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WEATHER ALMANAC

November/December 2009

This Month's Issue Includes:

- New Technology for your farm
- Sulfur, the Fourth Nutrient
- Soybean Seed for 2010
- New Herbicide Choices

TODAY'S FARMING TECHNOLOGY

There's no question that the last decade has seen major adjustments in technology and its use in farming. Now days – yield monitors, lightbars, and on-the-go monitoring is not so much a novelty as a standard. We also know that the decision to purchase technology as well as how they should be used is not an easy decision. Farm Fertilizers & Seeds is ready, willing, and able to help you work through these decisions. As a Precision Ag Center, we can help you purchase navigation & application systems from companies like Raven, Teejet, and Autofarm.

We also have the computer technology to help you utilize your yield maps as more than just pretty pictures. Our IMAGE Services using SST Summit allow us to be able to analyze field records like yield, soil sample results, and fertilizer applications to make informed decisions for the coming year. All these can be combined with the financial aspect of things to see the most important number – profit per acre.

We also are geared up and ready for any variable rate application needs you may have, now or in the future. Call on us to be your Technology Partner now and in the future!

'INTERESTING' FERTILIZER SITUATION

When you look back over the last twelve months of fertilizer pricing, 'interesting' is only one of the ways to describe it. Prices this fall for basic products are significantly lower than they were last fall. Fall fertilizer and early prepay for spring fertilizers are very attractive options when compared to current commodity prices for 2010 crop. So what should you do? We can't say with any certainty what the fertilizer market will continue to do, but we can say for certain that Farm Fertilizers & Seeds will continue to provide economical, full-service fertilizer to our customers as we always have in the past. We have four full service locations staffed by trained agronomists, applicators, and service personnel. Unlike a "shop and drop", we will be around to help you with products, equipment, and service as needed. When you're ready to discuss your fertilizer needs for 2010 and put together some budgeting scenarios, whether that's tomorrow or in January, stop in or give us a call. We have the answers to get your cropping programs for 2010 going.

NEWSLETTER CHANGES

For the past 20 plus years, we have offered this newsletter, "The Weather Almanac", to our customers as a way to keep you all up to date with new changes in fertilizer, chemicals, and seed programs. For all of that time, we have worked hand-in-hand with Jim Wetherbee, President of Agmark, to produce these newsletters. Jim would travel to our office once every two months or so to find out what kind of issues we, and in turn you, were facing, and prepare most of the articles that you have read here over all those years.

Sadly, Jim suffered a stroke three months ago. He is doing very well, but unfortunately feels that he will no longer be able to continue his work. Agmark has been a one-man operation for the past several years, so without him, there is no longer any Agmark. Because we feel our newsletter is a valuable service to all of you, we have decided to continue with it, but in somewhat of a different format. For one, we are no longer going to be putting the newsletter out monthly. We will schedule the issues around times of most importance, focusing on information of most importance to you. Also, we will no longer be including the weather portion of the newsletter. If you have any suggestions for future issues or formats, please do not hesitate to contact us!

MANAGE COSTLY WEEDS

We talk about scouting fields as you harvest every year. In a season like 2009, where delayed planting may have triggered changes in your planned weed control program, paying attention to where you have weeds this fall is more important than ever.

Make notes on the weed breakthroughs you see such as the grass observed in short soybeans this fall...identify those wet holes in fields...identify where equipment wheel tracks ran through wet fields (for both compaction damage and weed pressure)...note where you changed your usual weed control products or had to delay application. These are areas where you will have increased weed pressure next spring to rob costly nutrients and moisture from your crop. Weeds produce an incredible number of seeds. By the time you would see the problem next growing season, it may be too late to get the most effective control.

Those wet areas will need extra attention to protect the yield potential of your 2010 corn and soybeans. Your notes during harvest allow you to take preventative action before any tillage removes the most obvious evidence or early pre-plant next spring. We have economical products and programs to help you get control of these profit-robbing weeds...starting this fall.

LIME IS BASIC TO YIELD

Aglime is your most basic, economical fall application to assure long-term productivity. Aglime neutralizes yield-restricting soil acidity caused by some fertilizer treatments...helps water-use efficiency...provides essential calcium and magnesium...improves the physical and biological properties of soil...and more. All basic to yield and performance.

