



Soil Management in Berry Crops as a Model for Management Education Project Invites Ag Educators to Participate in a Free Webinar Series

Commercial berry growers in the Northeast have traditionally made standardized fertilizer applications based on crop age. This practice continues today, some 10 years or more after commercial berry crop guidelines for analysis-based fertilization programs became widely available. Adoption of soil health improving practices has also been slow.

Research demonstrates an analysis-based approach to berry crop nutrition provides increased yields along with better fruit quality and plant health. Use of soil health management practices (i.e. cover cropping) has been shown to reduce weed, nematode and soil-borne disease pressure, along with improving soil tilth, organic matter and nutrient content. Rising costs of products and concerns about environmental impacts of fertilizers make a whole farm approach to berry crop nutrient and soil management highly desirable.

Ag educators, frequently called on to cover multiple commodities and/or information areas outside their field of expertise, often struggle to assist commercial berry growers with berry crop soil and nutrient problems. No single comprehensive resource on this topic is currently available for either educators or growers.

A 2-year NE SARE Professional Development Project, led by Dr. Marvin Pritts, Small Fruit Horticulturalist and Berry Crop Nutrition Specialist, is beginning this fall to provide in-depth berry crop nutrition and soil management training and resources for ag educators and the commercial berry growers they serve.

Year one of the project will focus on helping ag educators build berry crop nutrient and soil management expertise through 1) a series of 12 in depth webinars and case study learning modules on the subject and 2) development of internet resources to be used by educators in grower training.

Year 2 of the project will focus on assisting ag educators to 3) develop and implement grower training programs and 4) carry out one-on-one consultations with participating growers. Year 2 will also involve educators in monitoring adoption and success of analysis-based berry crop nutrient and soil health management by growers.

A whole farm soil and nutrient management decision tool for commercial berry crops will be developed from existing resources. This tool, along with accompanying ag educator and commercial grower training materials, made available via an internet web site, will provide a “one-stop-shop” resource for ag educators interested in building skills or providing training and/or commercial berry growers interested in improving berry crop soil and nutrient management.

Soil and nutrient management principles and practices gained through this project will have application to other crops currently or in the future.

We invite you to participate in the project by joining us for an educational webinar series on the topic beginning Friday, September 30, 2011 at 2 PM EST (full schedule follows).

For more information or to register for the series please contact Cathy Heidenreich, mcm4@cornell.edu or 315-787-2367.

Funding for this project is provided by the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program

Project overview/introduction and pretest for educators

September 30, 2011 2PM EST *Dr. Marvin Pritts, Cornell University*



Introduction to Soil Management (Webinar 1)

October 7, 2011 2PM EST Introduction to Soil Management: Soil types ,
Accessing soil surveys, Physical properties, Biological properties, Chemical properties
Dr. Harold van Es, Cornell University

Soil Nutrient Management (Webinars 2 through 4)

October 14, 2011 2PM EST Soil Testing: Sampling procedures, Soil testing, Test options: Morgan, Modified
Morgan, Melich III *Ms. Janet Fallon, Agro-One*

November 4, 2011 2PM EST Interpretation of soil test results prior to planting *Dr. Marvin Pritts, Cornell University*

November 11, 2011 2PM EST Correction of soil problems: Application technology, Conventional nutrient
sources, Organic nutrient sources, Liming and pH reduction *Dr. Eric Hanson, Michigan State University*

Nutrient Management in Established Berry Plantings (Webinars 5 through 7)

December 2, 2011 2PM EST Foliar testing and sampling, Visual assessment of nutrient status
Dr. Marvin Pritts, Cornell University

December 9, 2011 2PM EST Interpretation of foliar analysis results *Dr. Marvin Pritts, Cornell University*

January 6, 2012 2PM EST Correction of nutrient problems in established plantings: Application technology,
Conventional nutrient sources, Organic nutrient sources *Dr. Eric Hanson, Michigan State University*

Management of Biological and Physical Components of Soil (Webinars 8 and 9)

January 13, 2012 2PM EST Soil health assessment *Mr. Robert Schindelbeck, Cornell University*

February 3, 2012 2PM EST Improving biological and physical soil properties: Organic matter and composts
Mr. Robert Schindelbeck, Cornell University

The Future of Nutrient Management (Webinars 10 through 12)

February 10, 2011 2PM EST Environmental impacts of nutrient use: Run-off/leaching, Minimizing impacts,
Nitrogen plans *Dr. Harold van Es, Cornell University*

March 2, 2012 2PM EST Fertigation and Hydroponics (strawberries), New Diagnostic Tools, Precision
agriculture for berry crops *Dr. Bielinski Santos, University of Florida Gulf Coast Research and Education Center*

March 9, 2012 2PM EST Future Soil Health Assessments, Economics of Nutrient Use, Post test *Drs. Harold van Es and Marvin Pritts, Cornell University*

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