

# Southern Soils FERTILISER

**A BALANCED APPROACH**



## Summer 2018 – 2019 Newsletter

*Welcome to the first Southern Soils Fertiliser Newsletter.*

*We hope to give you a bit of an insight to what the team have been up to and what we offer.*



### SOIL TESTING

Hopefully you've seen Pete or Dan out and about busily taking soil tests over the past couple of months. We place a great importance on soil testing and you may ask why the push for spring soil testing, when traditionally a lot of people wait until summer or even into the autumn before taking tests.

- 1) Spring is when we are likely to see the most accurate and informative data come through, as it is a time when plants are actively growing, microbial activity is high, we normally have soil moisture and nutrient availability is at its highest.
- 2) In order to help our clients make the most out of their fertiliser investment, we need accurate information in order to give the best advice we can to deliver value for money.
- 3) Soil testing laboratories are often flat out early in the year and we regularly experience delays. Spring soil testing helps us to get the data we need early and make informed timely decisions and prevent delays with autumn applications.
- 4) Spring is also a great time for a farm tour to discuss what has worked over the past year and what we can improve, and start planning for the new year.
- 5) We offer great incentives to soil test in the spring and also to plan and order your fertiliser early in the new year.

As with every year we are seeing large variations in soil test results, between districts, between farms, between paddocks and even within the same paddock. Soil test results give us a good indication of what is happening, but they are often not as expected and it is important to keep this in perspective. It can be just as important to discuss how the paddock is visually performing and how livestock are performing.

With this data and assessment, we are able to tailor programs to your farm and budget to help economically and efficiently lift your production.

If you are yet to soil test, but would like a visit please feel free to contact one of our team to arrange an appropriate time to suit.

*Remember - 'Timing is free, successful businesses plan ahead'*

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### MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR PHOSPHORUS INPUTS

Whilst all farming enterprises are unique and suit the individuals running them, overall farm productivity and profitability, is generally determined by carrying capacity and the quantity of meat, milk and/or wool produced per head. The answer to improving the farms carrying capacity and stock performance is always multi-faceted, but for this article we will focus on soil nutrients, specifically phosphorus.

The long term phosphorus experiment in Hamilton, Victoria has shown that when phosphorus is added to soils that have low phosphorus levels, we should expect an increase in pasture dry matter production, a change in pasture composition to more desirable species, an improvement in the quality of feed produced and an increase in the persistence of our perennial pasture species.

The table below highlights that when soil phosphorus levels are increased to desirable levels, winter and annual pasture production levels are also increased.

#### SOIL TEST RESULTS AND PASTURE PRODUCTION

Colwell P (mg/Kg)	6	8	14	<b>26</b>	45	129
Olsen P (mg/Kg)	6	6	7	<b>11</b>	19	30
Winter Pasture Production T/Ha	1.6	1.5	2.1	<b>2.8</b>	3.0	3.1
Annual Pasture Production T/Ha	6.0	6.7	9.2	<b>12.4</b>	12.7	12.6

Agriculture Victoria, trial started in 1977

It is this improved feed base that leads to increased stocking rates, maintaining/improving stock condition (condition score), improving reproductive performance, increasing growth rates of growing stock and less supplementary feed is required. More detailed information on the specifics of this trial can be found on the [Evergraze website](https://www.evergraze.com.au/library-content/long-term-phosphate-trial/).

<https://www.evergraze.com.au/library-content/long-term-phosphate-trial/>

Whilst we need to ensure that our soils are well balanced and that all nutrient levels are within the desirable ranges, improving soil phosphorus levels continue to be a focus for many producers in the areas that Southern Soils operates.

When it comes to applying phosphorus to our paddocks, there are a number of different products, that can be categorised into two groups. Water soluble phosphorus (e.g. single super, double super, DAP and MAP) or citrate soluble phosphorus (reactive phosphate rock or RPR). They all contain phosphorus, but it is how the phosphorus is released into the soil for plant utilisation, that sets the products apart.

When water soluble phosphorus is added to soil, it quickly dissolves and releases its phosphorus to be either utilised by plants, or to form low solubility compounds with either iron or aluminium. When citrate soluble phosphorus or reactive phosphate rock (RPR) is added to soil it dissolves at a slower rate and gradually releases the phosphorus to the growing plant. There are several factors that determine the suitability of using RPR in our pasture and cropping systems, and they include soil pH, rainfall/irrigation quantity, plant species and most importantly the quality of the RPR used.

The suitability of RPR for direct application to soils is primarily driven by its phosphorus content, citrate solubility and its heavy metal content (cadmium). The citrate solubility needs to be above 30% to make it suitable for direct application, and the cadmium needs to be below 300ppm. It is for this reason that Southern Soils has continued to use a reactive phosphate rock product called BioAgPhos®, as it has a phosphorus content of 12.7%, a citrate solubility of 41% and a cadmium level of 110ppm.

BioAgPhos® is imported from a high-quality sedimentary deposit in Algeria and treated with a biological inoculant. This inoculation not only enhances the phosphorus release of the product when applied to the soil, but it also delivers a diverse population of micro-organisms that improve overall nutrient cycling within the soil.

