



NOTES & QUOTES

MAY/JUNE 2024

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Upcoming Events 2
- New Dealers 2
- Monthly Specials 3
- Summer Heat & Laying Hen 4-5
- Ode to the Dairy Cow 5
- Natural Fly Control 6-7
- Sharpening your Tools 7
- Potassium: Produce Productivity . . 7-8
- Why Do My Cows Eat Dirt 8-10
- Old Tools Work 10-11
- Fermentation of Vegetables 12-13
- Essential Tips for Backyard
Homesteaders 14-15



ORGANIC FERTILIZER BLENDS & SOIL AMENDMENTS



LIVESTOCK NUTRITION & CUSTOM PREMIXES

PO Box 265 • Bainbridge, PA 17502
800-347-1566 • www.fertrell.com

Our Mission:

Healing the Earth and feeding the world -- Better Naturally!

NEWS FROM THE FRONT

Per customer requests, just a friendly reminder that we do accept customer-initiated ACH payments. If you are interested in making this your preferred payment option, please contact the accounting office for banking information.

UPCOMING CLOSINGS

May 27th, 2024, in celebration of Memorial Day

June 26th -28th 2024 for 6-month inventory count (production and shipping only, office will be open)

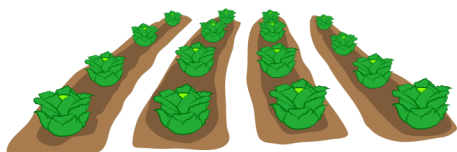
July 4th, 2024, in celebration of Independence Day

***On July 5th, 2024**, we are expecting limited staff & restricted shipping

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 18th, 2024
Homestead Day
7447 South Eagle Valley Road
Port Matilda, PA

June 7th – 8th 2024
TN Homesteading Festival The Homestead Hardison Mill
Columbia, TN



June 29th 2024

Heritage Homestead Day
Raymond Fisher Farm
531 Millheim Narrows Road
Rebersburg, PA 16872
ALL TOPICS WILL BE IN PA DUTCH

July 5th – 6th 2024

Horse Progress Days
Gordonville, PA

July 12th -13th 2024

Community Days
Fort Plain, NY

August 13th -15th 2024

Ag Progress Days
Pennsylvania Furnace, PA

August 22nd -23rd 2024

The SGF Gathering at Polyface
Swoope, VA

September 6th -7th 2024

Ozark Homesteading Expo
Marshfield, MO

October 11th -12th 2024

Homesteaders of America
Conference
Front Royal, VA

NEW DEALERS

ALABAMA

Walker Supply Company LLC,
Carey Blackmon
628 Carter Ave
Bessemer, AL
35020 205-586-0169
Carey@doublerfarmsal.com
www.doublerfarmsal.com

LOUISIANA

Local Cooling Farms,
Grant Estrade
4516 Clearview Parkway
Metairie, LA 70006
504-887-4336
Grant.estrade@gmail.com

MAINE

Jesse Geiser
1467 Park Street
Livermore Falls, ME 04254

MONTANA

Bontrager's Horticulture
DBA Sunset Sales
4603 Hwy Y
Clark, MO 65243
573-356-0854

MONTHLY SPECIALS

The following Fertrell products will be sold at 10% discount during the month indicated below. **Some restrictions apply.*

MAY SPECIALS

Fertrell Grazer's Choice 50lb bags

A ready-to-use mix of kelp meal, calcium, phosphorus, trace mineral salt from redmond minerals, vitamin E, selenium, and diatomaceous earth.

Even grazing livestock will have a need for supplemental calcium, phosphorus, vitamins and selenium. Grazer's Choice contains no added copper and is not harmful to sheep.

Fertrell Grazer's Choice with Copper 50lb bags

A ready-to-use mix of kelp meal, calcium, phosphorus, trace mineral salt from redmond minerals, vitamin E, selenium, and diatomaceous earth. Even grazing livestock will have a need for supplemental calcium, phosphorus, vitamins and selenium. Graziers Choice with Copper is our standard Graziers mineral with 1,000 ppm copper added. For producers with low copper levels in pastures or forages.

