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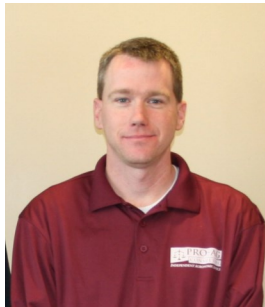
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Jason Boerngen Celebrates 21 Years with Pro-Ag Consulting



Jason is starting his 21st year as a full time employee and in 2004 he became co-owner with 4 other employees.

During the summer of 1995 and right after he completed his Associate Degree at Lakeland College, Jason was offered summertime employment taking samples and working out of the Windsor office. That fall, he enrolled at Southern Illinois University and after completing his junior year, he came back to Pro-Ag working in the fields. That summer he completed an interim course in-

volving mapping, sampling and deep profiling samples for pH, P and K for college credit.

His work and work ethics were so outstanding that Pro-Ag owner, Don Hackerson, offered him a permanent position for when he finished his senior year. Much to delight, in January Jason accepted the offer and started working for Pro-Ag Consulting in May, 1997.

Jason's duties, beside his Co-Owner responsibilities, include servicing south eastern Illinois and south western Indiana as Regional Manager. He also services clients south of Bowling Green, KY and parts of Tennessee. Jason also farms on his own and with his father, Richard.

Jason and his wife, Jennifer and their 3 children - Kaitlyn, Alison, and Justin - reside near Montrose, IL.

In Memory

On June 26th, 2017 all of us at Pro-Ag Consulting lost one of our long time employees and friend, James (Jim) Molock age 70. He passed away at his home in Neoga, IL of cardiac arrest.

Jim retired from Pro-Ag in 2014 after serving 24 years in helping to grow Pro-Ag to be what it is today. Jim and his wife Gail were Pro-Ag's first full time employees. Jim started walking fields pulling samples in all parts of Illinois and Indiana, taking care of the equipment, training all summer part time help and was also responsible for the implementation of ATV's in the field. Gail was hired to manage and run the lab which she did for 22 years. In walking the fields, Jim became acquainted with many of Pro-Ag's clients from Mt. Carmel to Moline and they knew him for his dedication to "getting the job done," and doing so with a bit of humor and a smile.

Jim is survived by his wife and two sons and he will be sorely missed by all!



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Simple task
Exceedingly
well Spells
Success

Soil Calcium To Magnesium Ratios – Should You Be Concerned?

If you have been a customer of Pro-Ag Consulting for any length of time, you have heard us talk about the Phosphorus to Potash ratio as being ideal if the ratio is 1 to 5 to 1 to 8. Meaning if your soil test for Phosphorus is 40#'s then we like to have the Potash in the 200-320# per acre range depending on your soil type.

Why? We have found that research has proven we obtain maximum yields from Phosphorus at 35-40#'s and yields from Potash max out around 300#'s.

Recently articles have been written about having the ideal Calcium to Magnesium ratios. Some people are selling products to help you obtain that ideal ratio of Ca:Mg ratio.

While some sales people and scientists have claimed that there is an 'ideal' soil Calcium to Magnesium ratio (Ca:Mg) and that our soils contain too much Magnesium for the amount of Calcium present, research shows this is not true. The Ca:Mg ratio seldom limits plant growth if soil pH is maintained in the good growing range. Thus we do not recommend applying Calcium materials to soils simply to increase the Ca:Mg ratios.

What is a Ca:Mg Ratio?

The Calcium to Magnesium ratio is merely a statement of the relative proportions of available Calcium and Magnesium in the soil. It is measured in pounds per acre like we do when we state Phosphorus/Potash ratio.

For example, one soil may have exchangeable Calcium and Magnesium levels of 200 and 40#/acre respectively while another soil may have 2000 and 400#/acre of exchangeable Calcium and Magnesium. Both have identical ratios. Both nutrients would be marginally low in the soil in the first soil test and in the second soil test they would present adequate amounts.

STARTER FERTILIZER - ARE YOU USING IT??

Starter fertilizer came into the Midwest corn fields right after World War II. Farmers were looking for ways to boost corn yield. The first starter analysis I remember was 2-6-6. It was made from tobacco refuse and I believe the yield increases came from the nicotine killing the insects rather than the nutrient P & K.

