Tri-State Seed

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Tri State Seed Newsletter January 2017

Editorial Comment

I can't believe I am writing 2017 on this correspondence. It seems like we just got done planning for 2016. We had quite a few interesting phone conversations because of the last newsletter so we thought we would review some of the more critical decisions facing us this coming crop year. Framing the dryland situation today and comparing it to what we have experienced in the recent past is always a good place to start. One of the planning tools we use regularly is the SWOT analysis. By this we mean what the season has to offer in the way of **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities** and what are our **threats** to the crop. You might say this is boring stuff, right? The way we look at it is the opportunities are potentially large this year, but they could pose some unusual risks along the way. Our job is to make sure we manage the risks, all of them, to the benefit of the crop. In other words, don't make mistakes; and think about preventive measures instead of waiting until your pants are orange to spray for rust.

Soil Test Now

Let's talk about the moisture in the crop. Obviously we are in a good situation right? The ground is still not frozen, much. All of this moisture is going in the ground. Well, consider this for a minute—where do you think your fertilizer is now that we have had more than half a year's moisture in five weeks? We think you will be surprised. Our most recent results are eye opening. If you have more than 10 pounds of nitrate N in the first foot, we will be surprised. So stop worrying and go find out. If you fertilized for a yield target of 40 bushels and are now expecting 50 or 60 bushels per acre—what are you going to do? Without enough fertility you will deprive your crop of enough nutrition to maximize the yield potential. Remember that positional N is just as important as how much you have. If you find yourself in the unenviable position of needing more—consider this—you will never get enough fertilizer applied with your herbicide application in the spring to do much good. The timing will be wrong, and you can't get enough into the vegetation to make up the deficit. You have to do it now, so consider this next section as a viable option.

Stream Jetting Fertilizer

We have several tools today to address fertilizer shortfalls. The most viable in our mind is stream jetting. All this involves is changing the nozzles on your sprayer and figuring out your rate. The Stream Jett or Stream Bar nozzles are great because they shoot a stream of fertilizer and you can spray fast and in a 20 MPH wind with minimal concern for product loss or drift. Now is a perfect time to do this as we are expecting more rain soon and the amount of product loss will be minimized. Volatilization of product should be your primary concern and that too can be minimized with additives that stabilize the nitrogen. 25-0-0-3 is one of our favorites as you have ammonium nitrate and get sulfate sulfur in the blend. Both are immediately available to the plant. So, at 2.5 lbs. of N per gallon and .30 lbs. of S per gallon, at a rate of 10 gallon per acre you can put down an honest 25#s of N and 3#s of Sulfur very efficiently. Call us for delivery and pricing. We have already sold dozens of truck loads.

30-6-0-0 S. A. N. (Homogeneous granulated fertilizer)

No, this is not a military code. This product is much underestimated in its utility. 30-6-0-0 is **stabilized ammonium nitrate** with phosphate in a homogenous granule. If you can't stream jet your fertilizer this fall or early spring, then consider broadcasting this new product. The advantage here is the immediate availability of the Nitrate nitrogen, especially in cooler soils. It has less reduction of soil pH than traditional Ammonia or Urea sources of nitrogen. And last—less volatility. Since 30-6-0-0 **contains no Urea**, losses due to ammonia volatility are of minimal concern. This is very, very cool stuff, and it works like a champ when we need to ramp up our Nitrogen game on what appears to be

a dandy crop. You should be thinking about this soon, early February is perfect, even earlier if the weather allows. It probably needs to be applied by air, the granules go right to the bottom of the furrow, perfect placement! **DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE YOUR CROP'S FERTILITY NEEDS THIS YEAR.** We are predicting the 2017 crop will make 1984 look thin. Those of you old enough to have harvested that crop will understand.

