Natural Resources Conservation Service can help you determine the leaching and runoff potentials for your fields.

There are also guidelines that help determine which pesticides may be at highest risk for runoff and leaching. Two guidelines for pesticides are *surface loss potential* and *leaching potential*. Surface loss potential is broken into two categories: the risk of a pesticide running out of a field in solution with surface water (rain, irrigation, or flooding) and the risk of a pesticide adhering (being adsorbed) to soil or organic material and washing out of the field as erosion. A high rating in either category means the pesticide has a high tendency to move off the field, while a low rating means the pesticide has a low potential to move. Leaching potential indicates the tendency of a pesticide to move in solution with water and leach below the root zone. The ratings of *very high*, *high*, *medium*, *low*, and *very low* describe the potential for leaching. These guidelines are based on knowledge of the chemical characteristics of different pesticides and are summarized in Table 11-1. (The symbol “NA” is used where information is not yet available.) These are general guidelines and should be interpreted as such. Most pesticides will move into either surface or groundwater supplies in at least one of the ways described above. For example, a material that is not very leachable will tend to be adsorbed to soil and move with erosion. Thus, your best choice will depend on the characteristics of the field and the measures you have taken to reduce the chance of runoff.

## PROTECT WELLS

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Improperly constructed and protected wells offer the quickest pathway for pesticides to reach groundwater (and perhaps your drinking water). Direct flow through wells is most often the source of high levels of pesticide contamination in groundwater. Groundwater contamination is difficult and very expensive to clean up; prevention of such contamination is best.

- Ensure that wells are properly constructed and sealed.
- Do not mix or load pesticides within one hundred feet of a well.
- When filling spray tanks, be sure the hose or pipe is not at or below the surface of the water in the tank. Otherwise, it is possible to back-siphon the pesticide mixture directly into your water supply.
- Install back-flow prevention devices, and inspect them frequently.

**Table 11-1. Environmental contamination potential and mammalian toxicity of commonly used tobacco pesticides**

Changes to labels can occur at any time. This information does not take the place of the product label. Always read and follow label directions; it is the law.

The footnoted items in Table 11-1 should be interpreted as follows:

<sup>a</sup> Exception to Restricted Entry Interval: If a product is soil-injected or soil-incorporated, under certain circumstances, workers may enter the treated area if there will be no contact with anything that has been treated.

<sup>b</sup> Worker Notification: Unless the pesticide labeling requires both types of notification, notify workers EITHER orally OR by posting warning signs at entrances to treated areas (labeled "Either"). You must inform workers which method of notification is being used. Some pesticide labels require you to notify workers BOTH orally AND with signs posted at entrances to the treated area. If both types of notification are required ("Oral and Written"), the following statement will be in the "Directions for Use" section of the pesticide labeling under the heading Agricultural Use Requirements: "Notify workers of the application by warning them orally and by posting warning signs at entrances to treated areas."

<sup>c</sup> Most common trade names; others may be in use as well.

<sup>d</sup> Surface loss may occur when pesticides go into solution in water and run off the field in surface water. Potentials by Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2004. NA = not available.

<sup>e</sup> Surface loss may also occur when pesticides are adsorbed to soil or organic materials and washed out of the field. Potentials by Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2004. NA = not available.

<sup>f</sup> Leaching occurs when pesticides are moved downward in solution. Potentials by Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2004. NA = not available.

<sup>g</sup> LD<sub>50</sub>: The dose (quantity) of a substance that will be lethal to 50 percent of the organisms in a specific test situation. It is expressed in the weight of the chemical (mg) per unit of body weight (kg). The lower the number, the more toxic the chemical. When more than one LD50 for mammals was found in the literature, the lowest found is shown here. "Oral" refers to toxicity through ingestion, while "dermal" refers to toxicity by skin contact. Values are from product MSDS.

<sup>h</sup> Telone C-17 also contains chloropicrin.

<sup>\*</sup> = Technical material. Technical material (pure active ingredient) may be more or less toxic than the formulated material.

NA = not available.