Aglime the one decision that can't be put off until spring. Aglime needs the time from now to planting to condition the soil for next season.

If time permits only one fall trip across your fields after harvest...make it aglime!

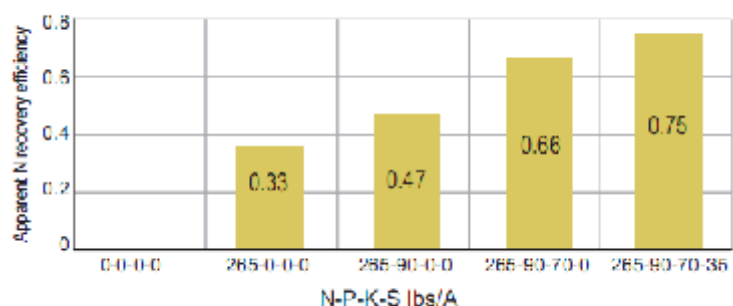
SULFUR, THE "FOURTH MAJOR" NUTRIENT

Sulfur (S) is a part of every living cell and is a constituent of two of the 21 amino acids which form proteins. The benefits from sulfur fertilization of crops can be traced to its role in protein development, to improvement of nitrogen (N) use, etc. However, the availability of sulfur needed for profitable crop production continues to decline. Reasons for the decline include the emphasis on improved air quality, the increasing amount of sulfur removed from the soil by higher yielding crops and use of modern fertilizers containing less sulfur.

A 180-bushel corn crop takes up nearly 30 pounds of sulfur during the growing season. The functions of sulfur and its influence on plant growth show why sulfur is a full season nutrient. It promotes plant growth from the seedling stage until the crop reaches physiological maturity. Sulfate sulfur is very mobile in soil solution, but considered non-mobile within the plant. Elemental sulfur must be converted to the sulfate form in the soil before taken up by the plant. Elemental particle size determines the amount of sulfur expected to be available in the season of application. A severe shortage of sulfur often develops visible deficiency symptoms on new growth. Deficiency symptoms in corn range from slow growth rate and poor response to nitrogen to pale green coloration of new growth and low protein levels. The preferred method of sulfur application is to use a combination of sulfate form for immediate uptake and finely ground elemental sulfur for mid-to late-season uptake. This provides season-long sulfur supply while minimizing potential.

Nutrient balancing is critical for high-yield cropping systems. Nutrient balance involves many nutrients but especially sulfur with nitrogen and potassium. These three nutrients are essential for protein synthesis, photosynthesis, and other plant growth processes. A shortage of any one will restrict the effectiveness of the others. To avoid an imbalance, many suggest the use of 20 to 30 pounds per acre of fertilizer sulfur. Adequate sulfur is necessary for high yield cropping systems and optimum plant use of nitrogen and potassium. However, other soil/crop conditions such as soil texture, can influence crop need and use of nutrients such as sulfur. For example, in 2008, northeast Iowa corn studies showed that response to applied sulfur was measured in 62% of the test sites. Yield response to sulfur applied on coarse textured soils exceeded fine textured soils by 13 bu/a. Also, corn responded to a higher rate of fertilizer sulfur (23 vs 16 lbs/a S) on the coarse textured soils. Remember, sulfur is a mobile nutrient in the soil and the nutrient reservoir is smaller for coarse textured soils.

Balanced Fertilization Improves Crop N Recovery



Source: Gordon, 2005

NEW HERBICIDE OFFERINGS FOR 2010

2010 has the more new herbicide products rolling out than any other year in recent memory. Most believed that Roundup-Ready products would eliminate the need for new herbicides. As always, though, Mother Nature continues to demonstrate her control over our business by either shifting weed spectrum (weeds becoming a problem today more so than in the past like chickweed), or weeds becoming resistant to glyphosate-only applications (marestail is a prime example). "Spiking" glyphosate with additional products or using combination products have become more the norm than an exception. Some new products for next year that we are excited about trying are:

Kixor Family from BASF

Kixor is one of the biggest advances in preemerge burndown and residual broadleaf weed control in several years. *Kixor* is a brand-new active ingredient in a new class of herbicides that includes:

- ***Sharpen*** – provides fast complete burndown of broadleaf weeds. Has no preplant restriction for corn or soybeans while speeding up the burndown of glyphosate by days. Very low use rate – 1 to 3 ozs.
- ***Integrity*** – a preemerge corn product combining *Kixor* with DMMP, one of the components of Guardsman Max. Requires no atrazine, so no setback restrictions. Provides burndown plus residual for corn on the weeds glyphosate alone struggles with like Giant Ragweed and Velvetleaf. Very low use rate of 10-14 oz. This product will be available in bulk from us in 2010.
- ***Optill*** – A dry formulation combining the power of *Kixor* with Pursuit. Exceptional preemerge control of tough weeds like Lambsquarter and Velvetleaf. Low use rate of 2 oz.

