



## Products & Advice for Soil Regeneration & Animal Nutrition



### From the Directors...

As we move into the warmer months with the worst of the Winter frosts thawed, it is timely to look to soil management and how best to utilize the nutrient and moisture

reserves in your soil, and how to maximize crop production.

Be it humans, animals, plants or soil, there is a lot of similarities... and a lot of differences. The requirement for broad spectrum minerals is one need shared by all. Also in common is that the action of microbes is essential to convert these minerals into a form that can be utilized.

**AgSolutions** soil management system is structured to enhance biological activity in your soil and to ensure that soil microbes become productive workers... responsible for converting mineral elements into plant available form, converting organic matter into humus... and creating a sponge in your soil to allow air and water to penetrate as well as providing a storehouse for moisture and nutrients.

Having become aware of the negative impact of single superphosphate and water soluble fertilizer on soil life... and subsequently on soil structure and fertility, many farmers and graziers have stopped using, or alternatively have minimized the use of these forms of nutrient replacement.

It is now well known that secondary and trace elements are essential to provide optimum results from phosphate fertilizers and many farmers, rather than accepting the myth that high levels of Phosphorus... or high levels of Calcium... or high levels of Nitrogen are required to grow healthy plants, are now turning to Natra Min.

The escalating price for nitrogen based fertilizer is also having an impact on decision making, resulting in an ever increasing demand for Natra Min.

On existing pasture, Natra Min has proven to be very effective, however Natra Min is not a stand alone product to replace water soluble NPK fertilizers required at plant stage. When Natra Min is applied, it can assist to maximize the effectiveness of applied fertilizer, thus allowing for a reduction in application rates.

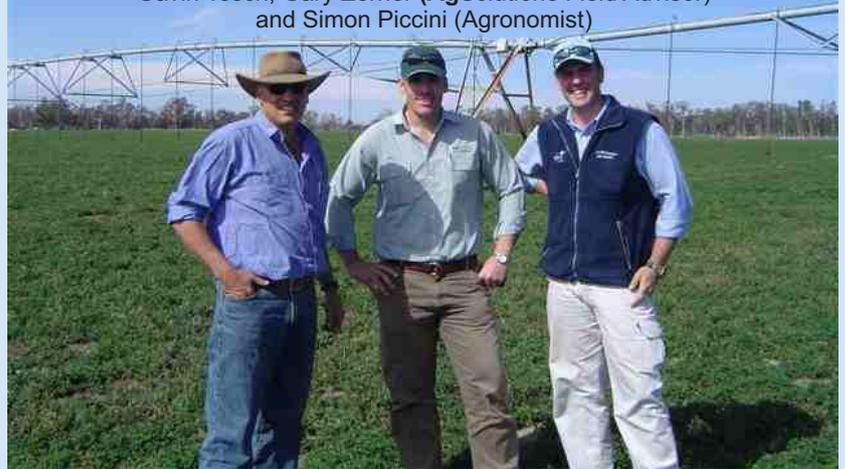
Why not pick up the phone and talk with one of our trained Field Advisors and find out more on Natra Min application rates for your property.

We appreciate the farmers who have shared their experience in this newsletter and hope that you enjoy your cup of tea while you have a read.

*Trevor & Wendy Zerner*

## Natra Min... Amending soil and water infiltration with Natra Min Cal-S

Gavin Tesch, Gary Zerner (**AgSolutions** Field Advisor) and Simon Piccini (Agronomist)



Yelarbon farmers Gavin and Robyn Tesch, and Val Lennon, have found that the use of Natra Min has become an integral component of their soil management program. With full water allocation, up to 200 acres of Lucerne are grown and depending on river allocation, oats and barley are also produced to meet their hay and chaff markets.

Gavin first applied Natra Min as a soil amendment to potatoes about nine years ago and has since used various Natra Min blends.

"I see the Natra Min Cal-S as having more benefits than straight Gypsum," said Gavin. "Natra Min also provides a boost to the soil biology and this, coupled with the trace elements, provides an extra advantage over Gypsum."

### Improved water infiltration noticeable...

Water infiltration on their hard setting, loam-clay soils is where Gavin has seen the biggest improvements from the use of Natra Min Cal-S. "These soils crust over and prevent any depth of water penetration. Normally 40-50 points of irrigation would cause run-off."