Common Name, EPA Reg. No. & Company Name (for first listed trade name)	Signal Word	Restricted Entry Interval (REI) <sup>a</sup>	Worker Notification <sup>b</sup>	Trade Name(s) <sup>c</sup>	Surface Loss Potential (solution) <sup>d</sup>	Surface Loss Potential (adsorbed) <sup>e</sup>	Leaching Potential <sup>f</sup>	FRAC, IRAC, or HRAC MOA Grouping	Mammalian LD <sub>50</sub> <sup>g</sup>	
									Oral	Dermal
Acephate EPA Reg. No. 5481-8978 AMVAC	Caution	24 hr	Either; all greenhouse applications must be posted	Orthene 97	Intermediate	Low	Low	1A	688 <sup>*</sup>	>2,000 <sup>*</sup>
Acetamiprid EPA Reg. No. 8033-36-70506 United Phosphorus	Caution	12 hr	Either	Assail	Intermediate	Low	Intermediate	4A	805	>2,000

**Table 11-1. (continued)**

Common Name, EPA Reg. No. & Company Name (for first listed trade name)	Signal Word	Restricted Entry Interval (REI) <sup>a</sup>	Worker Notification <sup>b</sup>	Trade Name(s) <sup>c</sup>	Surface Loss Potential (solution) <sup>d</sup>	Surface Loss Potential (adsorbed) <sup>e</sup>	Leaching Potential <sup>f</sup>	FRAC, or IRAC, or HRAC MOA Grouping	Mammalian LD <sub>50</sub> <sup>g</sup>	
									Oral	Dermal
Acibenzolar-S-methyl EPA Reg. No. 100-922 Syngenta Crop Protection	Caution	12 hr	Either	Actigard	Intermediate	Low	Intermediate	21	> 5,000	> 2,000
<i>Bacillus</i> <i>thuringiensis</i> EPA Reg. No. 73049-39 Valent Agricultural Products	Caution	4 hr	Either	Dipel DF	NA	NA	NA	11	> 5,050	> 2,020
Bifenthrin EPA Reg. No. 279-3302 FMC Corporation	Warning	12 hr	Either	Capture LFR	Low	Low	Low	3A	54.5	2,000
Butralin EPA Reg. No. 33688-4-400 Chemtura	Danger	12 hr	Either	Butralin	High	High	Low	K1	891	> 2,000
Carbaryl EPA Reg. No. 61842-37 NovaSource	Warning	12 hr	Either	Sevin XLR Plus	Intermediate	Low	Low	1A	500	> 2,000

**Table 11-1. (continued)**

Common Name, EPA Reg. No. & Company Name (for first listed trade name)	Signal Word	Restricted Entry Interval (REI) <sup>a</sup>	Worker Notification <sup>b</sup>	Trade Name(s) <sup>c</sup>	Surface Loss Potential (solution) <sup>d</sup>	Surface Loss Potential (adsorbed) <sup>e</sup>	Leaching Potential <sup>f</sup>	FRAC, IRAC, or HRAC MOA Grouping	Mammalian LD <sub>50</sub> <sup>g</sup>	
									Oral	Dermal
Chlorantraniliprole (rynaxypyr) EPA Reg. No. 352-729 DuPont Crop Protection	NA	4 hr	Either	Coragen	Low	High	Very Low	28	>5,000	>5,000
Chloropicrin EPA Reg. No. 5785-17 Great Lakes Chemical Corp.	Danger Poison	48 hr	Oral and Written	Ashta Gold	Intermediate	Low	Low	8B	NA	NA
Chlorpyrifos EPA Reg. No. 62719-591 Dow AgroSciences	Warning	24 hr	Oral and Written	Lorsban	Low	Intermediate	Low	1B	96	2,000
Clomazone EPA Reg. No. 279-3158 FMC Corp.	Caution	12 hr	Either	Command	Intermediate	Low	Intermediate	F3	1,369*	>2,000*
Dichloropropene EPA Reg. No. 62719-12 Dow AgroSciences	Danger	5 days	Oral and Written	Telone C-17 <sup>h</sup>	Intermediate	Low	High	8B	224	333
Dimethomorph EPA Reg. No. 241-427 BASF Corp.	Caution	12 hr	Either	Forum	High	Intermediate	Intermediate	40	3,900*	>2,000*

