

Products & Advice for Soil Regeneration & Animal Nutrition



From the Directors...

As Winter approaches, pasture quality and the importance of animal supplements becomes a major focus.

Many customers have experienced outstanding results using our animal supplements or Natra Min yet their successes are never documented. Sometimes customers are reluctant to share their 'good news' as the results achieved are difficult to quantify. For example, a farmer recently recalled how when ploughing, birds were following his tractor in pursuit of worms, something he hadn't witnessed for many years.

Such information is invaluable to us, and we are extremely thankful to farmers who share their experiences as so often this information can be used to help other farmers facing similar challenges.

Perhaps the most consistent feedback we receive regarding Natra Min is the improvement in soil structure that occurs following its use. As one farmer reported "when ploughing, it feels like the plough jumps out of the ground when I go from a non treated area to an area where Natra Min has been used" and another... "water no longer sits on top of the ground anymore, but soaks into the ground."

And whilst we are reluctant to make claims that Superior Mineral Supplement is a cure for scours, farmers regularly report that since using it, the white scours in calves have ceased. Other anecdotal 'evidence' regarding the use of Superior Mineral Supplement remains consistent... with stronger cycling and better utilization of dry feed a common theme.

While these reports would certainly not come under the category of replicated trials, we have often found that this sort of feedback can help us to help other farmers to have the confidence to re-assess their soil and animal nutrition.

In acknowledgment of farmers who kindly share their experiences with us, this month we are offering customers the opportunity to win a 2 night stay at the luxurious Novotel Twin Waters on the Sunshine Coast! Simply give us your feedback on the results you've noticed since using one of our products, and you will automatically go into the draw to win this holiday. 'Testimonials' may be faxed, mailed or emailed, but must be received by 15 June 2005. See the reverse of this newsletter for contact details.

So thank you again to all our customers, and we look forward to sharing some of these stories with you in our next edition.

Trevor & Wendy Zerner

Is Super Phosphate still working for you?

In the photographs below, both paddocks were planted with an identical pasture mix of Rye, Clover, Phalaris and Cocksfoot. Initially the growth was similar, however during the hot dry conditions it was obvious that the pasture performed much better in the area that was treated with Natra Min HI-Phos.



Many farmers tell us that Super does not give them the results that they used to get. Contrary to the belief held by some farmers that the quality of Super Phosphate has changed, we believe that the change is in the soil.

In particular, the depletion of microbe and worm activity in the soil has reduced the effectiveness of applied fertilizer as well as having a strong impact on soil pH and subsequently, the availability of all plant nutrients.

Do you have a phosphate bank in your soil?

If you have used phosphate fertilizer in the past, then the answer to that question is probably "YES"

CSIRO Research...

"It is thought that at best, just 20% of phosphorus applied by way of fertilizer is available for plant uptake in the year it is applied. Successive generations of Australian farmers have applied huge quantities of phosphorus fertilizer to combat the problem of chronic phosphorus deficiency in their soil. This has led to a massive bank of fixed phosphorus, estimated at close to \$10 billion at current Super Phosphate prices."

"This means, that of the dollars spent applying phosphate fertilizer at the rate of 250kg per hectare (about 22.5kg of phosphorus) often just one tenth of this phosphorus (2.25kg) is immediately available to plants." (Source CSIRO article, *Raiding the Phosphate Bank, 1997.*)

In separate research carried out by Cooperative Research Centre for Soil & Land Management, it was found that the application of high levels of fertilizer can reduce the effectiveness of soil organisms, thus further reducing nutrient availability. For example, high N inputs reduce Nitrogen fixation and high P inputs reduce beneficial effects of mycorrhizae (VAM).

How big is the phosphate bank?

"It is thought that each hectare of soil may hold up to 400kg of phosphorus, with less than 4kg immediately available to crops or pasture." (Source CSIRO article, *Raiding the Phosphate Bank, 1997.*)

Time for change...