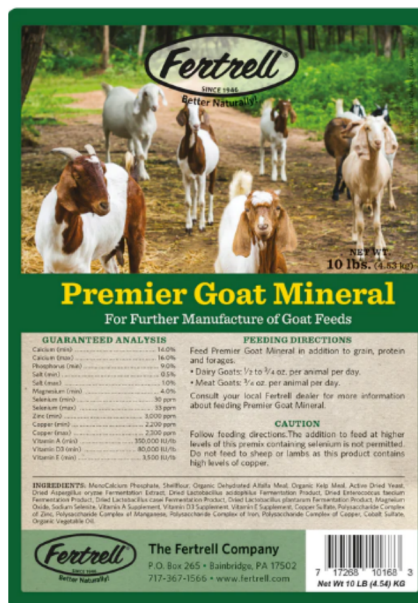
JUNE SPECIALS

Fertrell Sheep Nutri-Balancer 50lb bags

Sheep Nutri-Balancer is a premix vitamin & mineral supplement. A nutritionally complete premix, with no added synthetic copper.

Fertrell Goat Nutri-Balancer 50lb bags

Our premier Goat Nutri-Balancer is formulated specifically for the nutritional requirements for all stages of a goat's life. Goat Nutri-Balancer is formulated with the essential vitamins, minerals, and trace elements to promote optimum animal health. Goat Nutri-Balancer should be used with high-quality grains and forages for maximum health and performance.



“Summer Heat and Laying Hen” by Jeff Mattocks

The summer season is just around the corner. While many of us look forward to our summers it will change how our animals behave and perform. Putting together a plan to reduce the effects of summer heat and longer days will be beneficial for your animals and you. Some considerations to think about for managing your hens for higher temperatures. Look for ways to improve shade, water supply, cooler water, access to feed and water and diet changes to compensate for higher temperatures. As the temperatures get higher your hens will gradually consume less feed. They want to consume less calories to reduce body temperatures.

A couple of considerations for you. First try to feed the hens in the later afternoon. Through observation of my personal flock, I found they prefer to eat most of their food one hour before sunset, not dark, sunset.

Secondly, try to adjust the ration to compensate for lower feed intake. This is done by raising the protein level combined with decreasing the energy levels. We typically find that hens in the winter or colder temperatures will prefer to eat 5 – 6 ounces of feed each per day. Spring and fall, the hens will eat 4 ounces of feed each day. In the summer, with

temperatures over 80 degrees the hens will eat approximately 3 ounces of feed each day. We need to adjust the feed accordingly to each season. This will promote proper egg size during each season. People think feed is feed. When truth be told, the hen needs only a limited number of calories for each season. And needs to maintain 20 – 21 grams of protein consumed daily to maintain a large or extra-large egg size. Being able to fluctuate your feed protein through the seasons will enable the egg size to be more uniform throughout the year.

Let’s talk about water. I cannot describe to you the pain and frustration I feel when I see poultry without water in the shaded areas of their environment. We have all seen it, poultry during the summer or most of the year prefer to spend their time in shaded areas. They do not really like intense sunlight. Yet, I see too many poultry management set ups with water in the direct sunlight only. Water in direct sunlight is only an advantage to the manager/owner. This will significantly reduce water consumption. When water consumption is limited, then feed intake is also limited. These limitations lead to less eggs being produced or smaller eggs being produced. Neither of which helps your income from egg sales. Your hens will be much better off with water provided in the shaded areas they will gather during the middle

of the day. Consider the water temperature also. How would you like to drink the warm water that is being provided in the watering system your hens drink from? Yeah, that’s what I thought. I wouldn’t like it either. Try to figure out a way to provide cooler temperature water through the day. Options to consider:

1. Let the water run or trickle in the supply line. This will allow cooler water from the well or source to be closer to the drinker.
2. Keep the water source in the shaded areas
3. If using a supply hose, cover the hose with something white to reflect sunlight, let the grass grow up around the hose, or bury the supply line.
4. If using a reservoir for water, try to insulate, use a cooler, or plan to use ice in the reservoir to keep water temperatures lower.