**Table 11-1. (continued)**

Common Name, EPA Reg. No. & Company Name (for first listed trade name)	Signal Word	Restricted Entry Interval (REI) <sup>a</sup>	Worker Notification <sup>b</sup>	Trade Name(s) <sup>c</sup>	Surface Loss Potential (solution) <sup>d</sup>	Surface Loss Potential (adsorbed) <sup>e</sup>	Leaching Potential <sup>f</sup>	FRAC, IRAC, or HRAC MOA Grouping	Mammalian LD <sub>50</sub> <sup>g</sup>	
									Oral	Dermal
Emamectin benzoate EPA Reg. No. 100-903 Syngenta Crop Protection	Danger	12 hr	Either	Denim	NA	NA	NA	6	1,516	>2,000
Ethephon EPA Reg. No. 264-418 Arysta	Danger	48 hr	Oral and Written	Ethephon, Super Boll,	Low	Intermediate	Low		3,030	1,560
Ethoprop EPA Reg. No. 5481-9040 AMVAC	Danger Poison	48 hr	Oral and Written	Mocap 15 G	Intermediate	Low	High	1B	16	2.4
Etridiazole EPA Reg. No. 400-422 Maccdermid	Danger	12 hr	Either	Terramaster 4 EC	Intermediate	Intermediate	Low	14F4	1,077	>5,000
Flubendiamide EPA Reg No. 264-1025 Bayer CropScience	Caution	12 hr	Either	Belt	High	High	Low	28	2,000	2,000
Flumetralin EPA Reg. No. 19713-510 Drexel	Caution	12 hr	Either	Drexalin Plus	Low	Intermediate	Low	NA	>2000	>2000



**Table 11-1. (continued)**

Common Name, EPA Reg. No. & Company Name (for first listed trade name)	Signal Word	Restricted Entry Interval (REI) <sup>a</sup>	Worker Notification <sup>b</sup>	Trade Name(s) <sup>c</sup>	Surface Loss Potential (solution) <sup>d</sup>	Surface Loss Potential (adsorbed) <sup>e</sup>	Leaching Potential <sup>f</sup>	FRAC, IRAC, or HRAC MOA Grouping	Mammalian LD <sup>g</sup> <sub>50</sub>	
									Oral	Dermal
Imidacloprid EPA Reg. No. 264-827 Bayer CropScience	Caution	12 hr	Either; all greenhouse applications must be posted	Admire, Provado, Nuprid, many others	High	Intermediate	High	4A	4,143	>2,000
Lambda- cyhalothrin EPA Reg. No. 100-1402 Syngenta Crop Protection	Warning	24 hr	Either	Besiege	Low	Intermediate	Very Low	3A	98.11	>5,000
Maleic hydrazide EPA Reg. No. 400-84 Chemtura	Caution	12 hr	Either	Several (Royal MH-30 and many others)	Intermediate	Low	Low	NA	>5,000	>5,000
Metenoxam EPA Reg. No. 100-801 Syngenta Crop Protection	Caution	48 hr	Either	Ridomil Gold	High	Intermediate	High	4	1,172	>2,020
Metaldehyde EPA Reg. No. 5481-507 AMVAC	Caution	12 hrs	Either	Deadline Bullets	Intermediate	Low	Low	NA	283	>5,000

**Table 11-1. (continued)**

Common Name, EPA Reg. No. & Company Name (for first listed trade name)	Signal Word	Restricted Entry Interval (REI) <sup>a</sup>	Worker Notification <sup>b</sup>	Trade Name(s) <sup>c</sup>	Surface Loss Potential (solution) <sup>d</sup>	Surface Loss Potential (adsorbed) <sup>e</sup>	Leaching Potential <sup>f</sup>	FRAC, IRAC, or HRAC MOA Grouping	Mammalian LD <sub>50</sub> <sup>g</sup>	
									Oral	Dermal
Metam sodium EPA Reg. No. 5481-468 AMVAC	Danger	48 hr	Oral and Written	Vapam	Intermediate	Low	Intermediate	Z	812	> 2020
Methomyl EPA Reg. No. 352-384 DuPont	Danger Poison	48 hr	Either	Lannate LV	Intermediate	Low	High	1A	17	>2,000
Napropamide EPA Reg. No. 70506-64 United Phosphorus Inc.	Danger	24 hr	Either	Devrinol 2 EC	High	Intermediate	Intermediate	K3	4,640	>5,000
Oxamyl EPA Reg. No. 352-532 DuPont	Danger Poison	48 hr	Either	Vydate C-LV	Intermediate	Low	Low	1A	9.1	>5,000
Pendimethalin EPA Reg. No. 241-337 BASF Ag Products	Caution	24 hr	Either	Prowl 3.3	Intermediate	High	Low	K1	3,956	2,200
Pymetrozine EPA Reg. No. 100-912 Syngenta Crop Protection	Caution	12 hr	Either	Fulfill	NA	NA	NA	9B	> 5,000	> 5,000

