

Digital Farming – Becoming Increasingly Essential

Differences in farm operations can be vast and diverse and so we may each hold a different view of digital farming and the value it is able to provide to our business. “Digital farming is applying precision location methods and decision quality agronomic information to illuminate, predict, and affect the continuum of cultivation issues across the farm” from Michael R Collins of precisionag.com. From improving planting records to VRT topdressing fertilizer to harvest data collection or feed efficiency information in livestock production, digital farming has been driven by the agricultural evolution to continue to build a more efficient production model. The market for digital products from variable rate mapping systems to cloud based data analytics is attracting a lot of product developers as farmers are eager to embrace technologies that can increase yields and boost profitability. Regardless of your current mindset about this digital management era, recent experiences have helped us feel confident that we will survive and potentially thrive within this fast advancing Ag playground. The following are just a few;

1. Digital farming is an offering of support tools relevant to your farm; such as our Holmes Agro MyFarm record keeping system.
2. Digital farming is an effective use of data as a resource; such as processing and layering multiple years of yield information from combine monitors to help understand variables and make VRT prescription fertilizer application maps. We are anxious to help you with this process.
3. Digital farming is NDVI drone or imagery maps throughout the growing season to identify target areas to field scout and help understand issues and make management zones and address action plans. Several platforms exist, so let us get some of your acres on the list for spring.

There may not be one solution for every operation, but having the ability to recall information and understand trends regardless of how simple can help build better decisions as we grow from one season to the next.

Chemical Mergers Part II

Last month we outlined some of the changes happening with the acquisition of Monsanto by Bayer Crop Science. The other big shake up in the industry is the somewhat newly formed Corteva, which is the name of the newly merged DowDupont group which also contains the newly named Brevant seed business as well as Pioneer seeds. Corteva is the crop protection side of the business, while the seed side will continue to operate under the Brevant and Pioneer flags. In order for the crop protection businesses to merge, certain product lines were sold off to another company called FMC. These products include the cereal herbicides Barricade M, Refine M, and Refine SG, as well as some other products like Pinnacle SG, and Coragen. These changes all happened prior to the 2018 growing season, and remain in effect going forward. Yet to be seen is how the “genetics pool” gets divided up between the two seed brands and how much overlap there will be. No different than Bayer cited after acquiring Monsanto, the main argument for these companies consolidating is the more efficient utilization of R&D dollars to deliver new and innovative products to the market given the costs of not only developing the products but also pushing them through regulatory approval across the globe. Only time will tell how successful they are in achieving this goal.

Orangeville Fertilizer Tower Update

Progress on the construction of the new fertilizer blending tower remains on schedule. As of December 21st, scale hoppers, mixer and surge hopper are in place, as is the bottom half of both legs. In the first week of the January we anticipate installation of 18 tower bins and completion of the elevator legs. Electrical and automation will follow, as well as closing in the tower and installing spouting. We anticipate that we will be able to blend and bag fertilizer sometime in February. We appreciate the efforts of our contractors to keep us on schedule and look forward to operating it next spring. Follow us on twitter (@HolmesAgro) for up to date pictures!

Did You Know?

All of the Ontario crop trials are now out. You can go to each of the OMAFRA crop websites for the updated trial information. We now have all of the links and trial data available on our website as well! On our website, click the agronomy tab and you will see a page called ‘Agronomy links’. Click that page to see the results for yourself! <https://www.holmesagro.com/links2>

4R Nutrient Stewardship – 4 Part Series

1st R: The Right Source

When it comes to picking the right nutrient source, there are many factors to look at and many options to choose from. Soil pH should be maintained around 6.8, if it is below this level, liming is the first option that should be looked at. If liming needs to be completed, there are products that will increase soil pH, while some products will supply nutrients, such as magnesium, and potassium in addition to increasing soil pH. If a farm has manure, this will provide an organic source of nutrients that is a natural slow release throughout the season. After any liming or other soil amendments have been applied, it is time to look at fertilizer sources. Do we want the nutrients to be plant available right away, or is it better to have a slow release product? With nitrogen, it could be beneficial to add inhibitors, to slow the breakdown and conversion of nitrogen to prevent loss to volatilization or leaching. Depending on the crop to be grown and rate requirements a product with a lower salt index could be used for crop safety? In recent years, there have been new homogenous products coming to market, such as AMIDAS, that contains nitrogen and sulphur, and Aspire, that contains potassium and boron. With homogenous products, or products such as ProCote that applies micro nutrients to any fertilizer blend, this leads to a better and more even distribution of nutrients, which equates to a higher nutrient use efficiency (NUE).

Dufferin Cattlemen's Association

The Annual Meeting of the Dufferin Cattlemen's Association will be held on Tuesday, January 15, 2019 at the Amaranth Township Hall, Laurel at 7:00 pm. Dr. Rex Crawford will speak on the new drug protocol and there will be a Producer Panel. All livestock producers welcome. For more information call 705-241-5813.

Grower Pesticide Numbers



If we do not have a current number on file for you, we will be contacting you this winter to have that updated. Please make sure we have your current number and expiry date on file or we will not be able to ship chemical to you next season until it has been updated. Contact one of the locations to update your file.

Upcoming course dates are: February 26th in Sunnidale and March 28th & April 6th in Orangeville

Please call Ridgetown 1-800-652-8573 or email rcopez@uoquelp.ca to register.

Holmes Agro Credit Policy

Our credit terms are net 20th day of the following month for eligible charge accounts, as per our credit application and agreement. On-Line payments are available at the following financial institutions: RBC Royal Bank, TD Canada Trust, CIBC, Scotiabank, Bank of Montreal, Meridian Credit Union and New! National Bank.

Third Party Loan Due Dates:

- All eligible crop input purchases between Sep 01 /17 and Aug 31 /18 have a repay date by Feb 22, 2019 for Scotiabank Yield More financing, and March 15, 2019 for FCC Crop Input financing.
- There is no penalty if you pay early, and funds become available once again.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Upcoming Events

January 11th – Orangeville Grower Meeting

January 16th – Scotia Farm Legacy Forum: A succession plan that works for you; Nifty Nook Restaurant, Mono; 9AM

January 18th – Crop Smart, Waterloo

January 19th – Farm Smart, Guelph

January 31st – Flamborough Grower Meeting

February 13th – Dufferin Feed & Seed Day

February 20-21st – Innovative Farmers Conference, London

February 21st – Stayner Grower Meeting

February 26th – Grower Pesticide Course, Sunnidale Corners

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