

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this graduate study is a result of the constant attention and assistance provided by the many individuals who made this stressful undertaking both enjoyable and rewarding. My major professor, Dr. T. David Reed, deserves special credit for keeping me focused and instilling a love for Extension work that will never lapse. I will always be indebted to him for the advice, patience, understanding and friendship that brightened the darkest hours. Appreciation is extended to Dr. James C. Baker and Dr. Ronald D. Morse for their efforts to improve this work and for participating as members of this graduate committee.

The intensive nature of these research studies created unique and difficult circumstances. I will forever be indebted to Dr. James L. Jones for providing the needed counsel, excellent facilities and equipment. His participation on this graduate committee strengthened my love for tobacco and solidified the importance and need for Extension.

I will forever be indebted to the field staff at the Virginia Tech Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research and Extension Center. The diligent assistance they provided lightened the high burden of labor required for both tobacco production and soil erosion study. Special attention is extended to Mr. Bill Wilkinson, Farm Manager, for being open-minded regarding the intricacy and unusual nature of this study. His accommodation to the special needs and willingness to assist was invaluable.

The guidance and assistance provided by former graduate student, Mr. C. Taylor Clarke, Jr. was critical for the successful completion of this graduate program. His

assistance during both the design and construction phase of the soil collection system was invaluable and greatly appreciated.

Summer employee assistance was fundamental for the success of these research studies. Special recognition is given Mr. Lonnie Pope, Mr. Michael Mansfield, Mr. Hunter Irby, Mr. Andy Austin, Mr. Clay Holloway, Mr. James Scott Reiter and Ms. Heather Tisdale for their understanding, stimulating conversations, and friendship during the difficult work conditions imposed by the nature of these studies. A special thanks is extended to Mr. Michael Mansfield for the preparation and modification of the Autocad™ drawings contained in Chapter III of the text. Additional appreciation is extended to Mr. Steve Rideout, a fellow graduate student and roommate, for providing friendship and counsel during the most difficult task of writing.

The completion of this study was made possible by the financial support of many organizations interested in improving the quality and profitability of agriculture. Philip Morris U.S.A. is particularly acknowledged for allowing me the opportunity to study the crop most dear and important to my success. Additional appreciation is extended to CORESTA for providing a study grant and allowing me the opportunity to attend the 1996 CORESTA Congress in Yokohama, Japan. The Virginia Agricultural Council is recognized for financial support of this study and for their interest in improving Virginia agriculture. Gratitude is also extended to the Virginia Bright Flue-cured Tobacco Board and the Virginia Dark-fired Tobacco Board for financial support and for their efforts to improve tobacco production in the Commonwealth. Gratitude is also extended to Dr.

Charles R. Drake and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for their scholarship support during both my undergraduate and graduate programs of study.

Virginia Cooperative Extension deserves special recognition for the support and understanding provided during the final stage of this graduate program. The motivation and patience given by Mr. Michael Geisinger, Central District Director, kept me focused during the difficult task of writing and introduction to an unfamiliar county during my first year of employment. Special thanks are given the Lunenburg Extension staff of Louetta Jones, Dennis Stultz, and Joni Holder. Joni's interest in my research, friendly conversations, and thoughtfulness were critical for both improving motivation and maintaining direction. The citizens of Lunenburg County deserve special thanks for understanding my difficulty situation and providing necessary support during a stressful time.

Most importantly, I wish to express deep and sincere appreciation to my father and mother for their constant support and interest in my education. Without their love, compassion and understanding, this goal would not have become reality.

The friendship, support, and understanding provided by Ms. Kristin Van Natta, over the past five years was key to my success in academia and life. She supported me during the darkest hours and was the much needed shoulder to lean on.

Finally, I would like to thank Mr. Matt Garrett, a life-long friend, for helping me realize that family and friends are the most important aspect of life. Our weekend forays provided the necessary break from professional employment and this educational experience.