Rust, Rust, Rust

We talked about strengths and opportunities; this is a threat, albeit a preventable one. We saw huge infestations of leaf and stripe rust last fall. The weather was so conducive to this fungus that even my lawn turned yellow with rust. The infection rate is huge. It won't go away by itself. Please consider using the right fungicide with your herbicide early this spring. We have a great stand and the crop will canopy quickly. Use a fungicide with two modes of action, something with a strobularin and a triazole. Headline, Quilt, Twinline etc. are excellent choices. Remember the Tilt product and other generics are curative but don't last as long as the others. Use the longest residual one first and then follow up with the Propiconazole**. Most of you spray your weeds way too late in the spring** for optimum control. I know what you are going to say…. If I wait I will get a few more late emerging thistles. The truth is, the crop is big enough and the weeds are small enough that you may be able to use less herbicide and actually save yourself money and do a better job than you would by waiting. The wheat will canopy and crowd out most of the late comers anyway. If you decide not to top dress with fertilizer, then consider using up to 50% of your total tank mix volume as liquid fertilizer. If you are spraying 10 gallons per acre, then 5 gallons of 25-0-0-3 will give you an additional 12.5#'s of N and 1.5#'s Sulfur. This will not burn the crop and will certainly help the activity of your herbicide package also.

Let's Talk About Alfalfa and Headline Fungicide (BASF)

One of the things we found most interesting, and profitable last year is this: BASF has a label for alfalfa at a rate of 6 to 9 oz. /ac and it looks really promising. The target pathogens here are leaf spots and stem blights. The increased plant health benefits and subsequent increases in yield and feed values make this a no brainer especially on first cutting which tends to be heavy anyway. Have you ever noticed all the leaves at the bottom of the plant that are discolored and falling off just before cutting? Some of this is normal senescence but most of it is fungal damage. Have you ever noticed all the browning and dead plants after swathing first cutting? Headline is especially effective on spring black stem. Most of the fields we treated this past year were in the south basin and were first year seedling alfalfa. The results were very good. The following numbers and test were conducted from replicated research done by BASF and then in Rupert Idaho in 2013. The measured yield difference was 15.9% on first cutting. On this field that meant .34 tons/ac. If you assume $220/ton hay, that amounts to $68.00 return for an investment of about $25/ac including application. But wait --- The returns just keep coming. Second cutting was 9.4% better than the untreated control and third was 2.4% better than the control and fourth was 4.7% better. The cumulative return on investment was .62 tons/ac in Rupert Idaho over four cuttings. That means an additional $106.26/ac. This application was applied to 4-6 inch alfalfa **before first cutting only**. This is important because first cutting is always a big one, and seedling alfalfa is pretty fine stemmed, which all combined means it will be hard to dry down and there is more risk of damage from fungus. Call us and we will send you the pictures and give you the website for more info.

Cool Season Forages – there is more money in forages this year than corn.

The important things to remember when you are planning your forage production are simple. Plant cool season annual forages in the spring and the early fall when temperatures are cool, and warm season forages during the heat of the summer. Just look at your lawn – it grows like it is on fire in the spring, but languishes in the summer. That is because is doesn't like the heat.

Selecting the correct forages for the intended use is the most important decision you can make. For lactating mother cows you should concentrate on those forages that have high crude protein levels and more soluble fiber in the rumen. Typically this is a balancing act between product quality and quantity. The late boot stage of development in cereal forages always contains the densest concentration of nutrients for the animal. After the plant is done with the

vegetative stage of development and enters the reproductive stage of development, which we call anthesis, the plant will have the most tonnage, but the penalty for more tonnage is higher lignin levels and lower soluble fiber. That's okay for dry cow feed, but certainly not acceptable for the higher nutrition needs of lactating momma cows.

Here are some tips.

Where manure is commonly spread on the fields and the soils are becoming more saline, (higher salt content), plant beardless barley. Barley has all of the salt tolerance on the C genome, which wheat and oats and triticale do not have. Barley will do well on soils that have excessively high pH also.

Use a blended approach to forage production in most circumstances. Risk management is key. Always evaluate the research before you buy seed. Not all forages grow at the same rate and are therefore not necessarily timed to mature at the same stage of development to maximize nutrition and tonnage. It is very important to consult your seed man and research which components have been adequately tested to mature equally and provide you the optimum benefits for your individual needs. We like to add Flex Peas to the blend in irrigated spring forages to optimize protein level, this is especially true when growing for dairies. The peas are large seeded legumes, and the blend usually looks like this – 64% peas and 36% cereal forages. The reason this looks unbalanced is peas have more seeds per pound than cereal grains and in order to get a 50/50 stand in the field you have to blend by seed count, not by weight. The cereal forages can be split between Everleaf Oats, Beardless barley or spring forage triticale.

