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PEOPLE ON THE MOVE...

Dustin Parker, former soil tech for Pro-Ag has been promoted to assistant regional manager and has taken over the accounts of Gary Frye, who is retiring at the end of this year.

Landon Haywood has been hired as a soil tech to replace Dustin Parker. Landon resides in Windsor and started to work in September of 2015.

Bonnie Baumgarten has been promoted to our mapping department. This talented lady joined Pro-Ag three years ago and worked in our lab running one of our analyzing machines.

Rachel Reed was hired last summer to learn Bonnie's job and replace her in the lab. Rachel originally is from Stewardson, IL., but currently lives next door to our office.

CHRIS BEHL CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

Chris started with Pro-Ag walking bean fields taking samples in 1988. As Pro-Ag grew, his responsibilities also grew. Chris soon became crew leader of the soil techs. His duties took him to all parts of Illinois and Indiana. In 1994, upon graduation from Eastern Illinois university, he was promoted to regional sales manager for Northern Illinois. Chris has played a very important role in developing the use of GPS technology we are using today.
Congratulations Chris!

Newsletter
Spring 2017

Pro-Ag Update

Pro-Ag Consulting, LLC

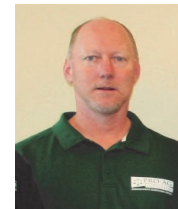
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Meet the Owners

Five current employees have completed buying Pro-Ag Consulting, LLC from Don and Carolyn Hackerson – Founders of Pro-Ag Consulting, LLC. These five individuals have a combined 107 years of service with Pro-Ag Consulting, LLC. As of March 1, 2017, these individuals now own 90%. Don has kept 10% interest.

Chuck Campbell (13 Years)



Chuck is starting his 13th year with Pro-Ag Consulting, LLC. He is the managing member of Pro-Ag. Chuck, his wife Tammi and three children, Zachary, Haley and Taylor live in Neoga, Illinois. Chuck has a degree in Accounting from Eastern Illinois University and is involved in farming with his father.

(30 Years) Chris Behl

Chris started working part-time for Pro-Ag Consulting, LLC during the summer of 1988. Upon graduating from Eastern Illinois in 1994, Chris became a full-time Manager and was assigned to our Northern Illinois Territory. Chris and his wife Kim, and children Zackary and Reagan live in Bloomington, Illinois.



Jason Boerngen (21 Years)



Jason, his wife Jennifer and children Katlyn, Justin and Allison reside in Montrose, Illinois. Jason started with Pro-Ag Consulting, LLC working in the summer of 1997 while in college and upon graduation, came to work as a full-time Manager. Jason works Southeast Illinois and Western Indiana. He is also involved in farming with his father.

(23 years) Ted Huber

Ted and his wife Donna reside in Oakland, Illinois. Their son Cole is a history teacher and coach living with his wife in Paris, IL. Their daughter, Kara is currently a classical pianist and lives in Toronto, Canada. Ted joined Pro-Ag Consulting, LLC in the fall of 1995. His area of responsibility is in Central Illinois and Western Indiana. Ted graduated from Southern Illinois University and has an extensive background in extension work and fertilizer sales.



Matt Schilling (20 Years)



Matt joined Pro-Ag Consulting, LLC part-time in the summer of 1998 while attending Southern Illinois University. When he graduated in December of 1999, Matt joined Pro-Ag Consulting, LLC full-time as Manager for Southern Illinois and Southern Missouri. Matt also farms with his father Larry. Matt, his wife Marva, and children, Austin, Sydney and Luke live near McLeansboro, Illinois.

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To do a
Simple task
Exceedingly
well Spells
Success

PRO-AG CONSULTING, LLC STARTING OUR 38TH YEAR

One Christmas morning while visiting their parents two brothers, Don and John, were discussing Agriculture and one brother brought up the idea of starting a new business. He had a soil sampling idea that had never been done before. He called it Grid Sampling in 3.3 acre grids.

The first customer was Bernard Conrady with 1,000 Acres committed. From that beginning in Beardstown, IL Pro-Ag has grown to a Multimillion Dollar Corporation serving customers in 6 states and over 2,500 clients. This continued operation could not be possible without a dedicated group of employees and a very loyal customer base. And to you, our customers, we are indeed thankful for your support.

LARGE ENOUGH TO SERVE, Small Enough to Care

BALANCING SOIL FERTILITY

When we first started the PRO-AG crop management program 38 years ago, we did so by talking about balancing soil fertility and having a one to eight ratio of Phosphate to Potassium.

When asked to explain the 1-8 ratio, we simply referred to the University of Illinois Agronomy handbook, first published in 1955 while I was a student and it gave us that information. No, you could not find a section that said have your soil in a one to eight ratio, but if you looked at the fertility response charts, they told you that you would get maximum response for corn and beans by having your soil test levels at 35-50#/Acre for phosphorus and 275-375#/Acre for potassium. If you divide the phosphorus level into the potassium level you will see that it goes 8 times. Thus, we called it the one to eight ratio.

