



Facility Update

Summer 2018 is flying by and it has definitely been a busy one as we maintain scouting and spray programs and complete topdressing. The Holmes Agro crew have also been busy updating and making important facility changes to continue to serve you well. The updates include:

Stayner – A new 300 tonne tower is being installed. Footings have been placed and the arrival and installation of the tower will start mid-August. This site will also gain a new fertilizer storage facility, to increase capacity, and construction of this building is anticipated to begin early in September.

Orangeville – The facility in Orangeville sustained significant wind damage on May 4th that put our fertilizer tower completely out of operation. Due to the extent of the damage, we will be constructing a new tower. We are currently using an on-ground blender to satisfy our needs for the remainder of the year. Delivery and installation of the new tower will begin late fall.

These new fertilizer towers will take us to a new level of speed while maintaining a high level of accuracy and quality. The speed of our previous towers was 60 tonne per hour and the new systems will approach over 220 tonnes per hour.

We are making every effort to continue business-as-usual throughout the site developments and we thank you for your ongoing support!



Soil Sampling

It's time to forecast your soil sampling needs for this fall and create an action plan to get them done. Knowing your soil fertility status will provide meaningful data for a proactive approach to fertilizer management. Regardless of commodity values past, present or future, knowledge of soil nutrient inventory is a benchmark starting point for crop production planning.

Some key areas of soil tests that can impact your bottom line include:

1. Managing soil pH and optimizing nutrient uptake by variable rate liming
2. Soil organic matter and noticing the importance of cover crops
3. Balancing soil nutrient levels for improved yield through using base saturation levels and CEC.
4. Monitoring secondary elements such as Sulfur and Magnesium for improving Nitrogen and Phosphorus uptake
5. Assisting in making better decisions regarding the right time, right placement, right product and the right application of nutrients to grow the best product.



Thousands of dollars are spent every year on fertilizer and limestone in our area. The cost of soil testing is relatively inexpensive in comparison in the cost of the fertilizer. Holmes Agro offers a variety of soil sampling services including bulk, grid, zone or site-specific sampling and can follow up with prescriptions to custom fit your field requirements. Larger fields with more variability should be sampled more strategically, which is where zone and grid sampling can be best utilized. These grids and zones can help identify changes in pH, fertility and soil type. These maps can then be used in combination with yield data, NDVI images, drone images, and grower experience. These tools can then be used to create plans for variable rate lime, fertilizer and even seeding rates. Please make time to sit down with your agronomist to create a soil testing strategy to meet your cropping expectations.

Wheat Straw

Wheat straw, like all crop residue contains some essential plant nutrients. If these nutrients are baled and removed from your field, then they most certainly need to be replaced to replenish your soil fertility bank account. Although you may receive short term economic gain from the sale of straw, failing to replace these essential nutrients (mostly P, K and S) will only equal long-term productivity losses. Soil sampling this fall after wheat harvest will help provide a current appreciation of your nutrient levels in your soil and will help outline a system to replace as required and insure that fertility isn't the limiting factor to capitalizing on yield opportunities in the future. Contact Holmes Agro rep for some "straw talk" and get a plan in place for soil sampling and fertilizer applications this fall.

Using a Cover Crop to Increase Your Farms Health

There are many opportunities to include cover crops in your rotation. The goal is to keep the soil covered with at least 30% crop, cover crop or residue, 100% of the time. A second goal is to have living roots in the soil as much as possible. Cover crops increase the amount of organic material and microbial activity (worms, etc) in soil. That increases the nutrient holding capacity and the rate of water infiltration which reduces runoff and compaction of saturated soils. Cover crops simply reduce the stress on crops caused by extreme weather conditions. Many think that volunteer cereal growth is good enough, but a planted cover crop can provide up to five times the above ground biomass and root growth. It can also suppress weed growth, which volunteer cereal growth cannot do.



When and How to Plant Cover Crops

Following cereals, or any other crop, plant the cover crop as soon as possible to achieve the most growth. Another great opportunity to plant cover crops is following corn silage harvest, as there is little cover left to protect the soil. Annual cover crops can be planted up until six weeks before a killing frost is expected. After that point a winter cereal is the best option. Cover crops can be applied using a drill or by broadcast and incorporated Nitrogen and Cover Crop Growth. The spring cereals and the brassicas require nitrogen to grow just like the corn and cereals we grow for grain. If manure has been applied, then there will likely be enough nitrogen for good cover crop growth. If the cover crop is following a winter wheat crop, then there may be very little growth without adding 30 to 50 lbs/acre of nitrogen. This application timing efficiently allows you to add in your potassium and magnesium for the following crop or to help build low soil levels.

A few cover crop options you may consider for your farm after your wheat is harvested:

Fall Rye- Should be used from August into September. Fall Rye will germinate at lower soil temperatures, and it maintains more aggressive growth as temperatures drop. Fall Rye will overwinter, and a late burndown application will be required. Fall Rye has 5 Times the potential root mass of Oats!

Oats- Basic ground cover after winter wheat to capture residual N and sunlight. Will not over winter.

Adding Crimson Clover to Rye or Oats- Lowers C:N ratio and adds a nitrogen credit to succeeding crops.

Adding Tillage Radish to Oats or Rye- can help break up compacted areas with its large tap root.

Cover crops are not a magic solution for your soil problems, but when combined with other good soil management practices they can help improve soil health!

Social Media

Holmes Agro is pleased to announce the continuation of our social media contests for the 2018 growing and harvest seasons! If you enjoy taking photos, and enjoy free swag, this is just the thing for you. We want to see your farming photos throughout 2018! Upload them to social media (Twitter & Facebook) and tag **@HolmesAgro** with **#WatchitGrow18**. We also

want to see pictures of how Holmes Agro's lawn and garden products are helping you achieve that happy and healthy landscape! At the end of the year we will randomly pick the contest winners, and they will win a Holmes Agro prize pack! Be sure to check out Holmes Agro's website for updates as well!



CLEANFarms 2018



Welcome back to the jug and seed bag collection program! Holmes Agro is proud to participate in the CleanFarms program as a depot to accept your empty pesticide jugs and seed bags. Just a few guidelines to remember:

Seed/chemical bags – all types of **EMPTY pesticide bags as well as paper multi-wall and plastic seed bags** can be returned in the clear green plastic bags we have available at our locations.

Seed bulk bags can be returned neatly bundled into **rolls of 6**.

Chemical jugs – **only clean, triple-rinsed jugs with caps and booklets removed** will be accepted for recycling

Triple rinsing

1. Drain container into tank 30 seconds
2. Fill container with clean water (1/4 or 1/5 full)
3. Shake, swirl vigorously
4. Drain into spray tank 30 seconds
5. Repeat procedure two more times
6. Puncture bottom

Calendar 2019

It's never too early to start sending in pictures for the 2019 calendar. We are proud to be able to provide a calendar full of grower pictures year after year – all thanks to your great submissions! Please email your photos to nicole@holmesagro.com

Upcoming Events

August 6th – Civic Holiday, Office Closed

August 14th-16th – Canadian Beef Industry Conference, London Convention Centre

August 16th – Stayner Expo Day

August 23rd – Orangeville Expo Day

September 3rd – Labor Day, Office Closed

September 10th – Dufferin Cattlemen's Association Body Condition/Scoring/Cow Nutrition Clinic

September 11th-13th – Canada's Outdoor Farm Show

September 18th-22nd – International Plowing Match & Rural Expo, Pain Court, Chatham-Kent

September 29th – Dufferin Farm Tour

***** **Please email micheller@holmesagro.com to sign up for our e-newsletter** *****

