

LFB Solutions Fall 2010 Newsletter

Crop Consulting: It's been fun again to be in the fertilizer recommendation side of things. I spent the past 36 years consulting with fertilizer customers about their crop needs, and making good recommendations for where they wanted to go with their crop production. *The past 6 years I have spent consulting without the need to sell fertilizer.* That changes a lot of the dynamics for me and for my customers.

Site specific sampling, or if you will Geo Referenced sampling, has been a fun experience for me, considering all I had ever done was by referencing the lay of the land and drawing maps accordingly.

Now I use soil maps taken off the internet, and yield maps from combines, to draw my management zones. These in turn are put onto a handheld computer to guide me as I am pulling samples from your fields. That in itself is "cool", but it is what happens when the soil tests come back from the lab that has me excited. If we have done an adequate job of laying out the management zones we can do a much better job of recommending where to put the fertilizer that is needed. Maybe in a given zone, none is needed at all at the present time. You may actually use the same amount of fertilizer in a given field but you put it where it was needed.

One of my larger clients claimed I saved him 25 tons of Phosphorous and 72 tons of potash compared to what he had done the year before. That allowed him to spread a bit of lime that I was recommending, and still have some money left over. That isn't a savings that will necessarily happen every year.

I have often heard while listening to people "my consultant is going to even out the fertility within my field". Even if you could achieve equal fertility within all areas (zones) of your field you still would not have equal production from the different zones because of the soil structural differences, and past histories of the soils. Therefore, I try to achieve for my clients, Maximum Economic Yields (MEY) from within each management zone. Try to do the best each zone is capable of doing in a economic manner for you.

I was told by a potential client that they don't have a yield monitor in the combine, nor do they have a variable rate way to do their spreading of the fertilizer. My present clients showed me how that wasn't always necessary in order to make the plan work for them. In the absence of a yield monitor, soil maps will do a reasonable job of laying out testing zones. Of course, you could take the "Grid Sampling" method that samples in a specific grid whether the soil changes, or not. These all work to a given degree.

I personally prefer the "Management Zone" approach of utilizing Yield maps overlaid on the soils maps. Drawing approximately 10 acre zones, unless smaller areas are indicated by the physical makeup of the soil. This combination of Yield maps in zones, allows us to make judgments concerning where the yield is coming from, and how those areas might influence what we recommend elsewhere. We are not trying to make everything the same, we are trying to get each area to produce to its' maximum capability.

After we make the recommendations, I can program the stick for you to take to your supplier in order to spread the variable rate application. All they need to do is plug in the stick and start driving. A bit over simplified, but you get the idea. When the time came some of my clients looked at the application maps and said "we can do that with our current single rate spreaders", and they did. They called it "poor mans variable rate".

Some of my clients found that after paying my fees, they still saved enough to buy the variable rate controllers for their spreaders and didn't have to resort to the "Poor Mans" way of doing things.

The value in a good consultant isn't just in pulling soil samples and what he recommends. It can be the way he recommends things and the how. It can come from comparing what you are doing vs other practices he has seen elsewhere. It can be from different equipment and utility that he has seen in use somewhere else, all brought together to challenge you to do an even better job tomorrow than you can today. Some even want me to help get rid of their paperwork headaches by the records I keep.

LFB Solutions Fertilizer:

We have just gotten our new pricing worked out for the near future. It is likely to change again in October, but for the month of September we pretty well know where we are going. There have been some changes in the product offerings for this year, and I am excited about those also. We have been seeing in our fertilizer testing, and our crop consulting/scouting, that there are certain things we used to see about 1-2 times in a 5 year cycle. In Michigan, Northern Indiana, Northern Ohio for sure, we have seen some of those patterns happening each year for the past 3 years on a broad area.

We continue on with our best selling 6-24-6 with micros and the emphasis on Zinc. We have touched up the Zinc a bit more than what we were doing, giving this product .25% Zinc. This product is meant to be seed placed at planting time and is one of the safest "seed placed" starters on the market.

We are introducing 6-24-6 EZ for those who need extra Zinc as a matter of course. This offering will get the Zinc content to .50% and is again meant for seed placement. The "EZ" stands for Extra Zinc. This product comes as a result of all the light striping in the corn fields the last few years. The striping is usually caused by a shortage of Zinc, Sulfur, And/or Magnesium at early growth stages.

We are also introducing 6-24-6 LS. This product will probably fit especially on light soils needing lime. Again a component of the light striping in the corn fields. Customers who had actually limed their soils still found that lack of magnesium early could cause stunting from which the corn would not recover. This product is meant to be used as a seed placed starter and carries the zinc content of .25% in addition to the added Magnesium. Because of logistics, this product will only be available on a early order basis, prior to January 1st, 2001.

Our complete line up will be as follows:

<u>Product</u>	<u>Micros</u>	<u>Zinc Content</u>
6-24-6	yes	.25%
6-24-6 EZ	yes	.50%
6-24-6 LS	yes	.25% with added Magnesium

3.

9-18-9	yes/no	NA
3-18-18	yes/no	NA

The 9-18-9 and the 3-18-18 will be offered as both clear “white” products as well as 80/20 products. The 80% ortho/ 20% poly products will have the micronutrient package of the 6-24-6 base product that contains the .25% Zinc, and others.

Depending on the product ordered some of these products will be Green and some will be Gold in color. Our main supplier usually is Gold in Color.

This is an exciting time for us as we see the fertilizer sales stretch from Minnesota, Missouri, North and South Dakota, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. We have had inquiries from other states, and they are always welcome. This is our 7th year in business as LFB Solutions, Inc and we have as a goal to sell \$1,000,000 worth of fertilizer. Our business has grown because people have been looking for answers they aren’t getting elsewhere. We aren’t very long on “Song and Dance” but then you don’t have unrealistic expectations. We are long on putting these products through the planter, then when we make a recommendation, we know what to expect on your farm.

Please feel free to pass our information on to others, ask in person by email, or phone, or ask on NewAgTalk.com on the crops forum.

Thank You!

Bill Moyer, CPC, Dir
LFB Solutions, Inc.
lfbolutions@msn.com
517-812-2483