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Pro-Ag Adds New Staff Members

Pro-Ag Consulting is continuing to grow and to meet the demands for our services, we have added two new agronomists to our staff. Corey Johnson, a graduate of University of Illinois and Troy Probst, a graduate of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale are the new hires. Both men have entered a 2-3 year training program and have been assigned account responsibility.



Corey Johnson

Corey graduated from University of Illinois in May of 2014. He has a Bachelor of Science in Crop Sciences and Crop Agribusiness. Corey has a strong background in farming. He is involved with his family farm in Monee, IL.

While attending college he worked for Growmark FS in Bourbonnais, IL.

He worked as a grain handling

assistant at Heritage FS grain elevator during his summer months. In addition, he worked for Syngenta as an Independent Syngenta seed advisor.

In March of 2014 he started his own business sampling soil for area farmers. He provided soil testing and field scouting services with GPS based services.

In January of 2015, the opportunity was presented to him to join Pro-Ag Consulting and he accepted. Corey is based in Thawville, Illinois and is working with Chris Behl during his training program.



Troy Probst

Troy joined Pro-Ag Consulting in June of 2015 and is in training with Jason Boerngen. Troy and his family reside in Wheeler, IL. He is a graduate of Southern Illinois University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agribusiness Economics.

He has a very strong farming background having worked on his families farm for over twelve years. He

managed a grain elevator for six years and recently worked for Dupont Pioneer as Production Coordinator. His job required him to coordinate all aspects of seed production, from planting to harvesting. He was required to keep accurate records to insure the integrity of the seeds produced.

Troy will be working with Jason and Matt Schilling and will also assume account responsibility for his new clients.

We would like to wish Corey and Troy much success in their careers with Pro-Ag Consulting, LLC.

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Let's Talk Dirt: Soil Terms Every Farmer Should Know!

Good soils start from the ground up, but to be a good soil steward you have to understand some basic terminology.

A few important terms associated with soil:

Soil Texture describes nothing more than the size ranges of the mineral particles that make up a particular soil. Those size ranges are defined in three broad classes: clay (smaller than 0.002 mm), silt (0.002 mm to 0.05 mm) and sand (greater than 0.05). Rarely is soil that is pure sand, silt or clay, so textures usually have such names as "sandy clay" or "silty clay" to indicate the mix.

Texture is important because particle sizes reflect the sizes of the pores between them, and that influences how much air and water the soil can hold. The smallest pores actually draw water in by capillary action, then hold onto it tightly. So clay soils can stay moist through long periods without rain.

Sandy soils have large pores, too large for capillary action, so gravity easily pulls excess water down beyond the root zone. Sandy soils tend to dry out quickly. On the other hand, they are well aerated because air fills those empty pores.

The ideal soil has a little of everything, sand, silt and clay, for both good aeration and good water retention. Such a soil, with roughly equal functional contributions from clay, silt and sand is, texturally, a LOAM.

You get what you're dealt in soil texture, but fortunately texture isn't the end-all when it comes to water and aeration. A soil's mineral articles can clump together, or "aggregate", into crystal-like, larger units, which give a soil STRUCTURE.

A poorly aggregated clay soil, its small pores filled with capillary water, leaves roots gasping for air. However, when a clay soil has good structure, the small particles aggregate together to make large articles with large pores between them. At the same time, water can be held in the small pores between particles within the aggregates. A well aggregated clay soils offers roots the best of both worlds.

While it's usually impractical to change your soil's texture, there are ways to manage soil so that it has good structure. (Hint: Organic matter, see below, is the key.)

FRIABILITY and TILTH, while not meaning exactly the same thing, are closely related from a plant's point of view. A FRIABLE soil crumbles when you squeeze it gently. TILTH is the physical condition of the soil as far as plants are concerned. A soil that is friable is in good tilth. Good structure puts a soil in good tilth.

A soil that is WELL-DRAINED allows water to readily percolate through it. Drainage, as you now know, is related to both texture and structure: Sandy soils generally have little structure but, with large pores, are well-drained. Clay soils, at the other extreme, are well-drained only if they have good structure, in which case they are also in good tilth. Texture, structure and tilth aside, ground where there is a high water table cannot be well-drained; there's nowhere for water to go.