Look folks if you wouldn’t drink the water, why should your hens?

Finally, shade. We all like shade. Shade is calming, relaxing, reduces stress, and relieves excess body temperature. Please try to figure out a way to offer more shade for your laying hens. The more shade the more they can spread out. They won’t be sharing as much body heat, oxygen, and manure. The hens will have less stress, less illnesses, less cannibalism, and will have a

much better life. These are all simple environmental things we can fix. I promise you it will make a huge difference for your flock and your bottom line.

“Ode to the Dairy Cow” by Baylor Lansden

Next to a fat, juicy steak, a glass of milk may look humble. A slice of cheese may make a cheeseburger, but the patty is inevitably the star of the show. Although dairy products may often play the supporting role, when you compare what a dairy cow produces to a beef animal, there is a clear winner when it comes to direct productivity. To exhibit this point, I want to look at just the final products of each animal.

Let us first look at a feedlot beef steer that was finished at 1400 pounds in 17 months. Out of this animal, we can get approximately 570 pounds of finished, boneless beef (not including trimmed fat, bone, or organs).

One of the most valuable aspects of beef to human nutrition is its protein content. The protein content of beef is around 26%, which means that our 570 pounds carcass will yield about 148 pounds of protein.

As we looked at a feedlot steer, let's compare it with an average US dairy cow, who produces around 24,000 pounds of milk per year. This whole milk averages 3.2% protein, which

means 768 pounds of protein per year.

Plus, when she exits the milking herd and goes into the beef market, she will produce a similar amount of protein as the beef steer.

On top of that protein, the dairy cow will give us around 2,640 pounds of calcium per year, while the beef carcass will give us around 6 lbs.

Of course, there are other ways to compare the value of protein. A pound of beef will give you 118 grams of protein, but you would have to drink about a gallon of milk to get the same amount of protein.

However, a pound of cheddar cheese will give you 113 grams of protein, so it is hitting just below beef. Put a pound of beef and a pound of cheese in your next burger, and you have enough protein for an elite bodybuilder! (I'm just kidding, that might be a mess.)

This is not intended to pit dairy vs. beef. Both bring benefits to the human diet. This is just intended to show how much a dairy cow produces for us in her lifetime. So next time you pass a parlor and see all those tall ladies patiently waiting their turn to be milked, give a little thanks to the cows and the farmers that milk them.



Fertrell
SINCE 1946
Better Naturally

Seasons & Forages Change, So Should Your Dairy Minerals

Fertrell has several products to help with your dairy production such as:

- 3 Different Blends of Dairy Nutri-Balancers
- Graziers Choice
- Graziers Choice with Copper
- Graziers Choice with Magnesium and Copper

Contact Us to Request a Catalog!
PO Box 265, Bainbridge, Pennsylvania 17502
800-347-1566 • www.fertrell.com

FERTRELL HAS EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR YOUR FARM, BIG OR SMALL.

From fertilizers and soil amendments to livestock and poultry vitamin and mineral supplements.



Vegetable Grower's Bundle



NUTRI-BALANCERS MADE FOR YOU

WWW.FERTRELL.COM



“Natural Fly Control” by Baylor Lansden

To me, there are few things more frustrating than walking out to the field on a warm summer day, soaking in the picturesque image of a full, lush pasture, just to have the setting spoiled by seeing that the herd in this pasture is covered in a swarm of flies.

Not only is it hard to see your herd visibly frustrated by fly pressure, but also to realize what economic damage this fly pressure is having. This damage is coming directly from the blood being removed from the animal, as well as the energy being burned in fly avoidance, and the disruptions to grazing that flies cause. Compounding the frustration about the effect of flies is that if you are trying to follow organic or natural practices, fly control is more complicated.

Managing manure and bedding piles is a good cultural practice to reduce fly pressure. Keeping bedding fresh, and avoiding pileups of wet, soiled bedding, is going to limit fly breeding grounds (Remember that fly larvae need moisture to survive).

