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GRASS OR WEED

A potential problem exists for farmers

By Mike Phillips

As soon as weather permits farmers will be ready to start spring planting. Soil temperatures are high enough for corn to be planted into the soil. At corn planting time we run into special problems, problems that have to be handled with extreme care. One of these problems is weed control. One of the most difficult and hated weeds to grain farmers is Johnson grass. Due to the plant type, it is very difficult to control. Plants are grouped into 9th classes — C3 and C4 types. C3 simply means that some plants take in carbon dioxide and release small amounts from the system. C4 plants take in carbon dioxide and simply revolve it through the system. This makes the plant extremely efficient, and difficult to control. Besides Johnson grass, other C4 plants are canes and milo grasses. One of the characteristics of these plants are the toxicity they present to animals immediately after a frost.

It is most difficult to imagine, being from Western Kentucky, how anyone could possibly like Johnson grass. A few years ago while traveling through a southwestern region part of the U.S. I had the horrifying experience to see cattle actually grazing on pure stands of Johnson grass, and other farmers actually cutting and baling this weed. Well that's what it is if you are a grain farmer. Kentucky has listed Johnson grass as a noxious weed, due to the increased grain farming in the state. The manner in which Johnson grass seed is transmitted can be in many ways. Water, machinery, animals and

man has the potential to spread seed. Parts of Western Kentucky has become epidemic proportions. Through cultivation and chemical applications we have the ability to control this problem. But it isn't cheap. Nicholas County has not experienced the problem on a scale that many counties have. Most of our problems are centered around areas that tend to be flood. As you drive along many highways and observe patches growing uncontrolled the problem can only get worse. We have not experienced a problem severe enough to create an economic loss on a significant scale and I trust we never will. Grass or weed, Kentucky and Nicholas County have no need for another problem to add to the multitude of problems the farmer already faces.



County Homemakers officers

Left are: Mrs. Hazel Swartz, secretary; Mrs. Dorsey Lynn Watkins, president; C. E. Burgin, guest entertainer for the evening; Mrs. Snopp and Mrs. Crump. Mercury photo

NICHOLAS NATIVE

State police commissioner Campbell reorganizes department; emphasis on criminal investigation

When the new state police commissioner, Martin D. Campbell, took office just two months ago, the first priority he set for himself and his troopers was to strengthen and re-emphasize criminal investigations.

Since then, the changes within the state police have been coming fast, and none of them bode well for the lawbreaker. In the few short weeks that have elapsed since Campbell's appointment, seven teams, made up of six troopers each, all volunteers, have been organized, specially equipped and trained in the delicate, dangerous art of rescuing hostages unharmed and dealing with other high-risk situations, such as barricaded gunmen and airplane hijackers, where the lives of innocent persons often are at stake.

Now based at Bowling Green, London, Frankfort, Madisonville, Dry Ridge, Pikeville and Ashland, the new special response teams have already been put on an around-the-clock alert status to go to the assistance of any other KSP units or local police agencies, anywhere in Kentucky, who request their help.

"And when the call comes to move," Campbell added, "the teams will also have at their backs and call a cadre of still another 22 troopers, assigned two per each of our 18 posts, who recently completed a separate, but related, training program in hostage negotiations."

more of them in the face of skyrocketing crime rates, up 11 percent in Kentucky during the past year alone. Although the new approach emphasizes criminal investigation, "it will not work to the disadvantage of our traffic safety and enforcement obligations, either," the commissioner said. Materials will still see troopers patrolling the roads and writing traffic tickets, he said, "but we are going to

be a lot more selective about when and where those patrols are scheduled. "We're also going to be rethinking some old attitudes of our own about how to make the most effective use of an officer's time," he said. "From now on, it won't be how many tickets he can write in a day, a week or a month, or the number of criminal cases he opens, but how many accidents are being averted."

So stated H. Frank Grainger, Cary, N.C., sales manager for the Farmount Chemical Company. In a recent presentation before approximately 200 Central Kentucky tobacco growers at Lexington. Citing statistics on the importance of tobacco to the economy of the United States, plus increased imports of foreign tobacco into this country, and America's declining position in tobacco exports, Grainger called upon growers to "do their part to see that tobacco stays afloat."

The key issue raised by Grainger was the improper use of maleic hydrazide (MH) in tobacco sucker control. "Maleic hydrazide is one of the best friends that you and I as tobacco farmers have ever had," he said. "But, we have abused it, we've over-used it and its beginning to put us out of business."