ORGANIC MATTER is the living and once-living component of the soil. The low percentage of organic matter in soils (usually only a few percent) belies its importance. Besides its positive influence on plant nutrition and health, organic matter also proves the glues that lead to aggregation, good structure and, hence, friability, good drainage and good tilth.

CULTIVATION, in farming has more than one meaning. One sense is to stir the soil, as with a chisel plow. Such cultivation kills weed seedlings and loosens the soil surface so that water more readily percolates in. Cultivation also refers to plant care generally, in the same way you cultivate a friendship. Caring for the soil (keeping it in good tilth) is one component of plant cultivation.

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To do a
Simple task
Exceedingly
well Spells
Success

Pro-Ag Co-Founder Retires

After 30+ years, I have officially retired from the day-to-day activity involvement in PRO-AG Consulting. I still retain part ownership and will be involved in owners’ meetings.

It has been a wonderful 30+ years! Not too many people have the opportunity to have a job they really enjoy doing and look forward to every day of the year. We have been blessed with wonderful employees and so many loyal clients.

I have so many of you to thank for your loyalty and support. I hesitate naming anyone for fear of offending the rest, but I feel I must express my thanks to a few who were so helpful in getting our business off the ground (no pun intended).

Darrell and Melanie Hall and Marvin Gorden of Moweaqua were one of our first customers – they offered many testimonials on our behalf. To Fred and Mary Naber of Shelbyville without their help in introducing our program to East Central Illinois, we may have never moved to Windsor. Fred’s help enabled us to start our program in Olney. And to Ray Haase who talked us into coming to Mt. Carmel so we could explain our program to his neighbors and friends allowing us to grow in that area. And to Roy and Donna Koester, Watseka, IL I thank you for starting our program in your area and especially to your son, Jim, whom was a person that really affected my life and one I will never forget.

When you grow your own company and when you retire you want to see it continue to succeed and grow. We were very fortunate in having the employees who wanted to buy the company and to see it continue to serve our many customers. We are convinced they will do just that. They are very dedicated and work very well with each other in seeing that our service to you continues in the years to come.

I plan to stay in Windsor and will be available if I am needed. My wife and I will do some traveling and I will spend some time watching my daughter show our horses.

To each of you, THANK YOU for being such loyal customers all these many years. I hope we have been able to make your farming operation more profitable and successful.



Don Hackerson

Pro-Ag Announces 2015 Scholarship Winner

The 2015 winner of the Jim Koester Memorial Scholarship is Kayla Broster of Mt. Carmel, IL. Pro-Ag Consulting, LLC awards a \$2,000 scholarship each year to a person who is graduating and planning a college education in a field related to Agriculture.



Kayla Broster

Kayla is the daughter of Kurt and Angie Broster of Mt Carmel, IL. Kayla enrolled at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. She is planning to major in Crop and Soil Science. While attending High School, Kayla was very active in her church as well as her school. She was on her school honor roll, vice president of her FFA chapter, president of her 4-H and held other offices during her school years. When asked what her goals for her business career were she replied “I want to become an Agronomist and complete my masters degree.” She further stated that she wants to learn how to manipulate genetics in seeds to help further agriculture productions. She added, “I have chosen to have a minor in Plant Biology. I want to help farmers produce the highest quality yields while manipulating the plant genetics.” Her teacher wrote “Kayla has always been kind and forthright in my dealings with her and Kayla has shown great initiative in her school work.” Another teacher wrote, “Her intelligence is an asset to any classroom as she readily grasps complex ideology and can then reinterpret that information in a simpler form, enabling her struggling peers to more readily grasp the concepts at hand.” “Kayla’s personality is a welcoming attribute to any environment she enters as she readily works well with anyone placed into her group yet demands excellence, pushing those around her to reach the peak of their potential.”

The Jim Koester memorial scholarship is awarded in memory of Jim, who lost his life in a farming accident. To date, Pro-Ag Consulting, LLC has awarded nearly \$40,000

Phosphorus

Crops need phosphorus to grow roots and phosphorus is used to transport other nutrients in the growing plant.

