

SFG Update

Smith Fertilizer & Grain

December 6, 2013

Max Smith
General Manager



It won't be long now before Santa comes to see you! I am getting ready to do my part this year. My whiskers feel pretty good in this cold weather. The girls have my office looking good. Stop in to see how they have me fixed up! I have the greatest staff to help me. I am truly grateful to be surrounded by so many good employees.

We have just come through a long good harvest. Our elevators were empty starting the season and today we are almost full at every location. This past Sunday we had a big

run on beans in Centerville. Jason had to call for 4 semi's to haul out of there to get him through the weekend as is overflowing in every silo he has! What a great problem for us to have. Mark White spent his birthday helping me haul beans. We really know how to have fun right?

On the few days that the weather allows us to run, we are still trying to get more lime on the ground. Dry fertilizer and Super Grow are running most days too. Less NH_3 was applied this fall than in the past, so that means next spring is going to be a mad house to get it on. Hope we have an early spring to get started. Our new fertilizer shed is still not finished in Centerville. We have had several unexpected delays, the roof is on it but no electric yet. More on this later this winter.

Feed sales have been increasing as we go into to the colder months. We have added two new employees to help with the feed nutritional work to better support this end of our

business. Will have a big update on this in months ahead. Cattle prices have been very good to cattle producers. It was there turn too!! Check out our year end promotion's to prepay some winter needs to help with tax planning.

I am spending a lot of time with the Agribusiness Association of Iowa. I am Chair Elect and preparing for my leadership year to start this summer. We have a very large agenda in Plant Nutrient Management Work with the DNR, IDALS, and all the other farm organizations. It has become our priority to do our best to keep our water leaving the state with the fewest of nutrients we can and keep them in the farm fields we manage. There is a lot of "point" source and "non-point" source work done by all sides to help keep nutrients where they need to be and protect our waterways and creek banks from heavy erosion. I have found this work to be very rewarding. All sides I have worked with are

very cooperative to hit this issue head on. I have 18 grandchildren and like most, nothing is more important than doing our part to make sure they have a good place to live. I will keep you posted of our efforts in the months to come.

We will have Customer Appreciation Days later this month with prepay discounts. Please stop in to let us say thank you for this past years business. It has been our life's pleasure to work for all of you in assisting you to be profitable in your business operation. We are the luckiest people to have these jobs in agriculture. There is never a day that goes by we don't appreciate working with people like yourselves to better the place we live and call home!!

On behalf of all the Smith Family and all our employees we wish you the best in 2014 Thank you for your past years confidence to allow us to serve you.

SFG is planning Open houses for the following dates.

Stop by for breakfast or lunch!

Albia 8-10 Tuesday, December 17th

Centerville 11-2 Tuesday, December 17th

Knoxville 8-10 Thursday, December 19th

Pleasantville 11-2 Thursday, December 19th

Congratulations to Brad and Khristan Kaufman on the birth of

Logan Michael

12-1-2013

Greg Willer



Fall fertilizer application is underway and it is time to start thinking about what nutrients the 2014 crop will need. Sulfur deficiency has been a rising problem in corn fields over the last few years.

Sulfur is needed to metabolize nitrogen so that it will be available to the plant. Before the clean air act that was passed in 1972, our soil received enough sulfur from rainfall. Now we must rely on other means to get the sulfur that is needed in our fields. Iowa State has done a lot of research on how adding sulfur to fertilizer programs can increase corn yields. In 2007 Iowa State did a study across 21 different sites. At these sites they fertilized the corn with 20 pounds of sulfur vs. no sulfur. The results showed that sulfur added a significant yield increase on 18 of those sites.

Adding sulfur to your fertilizer program is a proven way to increase yields. Smith

Supergrow is a good way to add sulfur to your soil along with some phosphorous and potassium. A ton of Supergrow will put 140 pounds of nitrogen, 10 pounds of phosphorous, 20 pounds of potassium and 80 pounds of sulfur. Unlike anhydrous, we can apply the product on frozen ground so you won't have to deal with such a small window in the spring to apply your nitrogen. Supergrow is a good way to apply your nitrogen and add needed sulfur to your fields. It is also a good way to help build the fertility of your fields with the added phosphorus and potassium. If you would like more information on the product please give your SFG agronomist a call.