Many farmers are making the change to Natra Min as a means to provide a balance in soil nutrition and to stimulate the life in the soil, assisting to increase the availability of locked up nutrients. (More information over page)

In this Edition...



Natra Min - the effective alternative to Super Phosphate
Ray & Kelvin Pitkin discover the KEY to unlock soil nutrients

Mega Results with Mega Minerals Lick Blocks
Consultant, Rob Newcombe's report

Win a holiday at Novotel Twin Waters

Tenterfield graziers discover “key” to unlock soil’s nutrients



Ray Pitkin: pleased with return of clover to pasture.

Well known Tenterfield graziers, brothers Ray and Kelvin Pitkin, have discovered an economical and effective alternative to Super Phosphate.

For several years the Pitkins sought a suitable substitute to Super Phosphate that would deliver improved pasture growth and response. After decades of farming, and hindered by several seasons of poor rainfall, Ray admits their decision to review their choice of input was influenced by their dependence on an ever increasing amount of water-soluble fertilizer without increased results.

Double application of Super... but not double results...

As Ray explains, “Dad started to apply Super on our paddocks up in the mountain years ago, applying 12 - 15 tonne initially. Over the last 10 years Kelvin and I had almost doubled the application of Super, up to 26 tonne over the same paddocks... and yet we still weren't getting the response we expected.

We have noticed less and less clover and some grass species had disappeared altogether.”

That is when they heard about Natra Min... five different blends of broad-spectrum fertilizer, designed to restore the soil’s nutrients by stimulating microbial activity, helping to ‘unlock’ stored elements such as Phosphorous to increase its availability to plants.

Based on soil test results, and considering the amount of Super previously applied, Ray and Kelvin applied Natra Min Cal-S in a bid to release the Phosphorus bank in their soil.

Return of Clover & Medics...

“We aerial spread about 30 tonne of Natra Min and the response has been very impressive. Up on the mountain, the paddocks had been through a hard time, but since applying Natra Min the pastures seem to have held on better in the dry compared to when we applied Super.”

Another beneficial effect has been the return of clovers and medics that look impressive, standing knee high as well as an improved ‘durability’ to the pasture. “The pasture certainly seems a lot softer with better grasses and clover. We’ve fattened bullocks and turned them off before Christmas and two weeks later you wouldn’t know they’d been in the paddock.”

The return of legumes to this country is a huge advantage in terms of improving the protein content of the pasture and supplying a source of Nitrogen to the soil and grasses.

Natra Min: Cost Effective alternative...

As Ray adds, “For a similar cost to using Super, Natra Min has provided better results, with increased pasture density and growth.”

Visible Results...

With the improvement in pasture clearly visible, the Pitkins have fielded queries by many who are curious to find out the secret to their success. According to Ray, “even the neighbours are looking over the fence and have admitted that the results look very good”.

If you wish to discover more about the ‘key’ to unlocking your soil’s nutrients and improving its fertility, call **AgSolutions** on 1800 81 57 57.

Congratulations Jasmine!



Congratulations to Jasmine Cleary, our Administrative Assistant. Jasmine recently became engaged to local electrician, Ben Lally.

As the first point of contact for many of our customers, Jasmine is the ‘friendly voice’ at the other end of the phone. Her naturally helpful, charming and sunny disposition means news of Jasmine’s

engagement will surely cause many hearts to break!

So we asked our bride-to-be to take time out from planning the ‘big day’ to answer a few ‘personal’ questions...

So how did Ben propose?

Being a ‘control freak’, I directed Ben on what ring to buy, and when and where to propose. He proposed over dinner, and as expected, I said YES! *(The poor man doesn't stand a chance!)*

What is your passion?

I love to dance! I’m a professional clogging teacher, but I also love classical ballet.

Best thing about your job?