**Table 11-1. (continued)**

Common Name, EPA Reg. No. & Company Name (for first listed trade name)	Signal Word	Restricted Entry Interval (REI) <sup>a</sup>	Worker Notification <sup>b</sup>	Trade Name(s) <sup>c</sup>	Surface Loss Potential (solution) <sup>d</sup>	Surface Loss Potential (adsorbed) <sup>e</sup>	Leaching Potential <sup>f</sup>	FRAC, IRAC, or HRAC MOA Grouping	Mammalian LD <sup>g</sup>	
									Oral	Dermal
Pyrethrins EPA Reg. No. 1021-1771 MGK Company	Caution	12 hr	Either	Pyganic (multiple formulations)	NA	NA	NA	3A	>2,000	>2,000
Sethoxydim EPA Reg. No. 7969-58 BASF	Warning	12 hr	Either	Poast	Intermediate	Low	Low	A	3,200	>5,000
Spinosad EPA Reg. No. 62719-267 Dow AgroSciences	Caution	4 hr	Either	Tracer	Low	Intermediate	Low	5	>5,000	NA
Sulfentrazone EPA Reg. No. 279-3220 FMC Corp.	Caution	12 hr	Either	Spartan	High	Intermediate	High	E	2,855*	>2,000*
Thiamethoxam EPA Reg. No. 100-939 Syngenta Crop Protection	Caution	12 hr	Either; all greenhouse applications must be posted	Platinum, T-Moxx, Actara	High	Intermediate	High	4A	>5,000	>2,000



## **FRED G. BOND SCHOLARSHIPS**

### ***for students interested in tobacco***

The Fred G. Bond Scholarship Endowment provides scholarships for two- or four-year undergraduate students or for graduate students enrolled in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at NC State University. Recipients must be planning to pursue careers in the tobacco industry—specializing in tobacco farming, in corporate or university tobacco research, or in Extension work relating to tobacco production.

Undergraduate applicants from tobacco farms in the southeastern United States have priority in the selection of Bond Scholarship recipients. Scholarships will be awarded to in-state students (\$1,500 per year) and out-of-state students (\$3,000 per year) and continue as long as the student maintains a “B” average.

The Bond Scholarships are in memory of Fred G. Bond, who served the tobacco industry for 43 years, including 23 years as chief executive officer of the Flue-Cured Cooperative Stabilization Corporation. During his distinguished career, Bond represented flue-cured tobacco growers in the six flue-cured tobacco-growing states in many critical situations, and he provided leadership to numerous tobacco industry, civic, and local political boards and organizations.

## **APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

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Students accepted or continuing in the college’s two- or four-year undergraduate program or in the graduate program are sent a letter containing the following statement:

The College’s scholarship program is a part of our commitment to attract outstanding students. College scholarships are available to entering students based on academic merit as well as financial need. In order to be considered for academic merit scholarships, you need only complete and return a scholarship application, which is available from the Academic Programs Office. Call 919-515-2614. There is no special application form for the Bond Scholarship.













# THE TOBACCO PLANT

## LEAF

More than a third of the plant (34.5%) is made up of the leaves on the middle to upper stalk. These leaves are firm, thick, and heavy bodied with pointed tips. They contain from 3% to 3.5% nicotine and up to 15.5% sugars.

## CUTTERS

The largest leaves on the plant, both in length and width, although only 8% of its weight. Thin to medium-bodied leaves from the middle of the stalk or below, cutters have rounded tips and a most desirable color when ripe. High in oil and resin content, cutters contain about 2.5% nicotine and 12% to 22% sugars.

## PRIMINGS

The first leaves to ripen and to be harvested, primings make up 12% of the total plant weight and contain 1.5% to 2% nicotine and 5% to 10% sugars.