Is it still true today? Most certainly! Year after year, the best yields we see are from fields that start the crop year with a balance of phosphorus to potassium. Correct balance of fertility is as important to corn and beans as correct nutrition is to feeding livestock. Balanced nutrition fights off disease and helps offset the effects of inclement weather including rain-fall.

START WITH A GOOD SOIL TEST

To know your nutrition levels in your field, a good soil test is a way to start. This becomes your beginning inventory. If your inventory is adequate or a little bit high, you will not get an economic return by applying more phosphorus. In fact, we have seen many fields actually suffer yield decreases during stressful growing seasons because excessive application of phosphorus actually tied-up needed nutrient like zinc.

SOME FIELDS ARE NATURALLY SHORT ON POTASH

Many fields in Illinois cannot release or hold adequate levels of potassium. The silt-loam soils have very low potassium holding capabilities; therefore extra potash has to be applied almost annually to maintain test weight in grain and to give the plant health to protect itself from disease such as stalk rot.

In 1994 when stalk rot was so rampant in Iowa, Iowa State University surveyed hundreds of fields and found stalk rot was almost non-existent in corn fields where potassium levels exceeded 400#/Acre.

We are sampling a few fields that have been in CRP for the last 10-13 years. We have said if soils are left undisturbed and left to release nutrients by weathering the minerals and making them water soluble, we will find most Illinois soils will have a 1 to 8 ratio of phosphorus to potassium. What happens when we plant that old pasture or CRP ground to crops? It usually is one of our better producing fields! This fall we had six fields that we tested where had been in CRP at least 10 years and the average phosphate was 40#/Acre and the potassium was 333#/Acre.

About 8 of 10 garden samples we receive, we are told the garden doesn't grow much anymore. They usually admit to spreading a little extra fertilizer so they can have a good garden. The results are always the same. Too Much, Too Much! Phosphorus and potash are at such high levels that they are out of balance and toxic to the growing plants

SUMMARY

It does not take a lot of phosphorus and potassium to raise a bumper crop. However, they must be in the correct proportions. Applying nutrients only when our soil tests shows we need it and can get an economic return from our investment is the wisest decision to make. It is not only wise by providing better growing conditions for our crops, but it also improves your net profit and this is what we are striving to improve.

CAN THE TIME OF YEAR EFFECT MY SOIL TEST RESULTS?

We are often asked "when is the best time of the year to take my soil samples?" There is no "Best" answer to that question. Our usual response is "The same time of the crop year each year you sample."

Available nutrients in the soil vary from month to month. As the crops grow, they take up nutrients to grow and produce grain. While the nutrients are in the plant, the level in soil is reduced. As the grain is harvested, some of the nutrients have already made their way back into the soil. The remaining

stover holds a lot of unused nutrients and when returned to the soil and decomposition take place, those nutrients are put back into the soil lattices and become available to next years crop as well as on our soil tests.

SOIL TESTING PROGRAM

Soil testing is based on taking an inventory of what nutrients are available in the SOIL, it is very important that we take the samples pretty close to the same time each year. If we were to one year sample in April and then come back and sample in August, we would see much different results.

When using our inventory method of soil sampling, we suggest you pick the time of year that best suits your needs and operation. Many of you prefer summer sampling in the warm summer months. The soil is warm and soil nutrients are readily available. When we do our tests, they represent what

nutrients are there for the growing crop. Summer sampling also allows growers time to purchase plant food that is to be spread for next years crop. Very helpful for those who want to spread fertilizer in the fall.

UNIVERSITY TESTS

In (figure 1) many soil tests have been conducted to measure nutrient availability each month of the year. As you can see, phosphorus varies very little during the crop year. Phosphorus does not leech and it will not move in the soil except during erosion of the top 2-3 inches of soil. Plants use phosphorus but immediately return most of it to the soil.

POTASSIUM IS DIFFERENT

Plants use it as a cleaner to the transport system and retain a lot of it in the plant. A corn field yielding about 150bu after harvest will retain about 115#'s of nitrogen, 10#'s of Phosphorus and 155#'s of Potassium. If soil samples are taken right after harvest, the potassium in the plant will not show up in the soil test in November, but once the stalks are decomposed, the potassium will be available to the next years crop and also show up in the soil test.

Potassium results on our soil test could be 100-150#'s lower right after harvest but would return to higher levels in the spring.

NITROGEN & SULFUR

Other elements that fluctuate during the growing season are nitrogen and sulfur. Nitrogen in the soil is lower in August and September because of plant uptake and the water table is lower in the dry months of August and September. Nitrogen moves up and down in the soil with the changes in the water table.

More attention is being placed on Sulfur. Sulfate (SO_4) moves in the soil with much the same characteristics as nitrogen. What you get on a soil test one day, may not be the same as you may get next week? Sulfate form of Sulfur is subject to leaching just like nitrogen.

SUMMARY

Having a good soil testing program in your operation is very helpful to your economic success. But for any soil testing program to be effective, it must be well planned and consistent timing of when the samples are taken. If you have any questions concerning our soil testing program, contact your representative or contact our Windsor office at 1-800-879-2297