In very low phosphorus status soils, a combination of both water-soluble phosphorus and citrate soluble phosphorus (BioAgPhos®) has been a strategy used by Southern Soils for many years. This gives the benefits of both products, fast and also sustained release phosphorus. If soil phosphorus levels are adequate, and only require maintenance applications, we can utilise BioAgPhos® as a stand-alone phosphorus source.

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## WHY ADD COPPER TO YOUR AUTUMN FERTILISER APPLICATION?

Copper is an essential element for both plant and animal nutrition. For plants, copper is required for photosynthesis, nitrogen metabolism, cell wall structure and seed set. Whereas for animals, copper is essential for body, bone and wool growth, digestive function and reproductive performance.

Soil copper deficiency is well recognised in South Western Victoria and South Eastern South Australia, and many of the soil test results that we receive, highlight that copper is a nutrient that we need to improve the levels of. We also need to bear in mind that our stock have a greater requirement for copper than our pastures do. So, if the soils are low in copper, there is a fair chance that our stock are not getting the copper they require.

To further complicate the issue, copper absorption by stock can be compromised by elevated levels of both sulphur and molybdenum in the pasture. Whilst every pasture species is going to vary in its response, it has been estimated that copper absorption can be reduced by up to 50% if the molybdenum concentration is greater than 4.0ppm in the pasture consumed. This highlights the importance of both soil and plant testing, to evaluate and correct any deficiencies/imbbalances and the need to apply a balanced fertiliser application, according to your test results.

Signs of copper deficiency in stock are as follows;

Beef/Dairy	Sheep
- Rough Coats	- Wool Abnormalities
- Reduced Growth Rates	- Sway Back (Enzootic Ataxia)
- Diarrhoea	- Aneamia
- Skeletal Defects	- Reduced Growth Rates
- Infertility	- Infertility
- Aneamia	- Bone Fragility

For the majority of soils that we work with, the suggested ideal range is 0.5 - 5.0ppm for copper, with an ideal target of 2.0ppm. For plant samples, we would like to see them greater than 7.0ppm, assuming that sulphur and molybdenum are within range, but not too high.

There are a number of ways to apply copper, both liquid and solid. We find the best way to do this is to add it to your autumn fertiliser application, along with any other deficient nutrients. If using granular fertiliser, we use a copper coat, which ensures excellent paddock distribution. If applying a product like BioAgPhos®, we would mix copper powder with this, again ensuring excellent paddock distribution.

## Southern Soils Seed

Did you know Southern Soils recommends and supplies quality pasture seed mixes, fit for purpose, tailored to individual farms, paddocks and soil types?

With another strong livestock year and good farm returns from pasture-based systems, it is expected there will again be high demand for pasture seed come autumn time and supply is likely to be short again in a number of popular lines.

We will again be encouraging our clients to think about their seed requirements early in the new year, particularly perennial pasture paddocks going to phalaris. Our clients that have been placing early orders have been well supplied and we aim to do the same for the coming autumn.



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November - January

## LIME DEAL

Let us supply, deliver and spread your Lime between November and January, and take advantage of

## DEFERRED PAYMENT UNTIL APRIL 2019



To place your Lime order  
Peter Ham  
0429 448 653  
Daniel Hill  
0409 858 346  
Office - Tanya Lambert  
1300 11 81 81

## PASTURE FERTILISER EARLYBIRD DEAL

BUY EARLY & SAVE



Get your fertiliser out and get it working in your paddock early.

Take advantage of great early season

pricing and save up to 5%\*

### SUPPLY + DELIVER + SPREAD

Spread in January/February 2019

- 3% off total job with full payment by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019
- 1% extra discount if pre-paid by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019
- 1% extra discount on orders over 100t (BioBlend 250t)

### SUPPLY + DELIVER

Delivered in January/February 2019

- 1.5% off total job with full payment by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019
- 1% extra discount if pre-paid by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019
- 1% extra discount on orders over 100t (BioBlend 250t)

\*Offer applies to BioAgPhos, SuperSeven, BioBlend and any Custom Blends incorporating any of these three products.

\*E&OE - conditions apply, subject to change without notice.

## DROUGHT RELIEF FUNDRAISER

We will be showing support to those in need during the devastating drought.

During the months of September & October Southern Soils Fertiliser will be donating 1% of all fertiliser sales to drought relief organisations. For more information please contact:

**THANK YOU!!**  
**WE RAISED \$6223!**  
The proceeds were split between Drought Angels & Rural Aid to assist in their support to Australian Farmers.

For more information or to place an order call Peter Ham 0429 448 653 or Daniel Hill 0409 858 346

Southern Soils Fertiliser would like to wish all our customers a Merry Christmas, and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

### Operating Hours

Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> December	Closed
Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> December	Closed
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> December	Closed
Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> December	Open
Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> December	Open
Monday 31 <sup>st</sup> December	Open
Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> January	Closed
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> January	Open



## SOUTHERN SOILS FERTILISER

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