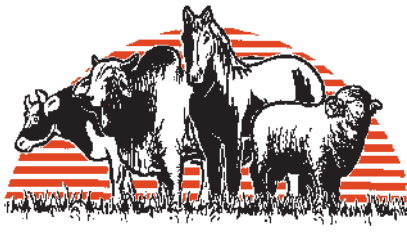
The variety that comes with the position. One moment I’m liaising with a customer in Western Australia, the next I’m organizing freight to Korea. I deal with customers across the agricultural industry, from avocado growers to cotton farmers, conventional farmers and those strictly farming organics.

Any burning ambitions?

In 2006 I will be attending university to study psychology. Ultimately I want to major in mental illnesses, and then be based in a rural community.

Ultimate wedding destination?

Ideally I’d love a white wedding in Europe, but realistically it will probably involve a cruise on the Brisbane River with close friends and family. *(Ben - you heard it here first!)*



“MEGA RESULTS WITH MEGA MINERALS”

Property Management Consultant, Rob Newcombe



Consultant, Rob Newcombe provides property management and property acquisition services to his clients, at present working across 30,000 acres and 3,000 breeders spread from Marlborough to Tenterfield.

Rob places a great deal of emphasis on nutrition for his breeding programs and has been using **AgSolutions'** animal supplements for over 5 years.

Improved Fertility...

Rob highlights that nutrition plays a key role in maintaining high conception rates in mature females... “I’m mindful of the need to increase conception rates with Brahman females so we need to operate and maintain above 85% conception rates in these herds”.

Rob runs a ‘spike’ feeding program with Mega Minerals prior to mating and recognizes the importance of phosphorous supplements on his northern properties.

Mega Minerals provides both phosphorous and a broad spectrum of other minerals and trace elements. By supplementing heifers with Mega Minerals to improve their condition and growth, Rob runs a yearling mating program.

“We’ve had outstanding results since using the Mega Minerals Lick Blocks. Conception rates have increased and we find that these supplements provide a tremendous maintenance source for our breeders. We’re achieving up to 93% conception rates which means clients are happy.”

Supplementing in good times....

Rob Newcombe believes that supplementing animals during periods of good pasture growth is also vital. “I prefer the Mega Minerals Lick Blocks as they have enough molasses to assist with intake in better seasons when we find cattle won't take other phosphorous sources... and they're still getting the broad spectrum of minerals and trace elements.”

... and bad times.

According to Rob, “in hard times, like the seasons we've been having, you need to supplement or you won't have a business. We don't aim to put on condition when it's really bad but if we maintain their condition when it's dry, cattle improve faster when the season changes. Supplementing with Mega Minerals also assists with conception in dry times which means clients will still have calves on the ground next year”.

Aid for Embryo Transplant Program...

Rob oversees an extensive ET program and the importance of supplementing recipients as well as the donor cow is recognised. “At least a 72% conception with recipients has been achieved using Mega Minerals. In one program where Mega Minerals were not used, only 2 out of 15 embryos held. I believe that the broad spectrum of minerals including silica are all important elements for ET programs... another reason I prefer the Mega Minerals Lick Block.”

Mega Minerals suitable for all livestock...

Because the blocks do not contain Urea, Rob uses the blocks for a range of livestock... “our paddock stock horses have access to Mega Minerals as a supplement and they always look fit and healthy. Even the chooks have a block to peck away at when they need it”.

Reduced Fertiliser Costs...

Rob Newcombe was first introduced to the range of **AgSolutions'** products through using **Natra Min** on an irrigated property for a client. “It turned the soil around and we were able to cut our fertilizer costs by unlocking Nitrogen and other nutrients there.”

“I don't like the heavy metals in some of the chemical fertilizers and believe that the use of them will come back to haunt us eventually. I'm currently witnessing, and believe that there will continue to be an increasing trend towards reduced use of chemical fertilizers in farming and an increase in a more organic type approach.”

