



A Smarter Approach to Collecting Soil Data

As wheat harvest enters full swing now, with some areas being nearly complete, it's time to think about fertility strategies for 2022 and appropriating fertility investment dollars this fall to set your ground up for the best chance of success for the following year. With both elevated commodity and fertilizer prices, we need to ensure that we are investing fertilizer dollars in the right places in order to achieve the maximum return on investment. Making these decisions requires gathering, interpreting and analyzing of soil data in the form of a standard soil sample. Soil sampling is never a "sexy" topic but nevertheless a cornerstone of successful and profitable crop production. With the abundance and often overwhelming availability of yield maps, satellite imagery, topography and soil type maps, there is ample opportunity to build a smarter approach to soil testing. Gone should be the days of arbitrarily splitting farms in half or quarters to create zones, as this type of approach takes no account of how the farm performs in different areas based on soil type, topography, fertility and/or cropping history. If you are collecting yield data then use it, otherwise look at imagery or other data available to help better create sampling/management zones. Make sure to keep your zones representing 25 acres or less, in order to satisfy the requirements of the 4R Nutrient Stewardship program. Grid type sampling has come under scrutiny in recent years; however, it still is the most clear-cut sampling strategy that creates actionable outcomes for variable rate applications of fall fertility and/or soil amendments. These grids can be used in perpetuity to re-evaluate soil fertility and soil health strategies over time, as the points are all geo-referenced and available at the drop of a hat. The bottom line is fertilizer management begins with soil testing in a manner that provides timely and accurate data. Ask your crop advisor which strategy is best for your situation and let's get at it!



The Benefits to Fall Fertilizer Application

As crops begin to be harvested, we have the opportunity to have fields soil sampled. Soil tests provide a great "report card" of how you are managing your soil fertility, along with a great tool to work with your Holmes Agro Crop Advisor to create a crop nutrition plan. When making a plan it's always important to consider how that plan will be executed. Fall application of soil immobile nutrients, like potassium, is a great way to execute your plan for three reasons:

1. It spreads out your workload.
2. Early fall conditions can be drier, making for excellent application and incorporation conditions.
3. Positively charged nutrients like K₂O are immobile because they are bound to the negatively charged soil colloid.

Therefore, fall application will help to build soil test levels and ensure better K₂O cycling in the following year.

Fun Fact: Did you know 90% of K₂O is taken up by the plant through diffusion? Meaning K₂O moves from a high-concentration in the soil to a lower-concentration in the root, and that 90-98% of total K₂O in the soil is bound between clay platelets? Due to these two factors, it is critical to have a K₂O soil test >120 ppm.

When applying K₂O in the fall consider giving Boron a free ride with Aspire® (0-0-58% 0.5%B). You are guaranteed a uniform distribution of boron, and due to the formulation of Aspire® having two forms of Boron (sodium borate & calcium borate) it provides season-long availability of boron even when it is fall applied. Our research shows (Figure 1) these two strong agronomic features will deliver on yield the following year. There was a 4.6 bu/ac yield advantage for using Aspire® in the fall over Muriate of Potash (MOP), and a 5.3 bu/ac advantage for Aspire® over MOP in the spring. The take home of this trial is that both fall and spring applications of Aspire® had about a 5 bu/ac advantage over MOP, therefore with either a fall or spring application you count on the flexibility in application timing with Aspire®. Source: <http://www.croptonutrition.com> Written by Aaron Stevanus from Mosaic.

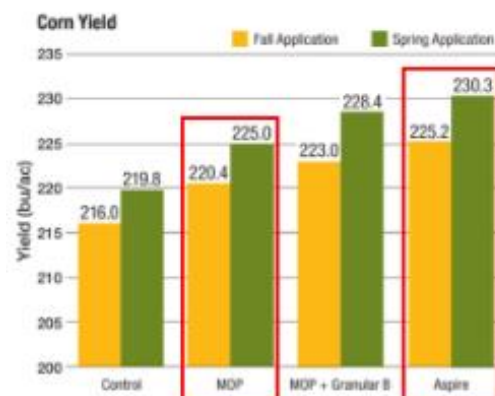


Figure 1. Corn yield influenced by fall and spring applications of MOP, MOP + Granular B, and Aspire

Customer Appreciation Drive Thru BBQ – Save The Date

Save the date of August 18th for the Orangeville drive thru BBQ, August 25th for the Stayner Drive Thru BBQ, and August 27th for the Redickville Drive Thru BBQ. Stop in and pick up your lunch at between 11:30-1:30pm!