Actively turning composting bedding/manure piles will keep them hot enough to kill fly eggs and larvae, and reduce the potential of this being a fly breeding ground.

Managing fresh manure on pasture is a little more difficult.

Some farmers may choose to drag the manure, which will help it dry out and make it unsuitable for fly larvae. Other than this, the only other options are a flock of chickens and a robust dung beetle population.

Besides direct manure management, there is the option of feeding diatomaceous earth in the mineral or feed. The DE passes through the animal and is imparted into the manure. Once the fly larvae hatch, the DE in the manure will kill them, as they move throughout the patty. This is why we add DE to our Grazier's Choice mineral, which is fed free choice to pastured livestock.

Other than addressing fly breeding grounds, most other fly reduction techniques are concentrated on trapping and deterrence.

Deterrence is going to be a constant effort. If you are not using conventional methods, this has traditionally meant using sprays made from essential oils and organically approved pyrethrins.

At Fertrell, we offer a product called Fly Aside which is built around these ingredients. These sprays are effective, but will have to be used whenever there is active fly pressure. This can work

for a milking herd that comes into a parlor twice a day, but is difficult or impossible for stock out rotating on pasture.

A new deterrence technique that Fertrell has been interested in is building up sulfur levels in the animal. This sulfur comes through in the blood and other body secretions. Insects are repelled by the taste and smell of the sulfur. This is why we have carried a high-sulfur mineral for the past few years, called Fly Aside Dry.

It is a free-choice mineral that could be offered to any stock. It contains sulfur powder, garlic salt, and bentonite clay as a carrier. We really like this mineral as it helps deter flies, but the sulfur in the mineral also helps ruminants capture more protein. This is because a critical part of some important amino acids are composed of sulfur. This sulfur is used by the bacteria in the rumen to convert more free nitrogen to true proteins. This corresponds to lower MUNs and more protein available to the animal.



⋮ **FLY ASIDE** ⋮

If you have any questions on this, please feel free to contact Fertrell. A Livestock Nutrition Consultant would be happy to help answer your questions.

Fly control is a complex, multifaceted effort. No one method is going to be complete, and flies will always be with us. But considering what the effects of high fly pressure are, the battle is well worth it.

“Sharpening Your Tools” by Matt Miller

I once heard, “Time spent sharpening your tools is never wasted time.” The speaker was using this as a metaphor for learning and perfecting a craft. Although I do agree with the statement, I don’t believe it goes far enough.

For example, most people could name one person in their life that has gone to college but once they got done, they are not using that degree in their line of work at all. Please don’t take this as passing judgement because I am one of those folks. I could show multiple accolades, but they mean nothing if I don’t use what I have learned.

Now the real question, “If I’m not using what I learned was it truly worth spending the money or time for a piece of paper on the wall?” For me yes because

although I am not in the so-called right field the years of study still affect all that I do today. Time is short. If we are gifted with a long life, it is still a flicker on eternity. As you spend time sharpening your metaphoric tools take some time to plan how you will use what you learn. It is a waste of yours if you don’t apply what you have learned.

“Potassium: Produce Productivity” by Ben Seldomridge Essential Macronutrient

The Neo-Latin word Kalium, also known as Potassium, is an essential macronutrient for a variety of plant processes and a part of the diverse web of soil nutrients. The genetic makeup of the plant will determine the amount of potassium a plant will need, with the higher end leaning toward legumes, nitrogen fixing plants and large fruiting vegetables.

Potassium helps regulate turgor pressure, stomate opening and closing, and plant metabolism. This cation, or positively charged ion, floats around in the soil, held on by the cation exchange capacity (CEC). The greater the CEC the better soil can ‘hold on’ to this critical element.