Advances in manufacturing of fertilizer increased the nutrient contents and soon we were seeing analysis such as 5-20-20, 10-20-10, 7-28-14. Corn responded with increased yields and many planters had fertilizer attachments on them.

But fertilizer came in 80# bags. Lifting them all day filling the fertilizer boxes was very tiring. Then the bulk spreaders came about. Bags were gone and in most cases the fertilizer boxes were gone as well.

Now in recent years with the development of liquid plant food, starter fertilizer is becoming a bigger force in our farming operations.

Minnesota and Iowa leads all other states in the application of starter fertilizer. Some estimates say starter fertilizer in those states was used on over 75% of the field planted. Yield increases of 10-15 bushel per acre are very common. Usage in Illinois is increasing each year.

Why Is Starter Gaining In Popularity?

The answer is mainly increased yields. The first 45 days after planting is so critical to the plant. During that time, the ear is determined, the length of the ear, the number of rows, the number of kernels. If stress on the young corn plants reduces any of the above, then the yield could be reduced dramatically. On the other hand, if all the nutrients are there to reduce the threat of stress, the yield could be greatly increased.

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The Ca:Mg “Concept”

The idea that a proper Ca:Mg balance is necessary for good plant growth was first conceived in New Jersey in 1901. They recommended a Ca:Mg ratio of about 5:4. At that time they were using total element analysis and later found that was not the best way to measure nutrients.

Over the years, testing was developed to measure “exchangeable” Calcium and Magnesium. This test gave results of what was actually available to the plant. That is the test we use at Pro-Ag Consulting today. Exchangeable Ca:Mg is attracted to negatively charge the clay colloids and organic matter in the soil. Same is true for Potassium (K). The ideal percentage that each element holds to clay colloids and organic matter ranges from 55-75% for Calcium, 8-12% for Magnesium, 2.5-4% for Potassium and 2-10% for Hydrogen. Your soil test results show these at the bottom of your test results page.

Recently completed study in Wisconsin varied the Ca:Mg ratio by using Gypsum (CaSO₄) and/or Epsom salts (MgSO₄) on two different soil types. Soil pH on both soils was 6.8.

The Ca:Mg ratio was varied from slightly above 2 to over 8. The yields did not significantly change on either soil. Adding Ca and Mg to the soil did change the percent of saturation of the exchange sites from anywhere between 32 to 68% for Calcium and the Magnesium saturation from 35% to 12%.

Summary

Thus, if adequate levels of Calcium and Magnesium are present in the soil, variations in the Ca:Mg ratio between 2 to 1 and 8 to 1 have no effect on yield and varying the Calcium saturation percentage from 32%-68% and the Magnesium from 35%-12% also do not affect the yields for Midwestern crops.

Buying products to change this ratio on our soils to increase yields just has not been proven.

How Can Starter Reduce Stress?

Soil Phosphate – on a cold spring day it is not very fluid. For Phosphate to enter the plant it goes through the root walls. This process is called osmosis. Picture if you will, pouring cold oil on top of a cloth strainer. It takes a while for it to seep through. Now take warm oil which goes through much faster.

Food grade Phosphate in starter fertilizer is like warm oil going through cloth. The starter enters the root system much faster, promotes rapid root development and most often eliminates early purple corn and takes much of the stress away.

Field Tests have proven 8-15 Bushel Yield Increase

Starter fertilizer is an excellent way to apply secondary and micro nutrients. Such elements as Zinc and Iron are often added to the starter.

We have seen yields increase 8-12 bushels fairly consistently. In some cases where Zinc is needed the increase is as much as 12-20 bushel. And if you are into adding a package of micros for corn, it is so much more efficient to put them into the row vs. broadcast.

Summary

If trends continue as they are, Illinois farmers will be using starter fertilizer on nearly 60% of all corn acres planted by 2020. If you are not using starter, should you? If you have questions on starter, talk with your Pro-Ag representative, he can help you.

38 YEARS TOGETHER – CONRADY FARMS,

BACKWOODS BERRY FARM AND PRO-AG CONSULTING

In the fall of 1979, John Hackerson was working for DeKalb Seed Corn Company and was doing a seed corn plot day at the Conrady Farms plot. He talked about plant health and the need to have a healthy soil. A healthy soil as John would say is having enough Potash to keep the Phosphate and Potash in a ratio of 1 to 5 through 1 to 8 ratio.