Since applying Natra Min as part of the annual program Gavin is now able to apply up to 90 points and still have no run-off. This means the water stays in the soil which makes a critical difference to the crop, especially given the dry times and reduced water allocations.

### Lucerne

"When we first trialed Natra Min on Lucerne we left 5 acres untreated. Initially we couldn't see much difference, however in the second year there was a noticeable benefit to the growth of Lucerne where Natra Min had been applied. After this result, Natra Min has been applied to all irrigated Lucerne as I couldn't afford to have areas that didn't perform."

*continued...*

### In this Edition...



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Broad spectrum minerals and trace elements restore pasture.

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Improved soil condition helps to drought proof property.

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Mineral deficiency eliminated and 97% calving rate.

continued ...

## NATRA MIN

Providing an effective alternative to Gypsum



### Agronomy...

Gavin works closely with his Agronomist, Simon Piccini, of Texas and Mingoola Rural Traders. According to Simon, "Crusting and

sodic soils are the big issues in the Texas and Yelarbon area. We incorporate Natra Min Cal-S as a soil amendment in place of Gypsum because the economics are there for our clients."

"We are definitely seeing the benefits of Natra Min Cal-S in broadacre crops, irrigated Silage and Lucerne. In addition to the improvement in the soil structure and workability of these soils, soil tests are also showing positive results."

### Barley...

Last year Gavin applied Natra Min Cal-S prior to planting Dictator barley. "Because we had used a belt spreader and hadn't totally overlapped our runs, the effects of Natra Min Cal-S actually showed up in the crop as definite dark green strips in the barley."

Other fertilizers were applied at a different angle and Nitrogen was applied through the pivot so it was clear that the crop variance was definitely from the Natra Min Cal-S," Gavin explains.

Gavin concludes... "Over time we've seen an increase in our Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC). In some paddocks we can have three soil types so from the start we needed a product to suit this variance and Natra Min has done that."

In our soil samples I believe Natra Min has improved the balance of the soil and the ability of the crop to utilize other applied fertilizer.

Working with Simon and incorporating the Natra Min blends has seen improved nutrient levels in our soil tests. We're storing nutrition and even having reserves left in the soil after crops like sorghum... where as once our levels would have been depleted."

## Clover and cattle respond to Natra Min...



*Like many others this year, Ross and Diana Stewart of Wellington Vale (West of Deepwater) are enduring one of their worst droughts and despite the lack of rain over the last 12 months, the Stewarts still recognize the importance of budgeting for their annual fertilizer program.*

### More than Phosphorus needed...

Ross and Diana Stewart are now in their third season of applying Natra Min Mineral Fertilizer and Soil Conditioner to their pastures. As Ross recalls, "we just weren't seeing the response from Single Super and realized that we needed to use a fertilizer that put minerals and trace elements back into the soil."

Traditionally our Basalt country is our better country and cattle generally do better on this area, so we first experimented with Natra Min Cal-S on our front country that we describe as Blue Granite."

Having a zero tolerance of African Love Grass, the Stewarts regularly monitor their pastures, so the benefits of Natra Min were soon obvious.

Diana was impressed to visually see the results of Natra Min... "The clover and medics responded where the Natra Min had been applied and overall, the granite pasture outperformed the basalt pastures that year (2005). In addition, the cattle grazing these pastures performed better than those on the basalt country."

### Soil Structure improved...

The Stewarts had a number of hard areas where nothing would grow. Now, after two applications of Natra Min the soil in these areas has softened up and is now productive.

"The corner of the oats paddock was an oak-clay pan and was predominantly couch and bare ground. Natra Min has definitely improved this area and this year is the first time it has grown a crop. Oats has been planted with a good germination and even growth across the entire paddock."

### Apply Natra Min at any time...

Natra Min provides broad spectrum minerals and trace elements and is formulated with a catalyst to stimulate microbe and worm activity in your soil. Available in six different blends to provide extra Calcium, Phosphorus, Sulphur or Potassium, Natra Min will not leach away nor volatilise into the air.

Even if an application of Natra Min is followed by extended dry weather, it will not be wasted... it will still be there in your soil when it does rain.

### Mineral Supplements the key...

Like most in the New England region, Ross and Diana provide supplements to their cattle through the winter months. "We've always made our own lick blocks in 100 litre tubs and the addition of AgSolutions' Superior Mineral Supplement 'hits the nail on the head'. The minerals definitely help to keep the stock healthier."