For more articles and market information please visit our website at www.sfgiowa.com.

Brad Kaufman Agronomy Sales



There is lot of talk that we are going to need to be producing 300 bushel/acre corn by 2030 to feed the world's growing population. Is it possible? Corn yields were very good this year but still fell way short of that elusive mark. I have said we need to raise 200 before we can worry about 300! So how can we break that barrier and push our yields to the next level.

Split applying nitrogen is a good start. Any where we side dressed corn, the corn was 30 bushel better. Throughout the whole year corn never showed any visual symptoms of being short nitrogen. However, I still have customer who say it is not

possible to side dress my ground with the contours and am not too excited about flying nitrogen on. One customer we side dressed for called me to tell me that we side dressed contours that he wouldn't have thought of doing, we didn't run over any corn, and the yields were tremendous.

ACA is a good way to increase yields. We have used ACA for many years producing an extra 10 bushel per acre, more on some of the more marginal ground. ACA helps build a better root system under that plant which helps out during stressful conditions.

Task Force 2 is a good catch all foliar fertilizer that we use with the second pass chemical. Task Force has provided tremendous results as well, 8-10 bushel per acre increase.

N Pact is a foliar nitrogen product that is put in second pass chemical spraying. Running one gallon of N Pact per acre along with the Task Force has put on 25 bushel per acre. Both N Pact and Task Force help on good ground, but is shines on the more marginal ground. We applied it to some corn and dropped over a side hill on a test and you could tell right to the row where we stopped. The corn was more uniform across the field and that in turn led to the nice

increase in yields we are seeing.

The last two years Headline has paid big by helping the corn handle the hot dry weather we have had during and after pollination, seeing at least a 15 bushel yield increase. Under ideal growing conditions some hybrids may not benefit from a Headline application, but how many times have we had ideal growing conditions in recent history.

These are all economical ways to help increase yield and provide excellent returns on investments. The big question is if all these different things we try help increase yield what happens if we combine them all, what kind of results do we get? We have combined several. For example, 90% of my customers have seen ACA work on their operations and use it 100% and we have put foliar fertilizer plots on these farms. However, with the size of equipment and the timing a big factor, especially on foliar fertilizers and Headline, I have not been able to figure out a logistical way to "stack" all the different things we can do to see if we can push our yields to the next level in corn. If anyone has an idea or would like to try to do a plot with the combination of all these products let one of your SFG agronomists know and we will figure out a way to accomplish this.

Taylor Banks Agronomy Sales



The need for early weed control in the spring is becoming more important than ever with the increasing amounts of herbicide resistant weeds out in the fields here is southern Iowa. The best way to

achieve this is by applying a herbicide that has residual at the same time as you would normally go in for your spring burndown application. There are many products on the market, such as Matador, Authority, or Sonic just to name a few. These products make it possible for your soybean crop to grow and possibly be canopied over before the second flush of weeds get a chance to grow above the soybeans. Weeds are easiest to control when they are small and the use of residual herbicides with your pre, make it possible to go back in on the second pass and spray weeds that are 2 to 4 inches tall and not 8 to 12. We have seen in the past few crop seasons that if marestail, giant

ragweed, or waterhemp get over 4 inches tall the chances of getting good weed control are greatly reduced, even when using a "burner" such as Cobra or Phoenix. Products like these pack a certain amount of crop injury along with their application. In the battle against herbicide resistant weeds, timing is everything and just a few days too late can make the difference from having excellent weed control or poor. The use of residual products in your pre emergence program will give you more flexibility for the second herbicide application. As always contact your local SFG agronomist for product information, and any questions you have for the upcoming crop season

Kyle Smith Albia Location Manager



Now that harvest is mostly behind us I'd like to remind everyone the dangers of winter and offer a few tips to help your cattle through the bitter cold weather ahead of us.