Phosphorus is an ion and does not move in the soil. Tests have proven that phosphorus will move less than 3 millimeters from its original placement. If you till no deeper than 8 inches, most all applied phosphorus will be in that top 8 inches. (See Illustration 1)

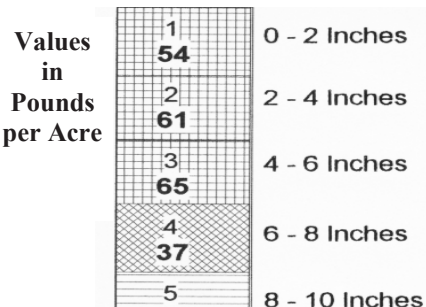
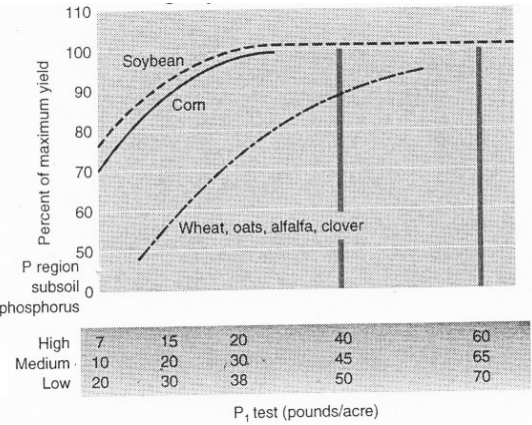


Illustration 1

It will not leech out like nitrogen or potash and because phosphorus does not leech out, soil levels do not deplete very quickly.

Soils in Illinois are very rich in total phosphorus. Most soils have 6-8000#’s of total phosphorus per acre. Most phosphorus is not water soluble nor is it available to the plant. But, each year, a quantity is made water soluble and available. When we perform our phosphorus test in the lab, we measure the water soluble phosphorus.



Relationship between expected yield and soil-test phosphorus.

Inoculants, Not Just for Soybeans

Most of us have used or are using inoculants on our soybeans, but have you ever thought about using them on other crops? With the newer technology now, there are some companies that offer inoculants for corn, wheat, and milo as well as soybeans. What is an inoculant? Most of the time it is a strain of Rhizobia bacteria to help in the nodulation of your soybeans. But this newer technology has started using different strains of bacteria along with mycorrhiza and other beneficial fungi. With these beneficial fungi, such as Trichoderma, you are able to get very good benefits on other crops, like corn, wheat, and milo. These fungi help the plant to fight off disease and insect pressures, causing you to have a healthier plant.

When choosing an inoculant, make sure that you are getting what you pay for. Check to see if they guarantee the plate counts of their bacteria and fungi. If not you may want to steer clear of those brands. Here at TEVA Corp we are representatives of the ABM Inoculants. This company guarantees the quality of their product and have great plans in case of replant problems. If you would like more information on their products contact us at www.tevacorporation.com or 573-579-7779.

How Much Phosphorus do We Need?

Tests conducted at the University of Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota over the past 50 years, shows that corn and beans reach full yields if phosphorus levels are between 25 & 30 lbs. per acre. Wheat will reach full yields if phosphorus levels are about 50 lbs/acre, as illustrated below.

Phosphate is probably the most misapplied fertilizer. Over 75% of the soils we test for the first time are excessively high in phosphorus. When buying fertilizer to get an economic return, applying phosphate when it will not increase yields, is a very poor investment.

Calculating Phosphate Fertilizer to Soil Test Results:

Phosphate Fertilizer is expressed in P₂O₅ form analysis. Soil Test Results are expressed in P₁ form analysis.

To convert values of P₂O₅ to P₁, it generally takes 9lbs. of P₂O₅ to raise the soil test of P₁ one pound. Fertilizer containing 46 units or pounds of P₂O₅ (18-46-0) will usually raise the soil test 5lbs.

Jim Koester Scholarship

Each year Pro-Ag Consulting gives a \$2000 scholarship to a College bound senior who plans to enroll in an agricultural field. The applicant should be a close relative of one our clients.

The application may be obtained by calling our Windsor Office at 1-800-879-2297 or by contacting your Pro-Ag Regional Manager.

Jim Koester was a young farmer from Watseka, IL who lost life in a very unfortunate accident while welding on his farm.