The Stewarts had found that cattle used to chase minerals and in particular, the cattle would actually gorge the bore water and lick exposed gully banks at certain times of the year.

Since adding the Superior Minerals they don't see any of these cravings and the intake of the minerals varies throughout the year.

Herefords are now a deep red colour and fertility in breeders has been very good despite the dry season.

"We'd suspected that this country and our cattle were lacking minerals and we now cover this lack both in our soil and supplements. As far as Natra Min goes, it's great to have a product that's adding minerals to the environment as everything else seems to deplete the soil," says Ross.

**BROAD SPECTRUM MINERALS... Essential for Soil and Animal Health**

## Natra Min fertilizers have saved thousands of \$\$\$....

When Michael Fitz-Henry 'took the reigns' as manager of a Woodhill property outside Beaudesert, the day yards were bare ground and other paddocks were lifeless, compacted and unproductive... the long term consequence of horses flogging pasture back to dirt over a 25 year period.

### Bare Minimum...

"When we came here we couldn't keep condition on the horses and even with irrigation, we had poor response in the pasture. We could pour water on the hard ground and watch it run off."

### Pasture Transformation...

"Now, after 4 years of Natra Min, this is as good as it gets. Our horses fatten, the soil feels softer and we've drought proofed the place. Even with no rain there's still a green pick underneath, and the horses do well."



### Starting in the Soil...

Recognizing the need to start with the soil, Natra Min was applied at a heavier rate of 500 kg/ha. Pastures responded well, water infiltration improved and both horses and cattle had a preference to graze areas where Natra Min was first applied.

### Soil Management...

Legumes such as Lucerne, White Clover and Siratro have been added to Rhodes/Kikuyu pastures and these have continued to spread. Coupled with grazing management and soil aeration, Michael has also seen other legumes return... a real measure that pasture and soil health has improved.

With softer soils, the germination of grasses and legumes has improved along with better water penetration.

The ridge areas of the property have always been considered poor country, and in these areas it has taken 2-3 applications of Natra Min to improve the pasture in these paddocks.

### Repeat Applications of Natra Min...

According to Michael the results in pastures have been so obvious that when the paddocks are no longer 'surprising' him, it is a clear indication that they require another top dress of Natra Min.

Visiting hundreds of properties each year, *AgSolutions* Field Advisor, Gary Zerner has noted that the Fitz-Henry property provides one of the best examples of pasture transformation.

### Strip Grazing extends Pasture utilization...



As Gary Zerner adds... "What impressed me the most is that Michael is now strip grazing his day yards and is able to budget his pastures. This has improved the utilization of pasture and allows him to know exactly how many weeks... not days... that he'll get out of each paddock."

Bare corners of paddocks are also improving, and Michael assists these areas by mulching. With a large number of paddocks, corners add up and these corners have now become acres of productive ground. Under the strip grazing program of Fitz-Henry Polo, one acre will feed 10 horses for 2 weeks!

### Economic Sense...

"Fitz-Henry Polo" runs a boutique family operation and must be able to supply champion horses at world Polo tournament level. Put simply, "you can't afford to provide \$10 000 worth of feed to a \$20 000 horse".

The use of Natra Min and its impact on pastures has ensured that expenses usually attributed to purchasing feed have now been reduced. As Michael confirms, "if I had to feed one group of 16 horses with half a bale of hay each per day, it would cost \$96 a day, or close enough to \$700 a week.

Around July, these same horses lasted 6 weeks in one paddock (strip grazed), so even where I use Natra Min at twice the recommended rate, it is still cheaper, and the financial savings on hay are enormous". (Note: hay costs above were based on \$12 / bale. Actual cost is now over \$25/bale).

With an annual application of Natra Min combined with minimal use of chemical fertilizers and grazing management, Michael Fitz-Henry claims that thousands of dollars per year are being saved by the reduced need to purchase feed.

### Healthy Soil = Healthy Horse

The improved soil condition has been reflected in the enhanced condition of the Fitz-Henry Polo horses, with noticeable improvements in feet, overall growth and condition... and even bone development.

Michael commented... "These results stand out when horses are brought in... or alternatively if horses come home after an extended time away. There is no comparison to the health, stamina and condition of our horses. That's proof to me that the soil and pastures are nutritionally exceptional."