Forms and Application

Fertrell offers a variety of forms




Thorvin Kelp

**A dual-purpose product
for both soil & livestock**

Kelp for Soil

- Kelp naturally contains plant growth stimulants
- Lots of micro nutrients
- Helps to repel insects



Kelp for Livestock

- Promotes better hoof condition
- Supports thyroid function
- Boost immune function

of potassium, depending on your operations, soil, or plant's needs. Placement, timing, application rate, and form are essential so you can maximize your yield and improve plant health. Potassium is either mined or extracted from natural sources such as kelp.

Fertrell's standard blends utilize kelp to provide an initial source of nutrition to the plant. Super K 3-4-7 was designed for vegetables, alfalfa and various legumes. As a starter fertilizer, high potassium demanding crops fair well with routine applications of other potassium sources throughout the fruiting season. While greensand was a popular potassium source, it is no longer readily available.

Fertrell has a product that 'mimics' the qualities of greensand. Green Potash 0-0-15 is a mix of kelp and zeolite that improves CEC while adding potassium. This is a soil builder or breaker. Sandy soils have an issue holding onto nutrients and clay soils have an issue allowing nutrients in, so zeolite breaks down each of these negative qualities and improves water retention. Sulfate of Potash 0-0-52 18S is another fertilizer option, and a great asset to vegetable growers, however it needs to be applied at the right time, as it is highly mobile in the soil column.

Applications every ten days are ideal during the growing season


to help fruit taste and size. Potassium application throughout the growing season comes into critical importance in times of drought. Since potassium regulates water mobility and retention in the plant, optimal levels will improve tolerance during times of high heat and drought.

If you have further questions about potassium, Fertrell's fertilizers or soil amendments, please contact the Agronomy Department and we will be happy to assist you.

“Why Do My Cows Eat Dirt” by Rodney Martin

Well, that's a good question! And it's one that we hear by times from astute dairy managers as they observe the daily, changing behavior of their herd.


Why do they chew on lumber in the barn till the 6x6 post has only half its 'muscle' left? Why do they lick the cement from between the pebbles in the concrete floor or curb till they look and feel like a cobblestone street? Or why do they lick and chew the pipe gates



FERTRELL GREEN POTASH

Concerned about low Potassium?

We couple zeolite and our very own kelp source to provide your plants ample amounts of potassium and soil conditioning power.



till they shine? Why do they drink urine from other cows, or from barnyard puddles? These ‘bizarre’ antics and others crop up by times in many herds, and it’s best if we take notice and try to ‘get a taste’ of what they’re craving.

First, I’ll suggest that neither science, nor gritty, hands-on experience will be able to produce solid answers to these questions in all situations. There are far too many unmeasured dietary and environmental factors affecting our cows, along with the symbiotic relationships of soil and forage microelements interacting with the microorganisms within a cow’s biological system that we simply don’t understand. I believe we’ve only observed the ‘tip of the iceberg’ relating to these marvelous systems.

However, this does not give us the license to prop up our feet and ignore the obvious needs within our herds. The caring animal husbandman will do his utmost to read the subtle, or maybe not so subtle, signals that his animals are sending him, asking for his help. So, are the cows simply inquisitive and exploring their surroundings? Have they fallen into a groove of ‘bad habits’? Perhaps they’re just plain bored... Well, you’ll hardly settle for these suggestions if you take note to the intensity that drives them, and the seeming discomfort to a sensitive mouth,

that must accompany some of this behavior. Following are some observations that we’ve gathered over the years.

Mineral deficiencies in the body on a cellular level can be caused by improperly balanced rations, poorly mineralized feedstuffs, hard or high nitrate water, stray current stress, and more. The cow’s biological system has an amazing ability to bring balance to her body, or ‘die trying’, as they say.

Acidosis, (low rumen PH), or other maladies of the GI tract may cause a cow to crave buffering material to remedy the burning discomfort of acid-stomach. Many of these ‘gut-aches’ result from improperly balanced rations...think effective fiber, for example. It may be a too-finely chopped, or very wet, (high moisture) ration not allowing for the proper function of a fibrous mat within the rumen. This can be especially critical for herds that are grazing very lush, (washy), spring and fall pastures. It can also happen in the mid-summer months when the grasses become lignified and the cows only nip the tips/tops of the plants.

