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FINELY GROUND AGRICULTURAL LIMESTONE IS AVAILABLE

By George D. Corder

Kentucky farmers can purchase a more finely ground limestone than they could 1 year ago.

The Department of Agronomy, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Kentucky, recommends that agricultural limestone be ground fine enough that at least 45 percent will pass through a 50-mesh screen. This is equivalent to the old recommendation that at least 40 percent pass through a 60-mesh screen.

A summary of the limestone samples analyzed by the Division of Regulatory Services, Agricultural Experiment Station, during 1966 shows that 50 percent of the samples submitted was as fine or finer than the standards recommended by the Department of Agronomy.

Limestone companies had to install special crushing equipment to produce fine lime. A number of the companies have the equipment installed and operating. Other companies have it on order, but delivery has been delayed because defense programs have priorities on some of the materials required.

The finer lime should give farmers greater results quicker. As a result we expect the use of agricultural limestone to increase. A summary of the 1965 soil tests made in Kentucky indicate that farmers could profitably use six times as much limestone as they are now using if they expect to get the greatest economical crop production and returns on their fertilizer investment.

Limestone industry personnel are working with the Cooperative Extension Service in an educational program to make farmers aware of the need for adequate liming programs and the advantages of the fine lime they can now purchase.

Fertilizer industry personnel, being aware of the importance of lime in soil fertility programs, are working on the problem with renewed interest since more effective, finer ground limestone has been made available.

For greater results next year, limestone should be applied this fall. The ground is firm and will support spreading equipment. The lime will be reacting with the soil this winter and will be of greater benefit to next year’s crop.