At that meeting, Bernard Conrady along with his brother Frank, suggested to John he should start his own company and provide soil testing and consulting services. John replied “Where would I get my customers?” Bernard replied, “I’ll give you 1000 acres to test for me.”



Dale & Becky with Gary and Dustin

The farm operation includes approximately 1400 acres of corn, soybeans and wheat plus a farrow to finish of 150 head of sows and 100+ head of cattle. And to diversify their operation, they sell straw to nurseries and supermarkets.

Another son, Dale, and his wife Becky in 1995 decided to diversify their operation and decided to start the Backwoods Berry Farm. More land was hard to come by and cash rent was too high so they made the decision to start raising berries in addition to the corn, soybeans and wheat.

So to make sure the soil nutrients were correct, soil tests were performed on the areas set aside for their new operation. Today their operation includes blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, peaches, plums, pumpkins, asparagus and others.

They have their own retail store and cold storage unit to hold the fruit fresh. Irrigation is pulled from a 10 acre pond.

This year was the year to test the orchard and Dustin Parker did so and is seen in the picture discussing the results with Dale and his wife Becky.

We at Pro-Ag Consulting are very proud of our long lasting relationship with Conrady Farms and Backwoods

Berry Farm. We want to thank them for all their business in the past and we certainly look forward to working with them in the future.



With that, John went home and made the decision to start Professional Agricultural Services with the 1000 acres he had received from Conrady Farms. Conrady Farms have continued to work with Professional Agricultural Services now called Pro-Ag Consulting LLC for 38 years. John worked with Bernard & Frank Conrady doing their soil testing making fertilizer and even some hybrid recommendations.

When John retired, Gary Frye continued to work with Conrady Farms. Now this year, Gary is retiring and Pro-Ag’s Dustin Parker has assumed handling their account.

Conrady Farms has Frank Conrady and sons, Doug and Dave, managing their operation.



SCHOLARSHIP WINNER ANNOUNCED

Pro-Ag Consulting announced that Drew McLane of Jonesboro, IL is the 2017 winner of the Jim Koester Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded annually by Pro-Ag Consulting to a college bound senior whose family are clients of Pro-Ag Consulting.

This young lady is an outstanding example of our youth of today. Drew graduated first in her class of 27 with a perfect 4.0 grade point average and completed all of the work necessary for graduation in three and a half years. Her proud parents are Mitch and Amy McLane of Wolf Lake Rd in Jonesboro, IL. Drew plans to major in Ag Business to learn the business side of farming. She eventually plans to return to the family farm and hope to someday manage the farm.



While attending Shawnee High School, she was awarded Illinois State Scholar, Anna Jonesboro Rotary Club student of the month, Shawnee High School student of the quarter & high honor roll ever quarter of high school. Drew was also selected All Conference in basketball & softball. Her activities also included a lot of FFA. She was Greenhand president, participated in Agronomy, food services, land use, tractor driving, Ag mechanics & others.

Some of her civic duties including fund raising for the future Veterans Wall at her school and when you live close to the river, you sand bag the levee.

As a girl growing up on a farm she has had an opportunity to be involved in all aspects of the farm from planting to harvesting, and, she hopes to someday return to the farm. David Gould of Anna Jonesboro Bank said, “In my many years of hiring young high school and college graduates at the Anna Jonesboro National Bank, I would love to have had the chance for her to work for me. We are very careful in whom we hire and she meets all the qualities that I would expect in an employee. She is outgoing, polite and has a quality that is difficult for us to find today, common sense.”

Her Social Science teacher & coach, Jamie Nash-Mayberry said, I have come to know Drew really well over the past eight years, and have seen how dedicated she is to helping her community. “She has helped with a number of service projects for Beta Club, and in addition, has become a leader for our Save the Levees, Save the Future ongoing project. With this project, she has given presentations to large audiences, written letters to politicians, attending hearings after school on levee related issues, helped with fundraising efforts, sandbagged during times of floods, and the list goes on.” “She has also helped with improving the school by serving multiple years on our Student Government League. With this program, she helped bring back the saying of the Pledge of Allegiance in our school and every day we say it in honor of a veteran.”

Best wished from all of us at Pro-Ag Consulting and we hope to have you back as a client someday.