"Our foreign traders have told us that they only want 60 parts per million (ppm) MH residue in the tobacco they buy. You and I have exceeded that considerably in most cases," Grainger said. For Kentucky, MH residue jumped from 20.8 parts per million in 1979 to 135 ppm in 1980. "That is going to catch up with you faster than anything else that's happened to you in growing tobacco today," Grainger said. Today, 25 percent of the tobacco used in the manufacture of all tobacco products in this country is imported.

Tobacco chemical official warns against MH over-use

"Eighty-five percent of that is coming from totally MH free countries," Grainger said. "Before you jump to conclusions and you are going to stop that importation of tobacco, let me recite this to you: One of the largest corporations in the entire world, General Motors, has not yet stopped the importation of Toyota. What do you and I think is going to happen to us as small tobacco farmers that nobody really likes? We don't have any clout anywhere."

Grainger pointed out that presently there are 128 million pounds in the flue-cured stabilization pool that averages 141 ppm MH and there is no hope for it.

Dr. Lee Townsend suggests that general sanitation practices around the beds will reduce insect from which pests thrive. If this spring turns out to be cool and

"It's costing us 11 1/2 percent per month interest on that tobacco and nobody wants to buy it," he said. "If you don't watch out, when the world market catches up to you, that same problem will be confronting you here in Kentucky. Now is the time to solve this problem, while your pool is down."

Grainger pleaded with growers not to let maleic hydrazide become "a stumbling block in the years ahead. We must stop abusing the product that has been very good to us."

"Whatever sucker control product you use in 1981," he said, "please just use the recommended rate of it. Every day that you abuse these products you're putting yourself and the rest of us out of business."

Tobacco bed pests and controls noted

Although fumigation of tobacco beds virtually eliminates soil insects, there can be plant damage from pests such as slugs, cutworms and flea beetles that move in from outside the beds, says an Extension entomologist at the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture.

Dr. Lee Townsend suggests that general sanitation practices around the beds will reduce insect from which pests thrive. If this spring turns out to be cool and

dam, watch out for slugs. Slugs thrive under damp conditions. They feed at night leaving ragged holes in the leaves with their raspy-like mouthparts," Townsend says.

He adds that elimination of hiding places such as decaying boards and piles of debris near beds helps to reduce slug damage. Slug control consists of applying metaldehyde bait, according to label directions, late in the afternoon or

Kentucky Business Scene new column begins this week on page 10

The fortunes of business in Kentucky have an impact on the pocketbooks of all our readers. The Carlisle Mercury strives to bring you area business news that most affects your job, income and security. Now we are expanding this coverage with Kentucky Business Scene, a new and incisive weekly column that tells you at how business affects you on a statewide scale.

Food prices down slightly; April drop third in four months

Food prices in Kentucky supermarkets declined slightly in April, continuing a pattern of relative price stability in evidence since the first of the year.

A marketbasket of 40 selected food items cost \$24.24 this month, down nearly 4 1/2 percent from the March figure of \$25.46 and the third month in the past four in which food prices have moved downward. Comparisons from a year ago, however, show the latest survey 5 percent below the same items in the marketbasket cost of April 1980.

Meat and poultry average lower in price now than they did in October of last year. The local averages were: Moreshead, 31.17; Hopkinsville, 34.21; Salyersville, 34.41; Greenburg, 34.76; Scottsville, 35.19; Glasgow, 36.11; Shelbyville, 36.81; Georgetown, 38.89; Brandenburg, 37.61; Covington, 37.67. Cyn-

thiana, 37.91; Louisville, 37.96; Middlesboro, 38.05.

Hay prices during the most recent reporting period saw a mixture of food and bad news for Kentucky farmers. All three major grains, corn, wheat and soybeans, dropped in price, according to the April report of the Kentucky Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, as did hogs and milk cows. Beef cattle and calves, however, were higher. Nationwide, USDA says farm prices dropped an average of 1.3 percent during the 30-day period, a figure which would have been even larger had not raw vegetable price increases moderated the reduction in other crops. With the decline, the April figure remained 16 percent above a year ago. Farm costs are up an average 9.4 percent during the same period.



George Nicholas, 174-1799

Roy Shannon, Lexington, has given the Nicholas County Court a portrait of Colonel George Nicholas, born in Williamsburg, Va., in 1743. He was Kentucky's first Attorney General, living on Mulberry Street in Lexington of the present site of Soire School, and died there in 1799. Mercury photo