



Conventional Ag and Orchards coexisting?

Posted by [Jake Riley](#)[Forum List](#) [Message List](#) [New Topic](#)[Jake Riley](#)[Conventional Ag and Orchards coexisting?](#)

April 26, 2020 06:10PM

Registered: 3 years ago

Posts: 7

Many of you are probably blessed with beautiful orchard locations far from conventional Ag land but here in the Midwest it seems we're in the "belly of the beast." Many years back we purchased 3 acres on the top of a hillside at a well traveled intersection in the country just a few miles from town, we thought "great place for our new orchard." We bought the ground from a friend and began building the soil and eventually began setting trees. We worked with the nearby farmer and set the trees on the north end of the property to minimize any potential drift. We offered to purchase the 1.5 acre corner to the north at four times the going rate to further decrease any chance of drift / conflict and were met with anger that we would even ask. This spring we set 45 trees moving to the south still leaving 200' to the south as a buffer as well as planting a hedge with native arborvitae. The nearby farmer stopped in yesterday and wanted to discuss "what we had done". He tried to strong arm us into signing a release of liability that would prevent us from seeking payment for any damage that his spray may cause. We politely declined and things got very heated. I was however given the option to pay for different chemicals for the farmer that are supposedly less volatile. We aren't trying to be a thorn in anyone's side, we even share our garlic, berries, and apples with our local neighbors / farmers. I know many of the traditional farmers are in difficult positions but this situation just seems unreasonable. Has anyone else experienced a situation like this or have any advice to offer? Jake

Lesley Run Orchard, Zone 5b/6a, West Alexandria, Ohio

[Reply Quote](#)[Mike Biltonen](#)[Re: Conventional Ag and Orchards coexisting?](#)

April 26, 2020 07:22PM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 298

Ooh, baby. This is right up my alley. First of all, there is precedence for farmers [suing farmers](#) for improper use of chemicals. Even farmers [killing one another](#) over the use of chemicals. So if there is a neighboring farmer I would gently remind him that the responsibility for safe use (including drift) lies with his/her use of any chemical. This is not an opinion, it is the law. And there are farmers/chemical companies paying dearly for the improper use of ag chemicals. I would also encourage keeping good notes, even recordings, of any conversations or communications between you two. Find a sympathetic lawyer to keep in the loop, if possible. I am sure you live in a "right to farm" community, and that includes all farmers. You are not endangering his crops, but he/hers. I would also do as much research as possible to learn what they are using, when and how. Are they soybean and corn farmers? row crops? livestock? forage? each crop carries different risks. In essence, be prepared. But I would also try to have a conversation with them about what you are doing, how and why. Don't try and convince them of anything per se, just get them to understand and see the successes you are having. Success is always a good way to convince people to change their ways. Probably try and do this first, however it seems they are already being confrontational - so remind them of their legal responsibilities and accountability. And of your rights to farm the way you see fit for you and your family. Anyway, I have seen to many conventional farmers not follow labels, apply illegal pesticides, laugh about environmental or food safety laws, not really care about how what they do affects others. There's always a time to draw a line in the sand. But you live there and I don't so that adds to the stress of "what to do," I know. Personally, I've had enough of it over the years and not afraid to call anyone out for their bullshit. Then there are things you can do with your farming activities to create more resilience on the farm, but that's another thread for another time.

[Mike Biltonen, Know Your Roots](#)

Zone 5b in New York

[Reply Quote](#)[Jake Riley](#)[Re: Conventional Ag and Orchards coexisting?](#)

April 27, 2020 01:46AM

Registered: 3 years ago

Posts: 7

Thanks Mike you've clearly been down this road and I appreciate your input. I Apologize to everyone on the forum, I really don't wanna be a "Debbie Downer." There are plenty of things to be optimistic about, the trees are beginning to bloom, the bees are buzzing, and I think the public is slowly waking up to what's been going on for far too long. The link to the Dicamba lawsuit article jogged my memory, I believe that's what this particular farmer will be spraying and maybe that's why he seemed upset / worried. He blamed us for this issue by "putting an orchard in the middle of a corn field." I thought about it for a bit and realized we would be at this same juncture had we grown anything but the specific GMO corn or beans that his spray program is for? I'm not one for conflict and would be more than happy to find some middle ground but it sure doesn't look like there is much middle ground with this stuff.

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[Karen Brindle](#)

[Re: Conventional Ag and Orchards coexisting?](#)

April 27, 2020 06:39AM

Registered: 9 years ago

Posts: 103

Oh my, you are truly on the front lines, I have no helpful comments except to express support and hope that you can be an agent of peaceful change.

[Vista Ridge Orchard](#)

Zone 8a in Washington

235 Cider and heritage apple trees, 72 varieties,

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[Jake Riley](#)

[Re: Conventional Ag and Orchards coexisting?](#)

April 28, 2020 04:25AM

Registered: 3 years ago

Posts: 7

Thanks it's good to know folks are behind you. If you're in an area free from "clean fields" and chemical drift, consider yourself very fortunate. I think maybe we were naive to think we wouldn't be at this point and we probably shouldn't be surprised. We've decided to respectfully stand our ground, hope for the best but still plan for the worst. Who knows maybe we'll even be fortunate enough to see the EPA finally ban some of this stuff, for the sake of all the specialty crop producers, and for the sake of all of the native plants and trees that don't have lawyers.

Lesley Run Orchard, Zone 5b/6a, West Alexandria, Ohio

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[Karen Brindle](#)

[Re: Conventional Ag and Orchards coexisting?](#)

April 28, 2020 05:00AM

Registered: 9 years ago

Posts: 103

Jake, we thought we were in a totally clean area. However, we are surrounded by commercial timber land and they occasionally spray from helicopters! Not something we even remotely considered when purchasing our land. They did log a huge area next to us but they left about a 1/4 mile buffer of trees standing next to our property. Enough to block drift? I guess the only way to know for sure would be to test a bunch of apple leaves for chemicals. Sigh, I do hope for the best for you!

[Vista Ridge Orchard](#)

Zone 8a in Washington

235 Cider and heritage apple trees, 72 varieties,

[Reply Quote](#)

[Jake Riley](#)

[Re: Conventional Ag and Orchards coexisting?](#)

June 04, 2020 08:49PM

Registered: 3 years ago

Posts: 7

Good news!

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