

SEVEN SPRINGS

THE FARMER'S CHOICE FOR OVER 30 YEARS



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CHANGING OF THE GUARD

After more than 30 years at the helm, Ron Juftes, the founder of Seven Springs, is stepping out of day-to-day operations at the supply company and back into the field. Ron and our Farm Manager, Adam, will be focusing on growing food for the staff and local charities, maintaining the farm and running field trials.

This transition has been years in the making and I am honored to take on the role of CEO at Seven Springs Farm Supply. I am grateful to Ron for all of the time we've spent together and his steady guidance over the past six-plus years. Together, we have navigated the many challenges that come with running a small, farm-based business.

Seven Springs is evolving into something that I take a lot of pride in. Not only are we providing many of the inputs that sustainable farms and farmers rely on, but we are also providing a secure livelihood and future for a growing number of families in our region. Our entire team is thankful for the roots that Ron has established and the trust he has placed in us to continue his life's passion.

As we move forward we are bolstered by the collective passions of a strong and growing team. In the last few years we have added professionals at several positions that did not formerly exist. We now have a Crop Adviser and two Livestock Advisers, a Farm Manager, a Purchasing Manager and a Marketing Director. Our sales and operations staff have the most collective experience in the history of the company. Beyond our titles and roles here, all of us are personally involved in the greater farm community as farmers, gardeners and homesteaders. Having a team that is integrated into our industry is an important part of our mission and the quality we strive to provide.



Seven Springs Farm Supply is dedicated to providing you, our customers, with a superior and friendly experience. For those of you who have been with us on this 33 year journey, please know that we're planning on being here for many more decades and we thank you for your support. Newcomers - we appreciate the opportunity to earn your partnership and we are grateful to be here to help support your success.

Sincerely,

Eric Sharp
CEO





Feed the Soil

In all of the in-house seed starting and potting mix trials we've conducted over the past few years one blend has stood out again and again - Vermont Compost Fort Vee. Germination rates are higher, seedlings and transplants grow faster and larger, and plants are healthier with Vermont Compost. Simply put, we believe Vermont Compost Company is producing the best composts and potting mixes available, anywhere. And we are not alone. Countless growers have told us that after years of trying everything from home-made blends to top-shelf mixes, they have settled on Vermont Compost. Growers have reported needing to adjust their production schedules because their plant starts and microgreens are ready so quickly. The peace of mind that comes with a reliable, consistent, high-performance soil blend has proven to be worth it for the growers who have tried Vermont Compost.

Why is Vermont Compost the best? In one word; *performance*. Vermont Compost performs exceptionally well across the board. This level of performance is the result of the quality and consistency of the ingredients that are used to create Vermont Compost, as well as their established production practices. Over the last 30 years, Vermont Compost has worked with growers to refine their mixes with results in mind. Vermont Compost Company sets the standard for quality compost and soil-mix production. As they say ***"Feed the soil, and the soil will feed the plants."***

We are proud to have partnered with Vermont Compost Company to bring their full range of seed starters and potting mixes to our growers. Please see our website to learn more about Vermont Compost Company and their range of composts and mixes.



Daniel's Picks

As the Crop Adviser at Seven Springs, I get to work with a lot of farmers to help them find solutions to any number of challenges that agriculture presents. Below are a few of my favorite new (and a couple of long-standing) materials that offer excellent value and performance for ecologically-minded farmers. For more information on any of these, please see our website.

HOMEPLATE

A new burn-down weed control made from a blend of fatty-acids. Its relatively low cost per acre and proven effectiveness put it at the top of the list among the herbicides we offer. Homeplate is an excellent option for floor management in orchards and vineyards.

OSO

A new-to-us disease control material based on zinc salts. OSO is an excellent rotational option for foliar disease and fruit rot prevention in certified organic production.

PREBIOTECH

A new micronized crustacean meal that is not only a foliar fertilizer, but also supports and prolongs the activity of bio-fungicides by providing them with a sustainable food source - chitin. Using Pre-Biotech along with a bio-fungicide can add several additional days of disease prevention to your intervals.

LALSTOP G46 AND K61

Two new bio-fungicides based on strains of *Gliocladium* (a naturally-occurring soil fungus). Both provide excellent protection from a number of common diseases of fruits, vegetables, ornamentals and more. Lalstop is a great rotational partner with other bio-fungicides targeting soil-borne pathogens.

SPEAR-T

An exciting new addition to our collection of biological pest controls. Spear-T (based on naturally-occurring peptides) is highly effective at controlling SWD, thrips, aphids, whiteflies and mites. While it is not approved for use in certified production, it is biologically-based and has an excellent safety profile for mammals, pollinators and other beneficials.

AGSIL

A concentrated, soluble potassium silicate. This material has been very popular over the last few years as the benefits of silica in crop-production have become more widely realized.



REDMOND

These ancient sea salts come from a mineral-rich deposit in the Utah desert. Redmond produces a range of excellent livestock minerals. Because Redmond salt is naturally-occurring, the minerals in it are highly stable and bio-available.

NATURE'S KELP

Produced by Thorvin from a blend of USDA Certified Organic North Atlantic kelp. Nature's Kelp is a lower-cost alternative to Thorvin, making it ideal for larger-scale livestock production, feed blending and soil applications.