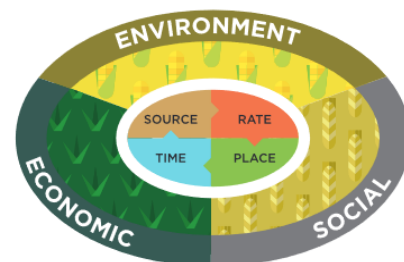
RSVP at (519) 941-0450 for Orangeville and (705) 428-4444 for Stayner.

Introducing Kevin Williams

Holmes Agro Stayner is pleased to welcome Kevin Williams to our team. Kevin brings a wealth of machinery and mechanical skill to our location, and we are looking forward to his oversight of our shop and equipment. His background in both agriculture and logistics makes him an asset to our business and a natural fit! Welcome Kevin!

Cover Crops + 4Rs = Sustainability Practices

Sustainable agriculture allows you to integrate management practices that reduce potential negative impacts of your decisions meaning you become socially, environmentally, and economically responsible. Cover crops are a great example of this because of their ability to protect and enhance soils, while providing numerous other benefits! With the heavy rains and storms experienced this season, cover crops offer the protection for your soil by reducing the loss of the resource, you require for growing crops or grazing livestock for years to come. As the winter wheat is harvested think about cover crops to protect your soil and keep it healthy for the future. Keep in mind that cover crops are part of the 4R nutrient management approach.



The 4Rs; the right source, rate, time, and place aim to optimize crop uptake of nutrients and minimize loss. Part of the 4R approach is to band nutrients, incorporate after a certain period of time, or apply to a growing crop. All practices aim to keep nutrients in their intended place, allowing them to be plant available and prevent runoff into our water system. As mentioned above, by maintaining a ground cover and improving soil structure, cover crops can aid with water infiltration after intense rains, thus preventing surface erosion. When cover crops are terminated, nutrients are released back into the soil and become available for the next crop. By keeping nutrients where they need to be and improving soil structure growers can leave their soil in the same or hopefully better condition than when they started, thus allowing our farmers to be more sustainable and enhance farmland for future generations, while improving growers' efficiency and their bottom line.



Winter Wheat Seed – Building a Strategy

As combines finish rolling across wheat fields in Ontario, this is a great time to be evaluating performance and deciding what varieties you would like to plant this coming fall. It is important to look at issues you may have faced in this year's crop, such as leaf diseases, winter survival or lodging as well as yield. It is also important to keep your management system in mind when looking at new wheat varieties. If you are someone who likes to push N rates, then varieties with good lodging scores are important. If you will be planting on tougher farms, then varieties with good winter survival and disease scores could be beneficial. With Ontario's gocereals.ca website, you can check how certain varieties perform head-to-head against each other, in both conventional and high management scenarios.

You can also chat with your Holmes Agro Crop Advisor to discuss which varieties will work best for your farm!

EquipCleen

Starting August 1st, we will be a dealer for EquipCleen by Flochem. It is a biodegradable and environmentally friendly foaming agent that will make washing equipment quick and effective whether it be at the start of the season, mid-season or end of year clean up. For more information, Contact Ty @ 705-795-2514

Watch It Grow

The majority of 'Watch it Grow' signs are up. This sign can be found west of Alliston, ON.

Did you know – Canadian soybean production has increased 123% since 2006 and the world production of soybeans has increased 500% in the last 40 years. Source: Syngenta Canada

Scouting update – Now is the time to start thinking about which fields may benefit from a preharvest herbicide application.



Calendar 2022

Keep sending in pictures for the 2022 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 laura@holmesagro.com

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

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