1. Help your herd weather the chill. Weathermen talk about "wind chill" or "real feel" temperatures. Cattle experience that "real feel" more than we do.

At a temperature of 10 degrees Fahrenheit and with a 5 mph wind, the wind chill temperature is 3 degrees. But when the breeze whips up to 20 mph, wind chill plummets to a minus 10 degrees!

The "lower critical temperature" of beef cattle is the temperature below which

energy intake must increase to maintain body temperature. The LCT of a cow with a wet hair coat is around 58 degrees. That same cow, with a dry winter coat, has an LCT of 32 degrees. If she has an extra heavy coat, it's more like 18 degrees.

Minimal shelter that serves as a wind-break, such as a woodlot, can significantly decrease cow cold stress. It doesn't have to be fancy.

Cows can withstand a couple cold days with no change in their feeding program. But for sustained periods of cold, wet and windy days, 10% to 50% more energy should be fed. Just don't suddenly offer a slug of grain to cows that haven't been adapted to it. That'll invite rumen acidosis.

2. Water is a major ingredient: Fresh water is just as important now as it was when it was 90 degrees in the shade. Cows that have calved and are milking heavily have especially critical water needs.

3. Remember minor ingredients: A good mineral/vitamin mix is critical year-around. We stock several different minerals such as Kent 365 and Hubbard

Stock Master as well as a wide variety of Crystalyx tubs.

4. *Don't forget your "sideliners"*: These are cattle that may escape your attention because they aren't doing much for the bottom line at this time of year – like a sidelined football player. Poor care now will limit their profitability when called on later this year.

Herd bulls are a significant investment. Unfortunately, bulls tend to be relegated to second-class status once breeding season is over. Be particularly aware of bulls in poor body condition. It won't be long before turn-out time arrives once again.

Young, growing bulls can be stunted if not properly fed. Most should continue to gain about 1.5 pounds per day through winter. That won't happen if you feed them broomstick hay.

Replacement heifers need to be kept growing at about 1.5 pounds per day. A heifer should weigh 60% of her mature weight at first breeding and be bred by 14 months of age so she calves as a two-year-old.

Be sure to stop in on December 17th for our out prepay open house and have breakfast with us.

May your Christmas be filled with fun and happiness—
From all of us at SFG



Mark Young Senior Agronomy Manager



Being prepared involves regular soil testing, which is one of the best tools you can use for determining which nutrients are present and how much will be available to your crop. Soil testing can predict which nutrients and how much of each nutrient needs to be added for plants to reach their yield potential. Decades of improving lab chemistry techniques and extensive field calibration provide a measure of confidence in knowing what is happening in the soil. Nevertheless, there are several things worth considering before samples are sent to the lab and after results are returned.

Do my soil samples adequately represent my fields?

Getting a good soil analysis is totally dependent on submitting a representative sample. Considering that the rooting zone of an acre consists of well over 1000 tons of soil and that the laboratory will only analyze a tablespoon of soil, the importance of SFG agronomist getting a representative sample is obvious. A soil analysis can only be as good as the sample that was sent to the lab.

Why do I often need to add more nutrients than I harvest in crops?

Whenever crops are removed from the field during harvest, the nutrients in the harvested portion of the plants are also removed, thus leaving the soil a bit more depleted than before. Replacing these harvested nutrients is a bare minimum for maintaining soil fertility levels. However, due to a variety of chemical and biological reactions that make many nutrients less available to the plant, the addition of more nutrients is usually required

than just the amount harvested. Failure to replenish the soil supply of nutrients will result in a gradual depletion of soil fertility and can ultimately lead to diminished crop yield and quality.

What is the right amount of fertilizer to add?

Consider the value of the crop and compare the cost of potential yield loss with the expenses associated with fertilization. The most appropriate approach will vary from farm to farm, thus the final decision is best made between you and your trusted SFG agronomist.

Once a representative soil sample has been properly analyzed, there are still many specific decisions concerning matters such as placement, source, and timing that must be made in order to use nutrients to their full advantage. Now is the time to make these decisions and prepare for the coming year.