ALFALFA MEAL & PELLETS

Great for both plants and animals. We are proud to offer what we believe is the highest quality USDA Certified Organic alfalfa available. Staff report being mobbed by their livestock after handling these aromatic bags. High in nutrients and protein.

HOWLER

Over the past few seasons, Howler has proven to be a favorite among many of our commercial growers. On a recent trip to a large vegetable farm, both of the lead growers told me "we are loving Howler" before I had a chance to bring it up. This novel biological fungicide is incredibly effective on many root pathogens and is now labeled for use against select fruit rots as well. Results from the field have been unanimously positive. Howler is truly "a fungicide unlike any other."

CALCIUM NITRATE

New to our catalog for 2021. This 15.5% N, 19% Ca fertilizer is an economical alternative to Sodium (Chilean) Nitrate for growers who are not certified organic.

KENKASHI

An effective microbial concentrate, produced in small batches here in Floyd County, VA. Kenkashi can be applied directly to plants, soil and compost piles. This unique complex of beneficial microorganisms can help protect plants from disease, improve nutrient availability and speed up composting processes.



When Bad Things Happen to Good Compost

by Daniel Sweeney

The use of compost is a foundational practice in organic growing. Compost adds organic matter and beneficial biology to the soil, facilitating the availability of essential nutrients to plants. Compost is also a recycled input; when we apply compost we are taking what was waste or excess and adding it back to the soil in a form that is beneficial to our crops. In vegetable production we are removing organic matter when we harvest our crops. By adding compost to our soils we are replenishing what we have removed. The benefits of compost are best realized when a high quality compost is used. Making compost is a rewarding part of farming or gardening and we recommend keeping a compost pile (or three) to anyone growing their own plants. There are also many commercial and bulk composts available.

It is important to know the source ingredients and processes involved in creating the compost you plan to use. Ideal composts contain a well-balanced blend of source materials (the more the merrier), have maintained temperatures high enough to kill weed seeds and pathogens, and have had plenty of time for all components to fully decompose and mature. These composts are stable and full of available nutrients and beneficial biology. Incomplete or unbalanced composts can have a negative impact on plants. Manures that are not fully composted may inhibit nutrient uptake or cause burn to plants. Raw manures may also contain pathogens. Not all composts are created equally.

In recent years, another challenge with composts containing manure has developed. A number of selective, persistent herbicides known as synthetic auxins (active ingredients Clopyralid, Aminopyralid, Aminocyclopyrachlor and Picloram) used to kill broadleaf weeds in hayfields and pastures has been shown to persist not only in treated hay or pastures but also in the manure of animals that consume the grasses from those fields. Unfortunately, these herbicides can remain toxic to plants (especially tomatoes, beans, cucumbers, lettuces and related species) for up to four years, even if the manure is well composted. Symptoms appear as curled or distorted leaves, twisting stems and other deformations, and an overall lack of plant vigor. We regularly receive reports of persistent herbicide damage stemming from contaminated compost. If you are buying bulk (loose) compost, we strongly advise you to talk to the supplier and discuss whether any of these persistent herbicides have been used.

If you believe that you have contaminated compost in your soils, all is not lost. The first thing to understand is that these herbicides are only toxic to broadleaf plants, not grasses, insects, animals or people. The second thing to know is that contaminated soils can be remediated. The timeline for full remediation will depend on the amount of herbicide in your soil, as well as environmental conditions and the practices you implement to address the situation.

Soil biology will break down and consume the herbicide(s) over time. To accelerate this process you can add soil microbes in the form of Kenkashi, EM1 or another beneficial microbial complex. You can also add things that support and promote soil biology, like molasses or biologically-based high nitrogen fertilizers like feather or blood meal. Intact soil structures (minimal tillage), warm temperatures and good soil moisture also promote biological activity in the soil and will accelerate the degradation of residual herbicides.

In addition, you can grow a high-biomass cover crop like sorghum/sudan grass in summer or rye or wheat in winter. These plants can bio-accumulate residual herbicides and help reduce the overall amount of herbicide remaining in the soil.

Please see our website for more information and links to more resources related to persistent herbicides in compost.

Farm Spotlight: Bell Pastures

Bell Pastures is a pasture-based poultry farm located in Pilot, VA. Our Livestock Adviser, Tim Bell, started Bell Pastures in the Spring of 2020 after returning home from working on farms around the state. Tim graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in Environmental Horticulture and subsequently spent a couple of years working in the greenhouse industry. His passion for animals drove him to return home to SW Virginia and start his own farm. Although 2020 was not the best year to start a business, the farm has thrived.

Tim raises chickens and turkeys on pasture, moving them daily and supplementing with grain from Dawson Gap Naturals.



Photo Credit: Whitney Viers Photography



With a focus on quality, Tim works to ensure that Bell Pasture's meats are of the highest quality available. He is a firm believer in regenerative agriculture - intentionally rotating animals on pastures to both improve the land and produce nutrient-dense meat. As a result of his rotations, Tim is already seeing new species of grasses and forbs and a dark green hue taking over his pastures as the fertility improves. Tim loves seeing the transformation of his pasture over time, knowing that the farm is contributing to the longevity of agriculture while producing healthy food for his customers.

We are very happy to have Tim on staff at Seven Springs Farm Supply. He is responsible for establishing our relationship with Dawson Gap Naturals and has been a welcomed addition to the sales team. If you give us a call, there is a good chance you will be greeted by Tim.