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Determine Liming Needs on Tobacco Land This Fall

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DETERMINE LIMING NEEDS ON TOBACCO LAND THIS FALL

There have been far too many reports of manganese toxicity in tobacco this season for a condition which is so easily corrected.

Manganese is one of the minor elements necessary for plant growth, but it is needed in very small amounts. When large amounts are taken up by a tobacco plant, light green or yellowish areas appear between the larger veins of the leaf. In severe cases the plant may be stunted or even die.

The availability of manganese is closely associated with soil acidity. As the soil becomes more acid the amount of manganese in the soil solution is increased to a point where it becomes toxic to plants. Fertilization practices on burley tobacco frequently cause the soil to become more acid, which results in a need for ground limestone to sweeten the soil.

Since not all tobacco fields will need lime, a good representative soil sample should be taken from each tobacco field as soon as the crop is harvested to determine whether lime is needed. If soil test results show that limestone is needed, it should be applied and disked in before the cover crop is seeded this fall. When this is done the limestone will have the winter months to be reducing soil acidity before next year's crop is planted. For this reason it is important that tobacco ground be tested immediately following harvest.

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