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A Test Ban Treaty designed to stop nuclear explosions above ground was signed. World tension was eased. Fear of radioactive fallout was lessened. The Chinese have the atomic bomb. They did not sign the Test Ban Treaty. World tension is on the up-swing.

What has all this to do with agriculture in Kentucky?

Strontium 90 is one of the harmful constituents in radioactive fallout. It will remain in the soil for a considerable length of time and can replace calcium in growing crops.

All growing plants need calcium. However, if calcium is lacking in the soil, plants will tend to take up more of the other elements that are chemically similar to it. Strontium 90 is such an element.

Thus, liming acid soils is a good farm practice from two standpoints:

First: Crops growing on soils that have an adequate supply of calcium will take up less strontium 90 if the soil should become contaminated with this material. Research has shown that an adequate supply of calcium in the soil can reduce strontium 90 uptake by crops as much as 50% in some soils.

Second: It will supply the calcium needed to grow good crops. It will make the plant nutrients that are already in the soil and those applied in fertilizers more available to growing crops. It will give greater returns on the fertilizer investment when applied on soils that need it.

Therefore, liming acid soils is a good practice from the farmer's standpoint regardless of whether there is radioactive fallout, and it is a good practice from the standpoint of all humanity if there should be radioactive fallout.

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