Yeasts and pathogenic toxins, caused by poorly cured, fermented, or stored forages can also be the sinister culprit of

many a stomach upset, causing a cow to seek buffering/binding material.

So, what to do?

First, look for the underlying causes, or seek the help of qualified nutrition or veterinary personnel to look at the ration feedstuffs, to ascertain that they are ‘sound’. Check the drinking water supply for key elements like bacteria, nitrates, and excessive hardness. Quoting the late Dr. Paul Detloff, water hardness in excess of 17 grains will reduce mineral absorption into the cells of the cow’s body by 50%. This can create strong cravings for the cow. And when the feed, water, and other environmental bases are covered, and problems still persist, consider the stray current question.

In the meantime, while you check off the above lists...give the cows some ‘instant’ relief by offering some ‘quality’ free-choice products to satisfy their cravings:

- **Redmond Salt** will address the osmotic needs of the animal on a cellular level while providing immune-building trace minerals in the process. It is superior to white salt in this regard.
- **Redmond Conditioner** serves effectively as both a buffer and a toxin binder, also providing a vast array of trace



minerals. Again, superior to refined sodium bicarb or sodium bentonite in trace mineral content.

- **Thorvin Kelp**, (dried seaweed), contains more than sixty plant-based vitamins and trace minerals to satisfy cravings stemming from nutrient imbalances within the cow on a cellular level.
- **Humates** will also serve as another toxin binder source when needed in addition to the Redmond Conditioner. It does not have the strong micronutrient profile of the Conditioner, but offers another binding mode of action with its charcoal-like qualities. Both Humates and Conditioner also feed the good microbes in the GI tract.

Fertrell can provide these items to you, and offering them individually on a full-time, free-choice basis is a great way to



reduce some of the strange behaviors discussed earlier. We also carry some blends of these products if more simplicity is needed:

- **Redmond’s SR-50** is a blend of Salt and Conditioner and is available in 1-ton totes only.
- **Fertrell’s Grazier’s Choice** mineral blend combines high inclusion rates of Redmond Salt and Thorvin Kelp with a few lesser ingredients to produce a nicely rounded free-choice mineral pack.

So back to our question, why do my cows eat dirt? We do well to be observant and seek to remedy the problem. Because, quoting one prominent grass farmer...

“FOLKS, THIS AIN’T NORMAL!”

“Old Tools Work” by Seth J. Epler

It seems an easy thing to forget about some of the old tools at our disposal. And I do not mean an old beat-up tool that doesn’t function anymore. I am referring to some of the old tools that just somehow get lost to the wayside and unused. It also seems an easy thing to let the new shiny technologies of the world overshadow some of the things



which work well and certainly already existed for a reason. Through that, things can tend to be easily forgotten and overlooked. Sometimes if we remember to just look for the simple tools available, we can find efficient and simple work in using them. Old tools and those who still use them can truly bring strong value and experience. And in turn, this can help us all learn more about ways to strengthen daily operations.

I was recently privileged to be a part of some great customer meetings. And in one particular group, there was a discussion about a **hoof knife**. This, to me, is a fine example of an old tool that I just do not see utilized anymore. That fellow shared how he keeps up on his cows’ hoof trimming himself, and how that helps his herd health and strength

immensely. I realize this is an intimidating task for many, and bringing in the hoof trimmer can be easier under certain circumstances. But if there is an opportunity to learn from an experienced dairyman, on how they keep up on their herd's hooves, I'd think taking that would be very worthwhile. How many tools could really help us all if we just had someone to take the time and show us? I realize getting and having the tool is the easy part. It is the experience of efficiently using said tool that is definitely the hard part.

The next tool that feels relevant to this topic would be **cow tape**. Or in other words, the tape measure that is used to determine the body weight of the animal. I know most dairy farmers have them somewhere covered in dust hiding in a drawer. But I will admit, I rarely see them being utilized. Maybe there are other times to know those weights other than when there is a sale about to occur. Have your animals' weights changed over a long period of time? Are there more crosses in your heard now? A ration could be set for 1,300# big old Holsteins, when maybe that is not entirely accurate anymore.