Michael suggests that all horse properties could benefit from the use of Natra Min, as he now spends less time feeding horses... and more time working with them.

As Michael concludes, "I like the Natra Min blends as I know they're 'ticking away' all the time in the soil. I now have good pasture growth in once hard, run down bare paddocks. Even after the severe frosts, I still have a green pick underneath."

Remember, *AgSolutions* offers a range of Natra Min blends, ensuring 'horses for courses'. Give us a call on 1800 81 57 57 to find out more on how Natra Min can assist you to restore fertility to your soil.

**SUPERIOR**  
MINERAL SUPPLEMENT

**MEGA MINERALS**  
LICK BLOCKS

## Superior Mineral Supplement increases Calving Rate...



Peter and Jackie Flohr of 'Mt Lebanon Santas', who run 3500 head on 31000 acres near Clermont, are well aware what it costs not to supplement.

As Peter says... "this country is lacking minerals and we've lost stock in the past as a result. Since using Superior Mineral Supplement as a dry lick for over five years now, mineral deficiencies are no longer an issue. Our cattle look perfect and the neighbours ask what we're feeding and have also started to use the supplement."

### Mineral Deficiency...

Peter and Jackie run 31 paddocks that are 1000 acres each and find it's their lighter sandy-loam country that's lacking and this is where they mainly use the Superior Mineral Supplement. "In these areas the cattle used to lick dirt. When mustering, there's one gully where they would always lick the bank and we would struggle to get them out of there. This no longer happens, and the condition of livestock has vastly improved."

Peter is also aware of the association found between mineral deficiencies and lameness in cattle. Prior to supplementing, the Flohrs had identified two paddocks where cattle would continually go lame. However, since feeding minerals year-round, lameness has been eliminated from these cattle.

### Minerals & their impact on Calving... 97% calving rate

The Flohrs proudly claim that year-round supplementing has delivered remarkable results in terms of fertility, with a 97% calving rate achieved.

In Peter's words, "Superior Minerals are bloody good! Our first and second calf heifers are on the minerals all year round and their calves are unbelievable. You'd think the heifers' calves were out of eight year old cows they are that good. The bulls are out year round and last year, with such a high calving rate, I couldn't get a deck of empty cows to sell out of 1800 breeders."

### Palatability...

"The cattle found the supplement to be quite palatable, so we used to add salt to the minerals to regulate intake but as this increased the cost, we simply put the Superior out each week and the cattle

regulate themselves. In our lighter country where we supplement all year round the cattle clean it up in a couple of days but the 460 heifers look good, despite these paddocks being mineral deficient."

According to Peter, the cattle come running when Superior is put out. "Our cattle seem to have more energy now. Prior to using Superior, it was obvious that stock in certain paddocks were off-colour and you couldn't drive them when mustering."

### Adding to Molasses or Grain...

As a dry lick or grain additive, Superior Mineral Supplement is a very versatile product and is able to be mixed with any other supplements to suit your particular program.

When conditions are extremely dry, the Flohrs also feed molasses to heifers, and finish their steers with Superior Mineral Supplement added to grain at 20 kg/tonne.

### Superior... an effective alternative to Urea

Peter Flohr says, "I don't like urea and know that the balance of minerals are important to ensue optimum production. In addition, we have found Superior Mineral Supplement to be inexpensive to use."

The fact that Peter and Jackie often recommend Superior to others in Central Queensland is a testament that they're satisfied with the results.

If you have concerns regarding the condition, fertility, or production of your livestock, contact **AgSolutions** and discover how supplements can be easily integrated into your current farming practices.

LAST MONTH...  
LAST CHANCE TO WIN...

## Win a Chainsaw

**SUPERIOR**  
MINERAL SUPPLEMENT



**MEGA MINERALS**  
LICK BLOCKS

The proven, safe & effective supplement  
for Winter & Drought conditions

5 chainsaws  
to be won!!!



### How to be in the draw...

Purchase 5 bags of Superior Mineral Supplement or Mega Minerals Lick Blocks (5x17kg or 1x75 kg) to qualify for your place in our draw to win a Husqvarna Chainsaw (model 340) valued at \$599!  
Closes 31.08.07 Drawn 17.09.07

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and soil fertility questions.**

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