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2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

In the near future, the USDA will begin conducting the 2007 Census of Agriculture. The Census will collect information concerning all areas of farming and ranching operations, including production expenses, market value of products, and operator characteristics.

Your responses help provide information that is used for all types of agricultural planning and decision-making. This information helps USDA work with other organizations to develop short-term and long-term improvements, strategies, and safeguards. Your input, along with that of all of America’s farmers and ranchers, can make a real difference for you and your community.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLECTING SOIL SAMPLES

As we near the end of this year's farming season, it is important to consider good farm management practices as we prepare for next year's crops. One of those practices is collecting soil samples. Collecting soil samples is the first step in planning an economical and environmentally sound fertilization program. The efficient use of nutrients can help reduce fertilizer costs and environmental concerns without reducing yield or quality. This requires a well-planned fertilization program based on soil sampling, wise selection of nutrients based on needs and costs, and proper application of fertilizers.

Taking good samples, filling out paperwork properly, and packaging samples for delivery in a well-organized manner are important. For best results, use the following guidelines.
Proper sampling depth varies depending on the kind of crop and tillage method you plan to use.

1. For conventional crops, collect soil samples to a depth of 6 to 8 inches. For no-till crops or establishing crops, such as pastures or orchards, samples need to be only 4 inches deep.
2. Use a soil probe and a clean plastic bucket.
3. Mix soil cores in a bucket; then fill a standard soil box to the indicated line.
4. Avoid taking samples when soil is wet.
5. Use permanent ink to fill out the information on the box.

**HUMAN RESOURCE RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

Human resources are both a source of risk and an important part of the strategy for dealing with risk. At the core of dealing with that risk - and that potential - is your approach to managing people.

Most families that successfully work together have evolved a good management system, although they usually don’t think about it as a management system. Their system flows from the inter-dynamics of lifetimes spent together, of giving and taking, and of listening to and respecting one another. But even small family farms can benefit as much as large operations from clearly defining how plans and decisions are to be made for the business. For family members, business planning should lead to estate planning.

Estate planning is the process of planning for the final distribution of your life’s work. Will the distribution be fair and according to your desires? Life will be tough enough for your family and business partners after your death without leaving tough decisions for them to make. Estate planning is as much for them as it is for your peace of mind. Who should have an estate plan? Anyone with business or personal assets and with responsibility for children or parents should have an estate plan.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Robeson County Area Beekeepers Association Monthly Meetings** – The third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. for the meal or 7:00 p.m. for the educational program at the O. P. Owens Agriculture Center, Highway 72 West, Lumberton. The next scheduled meeting is November 20.

**22nd Annual Southeast Vegetable and Fruit Expo** – December 12-13, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Fruit and vegetable growers should register now to attend this important conference. This year’s conference will have an expanded regional trade show and in-depth educational sessions. Registration is $60, which includes NCVGA Membership, yearbook, and lunch. For persons wishing to attend the first day’s session, transportation will be provided. For more information on the conference or to reserve a seat on the van, please contact the Extension Office at 671-3276.
Minority Farmers and Landowners Forestry Conference - January 10, 2008, O. P. Owens Agriculture Center, Highway 72 West, Lumberton. This program will address many of the major issues related to establishing and managing forestlands and timber sales. Look for more details later.


2008 North Carolina Small Farms Week - March 30 – April 5, 2008. The North Carolina A&T Cooperative Extension Program will coordinate various programs throughout the state honoring North Carolina’s small farmers. Extension programs that benefit small-scale agriculture will also be recognized during the period. Look for more details later.

Please do not hesitate to call the Robeson County Center of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service at 671-FARM (3276) if you have any questions about any topics covered in this newsletter. Persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency may request accommodations to participate by contacting me at 910-671-3276 or by fax at 910-671-6278 or by E-mail at Nelson_Brownlee@ncsu.edu or in person at the County Extension Center at least three days prior to the event.

Sincerely,

Nelson Brownlee

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Extension Area Agent
Agriculture - Farm Management

NB/dh