Using straight forage triticale or a blend of cereal forages is great for maximizing tonnage for dry cows. Just remember that as the plant matures, protein decreases and lignin or insoluble fiber increases. Makes great manure, doesn't put much weight on cows.

If you are rotationally grazing, move the wire before all of the leaves on the plants are gone to optimize regrowth. The plant has to have a way to produce food too – photosynthesis. If you apply fertilizer in between grazing, let the regrowth get well along and then test for nitrates. I don't want you to turn any of those $3000 cows upside-down. Any test below 1200 ppm is okay. If the test comes in too high, just irrigate and let the plants get a little bigger thereby diluting out the nitrates and retest. Usually takes about 10 days for the plant to dilute out the excess nitrogen by increased biomass, but the following plant growth response will be huge. Adding forage brassicas to the grazing blend is very cost effective and pays big dividends. They take about 4-6 weeks to get big enough to graze, but they regenerate just fine and are a good complement to the annual cool season forages. The grazing types also have a root type like a carrot, not a large bulb, that translates into much less choking hazard.

Permanent Pastures

Establishing permanent pasture is not difficult as long as you remember to treat it like a crop. The most surefire way to get cattle on the pasture quickly is to plant in the fall and let the grass establish over the winter. A good secondary root system is necessary before you begin your grazing. In reality 90 days after dormancy break is a good rule of thumb on new fall seeded grass. A judicious herbicide application will help establishment also; and that is a perfect time to add your micro nutrients. Remember that grass removes soil nutrients just like any other crop. So, measure the nutrient withdrawal and plan on replacing them. I like a late fall application. Don't forget the Sulphur and Phos. Want to know why most permanent pasture gets replanted – neglect. Most pastures are not planted on class 1, 2, or 3 ground. They are usually the piece that is too rocky to farm or has the worst irrigation system on it. That is okay, just plan for soils that are no doubt more variable in depth and soil type. Using a bracketed approach to grass selection is prudent. Some grass species like orchard grass have great nutritional value but do not persist very well on soils with higher pH and high salinity. Forage type tall fescues do that very well. We usually recommend a blend of species for this type of situation. Orchard grass, forage type tall fescue, tetraploid perennial ryegrasses and some bromes are all candidates for this application. Pubescent Wheat grass, Intermediate wheat grass, Basin Wild Ryes, and both Crested and Siberian Wheat grasses are easy to establish but produce too much lignin and not enough palatable forage. So stay away from the bunching types and head toward the sodding types.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nutrient Removal

Just for your planning purposes we want you to check out this free AP on your smart phone. It comes from AG PhD. Go to their website and down load the Nutrient Removal Ap. It is free. You will find out that a 60 bushel per acre wheat crop removes the following nutrients:
111 lbs. of Nitrogen, 38.4 lbs. of Phos, 89.4 lbs. of Potassium, and 14.4 lbs. of Sulfur. Just remember that your 50 lb. application of NH^3 on your summer fallow is not going to cut the bacon this year.

Even out your work load!

If there were ever a year where you could re-balance your acreage from one side of the farm to the other, this may be a good opportunity to accomplish that goal. We have enough moisture in most areas to grow a decent spring crop. Look at the SWS to DNS price spread – it is close to $2.00 per bushel. Some of you saw the handwriting on the wall and did this last fall. No need to work the hell out of the ground and spend a lot of money rolling dirt. Just direct seed it or do a minimal field prep like a cultivation. We have numerous ways to get some fertilizer on the crop, stream jet, 30-6-0-0 dry over the top or the Nutri-Pro rolling coulter liquid method for in-crop applications. The Nutri-Pro applicator from Great Plains Equipment is very efficient. DNS is close to $6.50 per bushel – be careful you might even make some money!

In closing we want to thank you for your continued support and confidence in our business. We just closed the books on our eleventh year in business and we have enjoyed the time serving you.

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