Flexstar GT from Syngenta

Flexstar GT is a combination of Touchdown Total, a glyphosate, and Flexstar, a broadleaf weed product, as well as a proprietary adjuvant system, Isolink II, that improves activity of both products while increasing the crop safety of Flexstar. *Flexstar GT* controls resistant and tough to control broadleaves like morningglory and velvetleaf that glyphosate alone struggles with. *Flexstar GT* also has excellent preemerge activity on many broadleaves so may fit as a burndown with residual as well.

If you have any questions on these, or any other new or unfamiliar products, please contact us!

At this Season of Thanksgiving

We Thank You for your business

And pause to count our blessings:

The freedom we enjoy...

The opportunity for achievement...

The goodwill and confidence of friends and neighbors.

Best Wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving!

SOYBEAN SEED CHOICES FOR 2010

To ensure a profitable soybean harvest for 2010, you need to start with seed you can have confidence in. Farm Fertilizers & Seeds offers the best soybean seed available from Asgrow. We wouldn't recommend you plant anything we wouldn't plant ourselves on our own farms. Below are the soybean varieties we have chosen to be our lead varieties for 2010.

AG2606 – A mid group II soybean with a good disease package. Resistance to race 3 SCN. Excellent Sudden Death Syndrome, Brown Stem Rot, and White Mold Scores. A great option for Muck soils. Original RR variety, so a good value.

AG 2939 – A late group II Genuity RR2Y soybean variety. Top yields for this maturity. Excellent emergence and standability. Very good Sudden Death, Brown Stem Rot, and Phytophthora Root Rot scores.

AG3030 – A early group III Genuity RR2Y variety. Double stacked 1c/k gene resistance for Phytophthora Root Rot. Excellent soybean variety for high management.

AG3139 – A early group III Genuity RR2Y variety. Excellent agronomics with very good defensive traits. Very good workhorse variety for variable soils, stress soils.

AG3402 – A mid group III variety. Large plant type. Consistent performer for the past few years. Good Brown Stem Rot and White Mold scores. Original RR variety, so a good value.

AG3539 – a mid group III Genuity RR2Y variety. Topped several plots in 2009. Very high yielding, go anywhere product. Very solid agronomic package.

Stop in to your local plant today to put together a soybean plan and take advantage of early order pricing and special financing options!

YIELD MAPPING SERVICES

Do you have a yield monitor with mapping? Not sure the best way to take a look at your maps or get them processed? Our Hamlet IMAGE Services personnel would be happy to take care of this for you. We also have the ability to merge yield maps with fertility and planting records to compare different treatments and hybrids or varieties across your farm. Contact Andy at Hamlet for details.

NEW DUAL-PRODUCT APPLICATOR SPEEDS UP VRT APPLICATION

We recently upgraded our dry fertilizer/lime spreading equipment to include a 2009 Terragator with a Dual-Product box insert. Terragators have long been held as the best application equipment in the business. The New Leader spreader L4000 G4 box is also equipped with a removable box insert, allowing us to variable apply two fertilizer products at the same time, independent of one another. Combined with the best application-assistance technology like a Viper Pro controller, autosteer, and on-the-go field mapping from Raven, our Terragator is fully equipped to provide the best field application of fertilizer and lime, both variable rate and standard rate. The finest equipment in the world isn't any good in the hands of an inexperienced operator, though. Our applicator for this machine has over 10 years running spread and spray equipment, so you can rely on the best equipment and operators for your farm. We are ready and able to travel to all our plants to meet your variable application needs for 2010 and beyond!



FARM FERTILIZERS & SEEDS, INC

Your Partner for the Future.

If you would like to receive this and other important updates by email, send your email address to farmfert@embarqmail.com. We never share email information!

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