For information on Superior and Mega Minerals call **AgSolutions** on 1800 81 57 57 or for Rob Newcombe's consultancy services, contact Rob on 07 4666 6250.

SUNFLOWER SUCCESS...

Congratulations to Pat O'Farrell for winning the Toowoomba Royal Show Dryland Sunflower Crop Competition. Pat's dryland Mono Sunflowers yielded 1.35 t/ac which is an outstanding result.

Pat has used **Natra Min** regularly for 10 years. More information on Pat's success will appear in our next newsletter.



Win a weekend away at Novotel Twin Waters!



AgSolutions Australia is giving readers the chance to win...

2 nights complimentary accommodation plus full cooked breakfast daily... at Novotel Twin Waters.



For your chance to win, simply send us a photo and/or write and tell us about the results that you have had using one of our products.

The winner will be announced in the next edition of our newsletter, so hurry ... entries must be received no later than 15th June 2005. Send entries to info@agsolutions.com.au, Fax 07 5482 7219 or post to Head Office, 8 Wadell Road, Gympie QLD 4570.



Winter heats up at Novotel Twin Waters Resort: Thoughts of a holiday to the glorious Sunshine Coast is always an appealing option, but Winter is the ultimate time to visit with Novotel Twin Waters Resort's exclusive Winter Break package, guaranteed to ease those winter chills. Guests can stay warm and indulge in the sumptuous cuisine of Lily's on the Lagoon, the Resort's premier dining experience or enjoy a round of golf on a near by championship golf course. Reward yourself with a pampering treatment in the over-water bungalow day spa, or have a little fun with the variety of complimentary water sports activities including kayaking, sailing, wind surfing, catamarans and heated pool and spa.

The special Winter Break package is only \$170 per Resort Room per night, including full buffet breakfast daily - it's the perfect excuse to take that mid-year holiday. Virgin Blue and Jetstar offer direct flights from Sydney and Melbourne to the Sunshine Coast Airport daily. This offer is valid from 1st May until 31st August 2005, limited days available on this rate. For further information and bookings telephone 1800 072 277, email relax@twinwatersresort.com.au or visit www.twinwatersresort.com.au

Update on Recent Events



AgSolutions has been busy hosting a number of educational seminars and field days, enabling us to meet with many more clients face to face and discuss their particular concerns and requirements.

Many thanks to those who have attended and contributed to the success of these events.

Recent events included a Tenterfield breakfast seminar on soil and pasture management, plus animal nutrition and health, co-hosted by Pfizer Animal Health and CRT Tenterfield.

Sumptuous breakfast aside ... participants were also introduced to a number of management topics, including learning how farmers in the Tenterfield area had successfully discovered cost effective alternatives to Lime, Gypsum, and Super Phosphate, and practical ways to increase the nutrient availability for their pasture.

George Wilkes, Area Manager for Pfizer Animal Health provided an update on the latest reproductive vaccines and parasite management, and Animal Nutritionist, Ken Sykes discussed the importance of mineral and trace element supplementation for cattle and sheep.

Derek Schulz and family hosted a successful field day at their property in Gatton, which focused on small crops and soil management. Thanks to the Schulz family for their fine hospitality!

Other events you may have missed included Dorrigo Pasture & Potatoes Field Day, an evening Seminar at Kyogle with Heritage Seeds and Norco Rural Store, plus an Organic Beef Seminar at Kyogle.

This seminar in particular highlighted the growth being experienced in the organic farming market, of which AgSolutions is proud to be a part of through way of its line of fertilizers and animal supplements, certified for organic use.

Agri Business Career Opportunity...

Do you know of any one that would be interested in joining our team of Field Advisors to service our growing customer base?

Contact us on 1800 81 57 57 for further details.

AgSolutions

A U S T R A L I A

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CALL NOW for answers to your animal nutrition and soil fertility questions.

Freecall: 1800 81 57 57 Fax 07 5482 7219 email: info@agsolutions.com.au