Taping the cows can be a simple helpful tool which can ultimately help you understand and better

pinpoint their feeding needs and requirements.

Those are just two simple examples of tools, relevant to the dairy barn, that seem pushed aside to me. And perhaps they are silly examples and wouldn't really move any dials for anyone who doesn't use them now. But the point holds relevance, nonetheless.

How many other good tools out there did we just stop using? It is very easy to end up doing things the harder way. All the old timers used to tell me to, "work smarter not harder." And perhaps here I am, just pretty much saying the same thing!

I think especially in the dairy world, or with all raising of livestock, experience is the true teacher. Therefore, there is huge value in gaining experience from trusted folks within our communities. Looking for ways to simplify should always be a part of the businesses our world revolves around. And utilizing tools and experience from trusted friends and family, can progressively help in gaining experience that gets to that efficient simplification. In other words, a tool does not always have to be a hammer, it can be the ally showing us how to pound nails too.



Fertrell
SINCE 1946
Better Naturally!

**WE KNOW
FERTILIZER**

**NATURAL & ORGANIC
FERTILIZERS AND ANIMAL
FEED SUPPLEMENTS**

- Fertilizer Blends
- Custom Fertilizer
- Soil Amendments
- Free choice Supplements
- Complete line of Nutri-Balancers
- Animal Health products

Contact Us to Request a Catalog!

The Fertrell Company • PO Box 265, Bainbridge, Pennsylvania 17502
800-347-1566 • www.fertrell.com

“Fermentation of Vegetables”

By Don Brubaker

Spring has sprung and we are all busy planting and caring for our gardens. Many of us have even been busy harvesting our bounty. We are busy eating fresh vegetables along with canning and freezing them.

When it comes to fermenting, most only think of making sauerkraut in the fall of the year. But let me tell you that my wife and I have fermented asparagus to zucchini and many combinations of them together. The whole process is faster than canning. There is no need to can them either if you have a cold root cellar, or a cool basement wall the veggies will keep for months. My basement is not cool at all through the summer months, so I use a two-door commercial refrigerator and they keep for well over a year.



The whole process is very simple to do. I'll use hull peas as an example.

First harvest at the peak of freshness, shell and rinse them with clean water. And here comes the fun part put your desired amount of peas in a bowl and add whatever seasoning and flavors your family enjoys. We always add garlic and pepper corns, then we sometimes chop up peppers and onions for flavor.

Using different colored peppers to contrast with the peas to brighten up the jar. Many times, I'll add a hot pepper to put some fire in the jar. Don't forget to also add your favorite herbs to your liking.

Now to put it all in a jar, we use quarts and half gallons. Fill the jar just like you would if you were canning it. Then you just add salt water to cover the vegetables. For the water use non chlorinated water and add a half cup of salt per gallon. Pour the water over the vegetables and cover them.

The most important process in fermenting is to keep the vegetables always covered with salt water and let the jars vent of gases as they ferment for five to seven days. You can simply use grape leaves, oak leaves or the outer leaves of a head of cabbage.

Another way is to use a freezer bag and fill it with some salt

water and place it on top of the vegetables.



You could also use a weighted object like a clean round flat rock and place it on top of the vegetables. Another way to just let the gas off is to use an air lock like you might use if you were making wine.

I hope you'll try fermenting out for yourself and the family. I eat fermented vegetables almost every day. They go great with a meal, a snack and a packed lunch. All in an effort to build good gut health.



“Essential Tips for Backyard Homesteaders”

By Kat Squibb

In May, the backyard homesteader's garden is entering a phase of abundant growth and opportunity. As the weather warms and the days lengthen, it's crucial to stay on top of tasks to ensure a bountiful harvest. Here's a quick guide tailored for backyard homesteaders to make the most out of their May vegetable garden:

1. **Soil Preparation:** Begin by assessing your soil quality. Test its pH level and amend it accordingly with organic matter or a Fertrell soil supplement if necessary. Contact your local Fertrell representative about [soil testing](#) as well as customized soil recommendations to amend your soil as needed. Be sure to ensure proper drainage to prevent waterlogging, and keep the soil well aerated by regularly turning it.