## TIPS

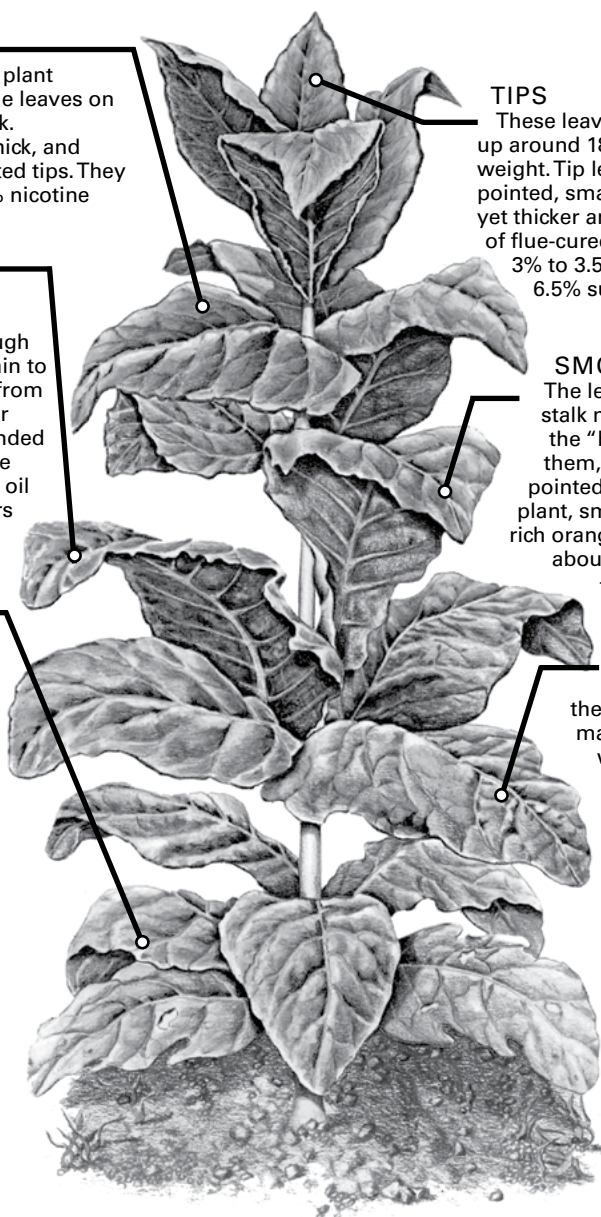
These leaves at the stalk top make up around 18% of the plant's total weight. Tip leaves are narrow and pointed, smaller than lower leaves, yet thicker and more full bodied. Tips of flue-cured tobaccos contain from 3% to 3.5% nicotine and 6% to 6.5% sugars.

## SMOKING LEAF

The leaves just above the stalk middle are thinner than the "bodied" leaves above them, and their tips are less pointed. About 7.5% of the plant, smoking leaf ripens to a rich orange color and contains about 3% nicotine and 12% to 20% sugars.

## LUGS

These thin, blunt-tipped leaves around the bottom of the stalk make up 13% of the plant's weight. Lugs contain about 2.5% nicotine and 12% to 20% sugars.



**Figure 1.** Characteristics of tobacco leaves based on stalk position

More than 2,500 different chemical compounds have been identified in the leaves of commercially grown tobacco. The most important of these is nicotine, of course. But the various sugar levels found in the plant also play a vital role when different tobaccos are blended. The nicotine and sugars in the leaves will vary according to soil, light conditions, moisture, and temperature, as well as stalk position.

Recommendations for the use of agricultural chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by North Carolina State University nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use agricultural chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage regulations and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact your local Cooperative Extension Center.

### A PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENT ON PESTICIDES

Pesticides must be used carefully to protect against human injury and harm to the environment. Diagnose your pest problem, and select the proper pesticide if one is needed. Follow label use directions, and obey all federal, state, and local pesticide laws and regulations.

*This publication is also available at  
[content.ces.ncsu.edu/flue-cured-tobacco-information](http://content.ces.ncsu.edu/flue-cured-tobacco-information).*

*The drawing of the tobacco plant on the inside rear cover is reprinted with permission  
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College of Agriculture  
and Life Sciences