2. **Planting Schedule:** May is prime time for planting warm-season crops such as tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash, and beans. However, it's important to be mindful of your local climate and frost dates. For cooler regions, consider using row covers to protect tender seedlings.

3. **Companion Planting:** Utilize companion planting techniques to maximize space and enhance plant growth. Planting complementary

species together can help deter pests, improve pollination, and boost overall productivity. For instance, interplanting tomatoes with basil can enhance tomato flavor and repel pests.

4. **Fertilization:** Hopefully you had a soil test and applied necessary amendments prior to planting or at planting; if you didn't, there is still plenty of time to put down fertilizer. Think of fertilizers as nutritional supplements for your garden. For instance, tomatoes require ample calcium for optimal growth. Consider using Fertrell's dry fertilizers, which can be side dressed along the row and worked into the soil. A general application rate for many of Fertrell's dry fertilizers is 10 lbs per 100 row feet. For crops that demand more potassium, such as larger fruiting varieties, opt for [Fertrell's Super K 3-4-7](#). Conversely, leafier crops thrive with [Fertrell's Super N 4-2-4](#).

Once you've applied a suitable dry fertilizer blend, consider foliar feeding your plants with [Fertrell's Liquid #3 2-3-1](#), a mixture of fish, kelp, and humic acid. This liquid fertilizer offers a balanced blend of nutrients, including nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, along with amino acids for enhanced growth. Kelp, a natural component, contains growth stimulants that boost crop performance and growth. Moreover, its high iodine content, when foliar fed, can help mitigate insect pressure on garden crops. You can apply liquid fertilizers every 7-10 days throughout the growing season or whenever plants are under stress. This regimen supports robust plant growth and development, leading to healthier, more productive yields in your backyard homestead garden.

5. **Weed Control:** Keep weeds in check by regularly hoeing or hand-pulling them from the garden beds. Mulching with organic materials





such as straw, hay, or wood chips can suppress weed growth while retaining soil moisture. Consider a natural, citrus oil-based herbicide such as Avenger Ag Optima as an alternative to synthetic herbicides.

6. Watering: May typically brings warmer weather, so it's important to ensure adequate watering for your garden. Water deeply and consistently, aiming to keep the soil evenly moist but not waterlogged. Consider installing drip irrigation or soaker hoses for efficient water delivery directly to the roots.

7. Pest Management: Stay vigilant for signs of pest infestation and take proactive measures to control them. Encourage natural predators such as ladybugs and lacewings, and utilize organic pest control methods

such as neem oil or insecticidal soap. Fertrell offers many organically-approved insecticides to meet your needs.

8. Harvesting: Regular harvesting encourages continuous production and prevents crops from becoming overripe or prone to disease. Harvest vegetables at their peak ripeness for the best flavor and nutritional content.

9. Preservation: With a surplus of fresh produce in May, consider preserving the harvest through methods such as canning, freezing, or drying.

This allows you to enjoy homegrown fruits and vegetables throughout the year and reduces waste.

Check out the article on “Fermentation of Vegetables” in this newsletter for more tips!

10. Continuous Maintenance: Dedicate time each week to ongoing garden maintenance tasks such as pruning, trellising, and fertilizing. By staying proactive, you can address issues promptly and ensure the long-term health and productivity of your backyard homestead.

By following these essential tips tailored for backyard homesteaders, you can make the most out of your May vegetable garden, enjoying a bounty of fresh, homegrown produce while nurturing a sustainable and thriving garden ecosystem.





PRSR STD
US POSTAGE PAID
LEBANON, PA
PERMIT NO. 146

A photograph showing the handles of a shovel and a pitchfork stuck into dark, rich soil. The shovel is on the left and the pitchfork is on the right. The background is a blurred garden with green foliage.

“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.”

– Margaret Atwood