



## Products & Advice for Soil Regeneration & Animal Nutrition



### From the Directors...

#### **Remove The guess work with a Soil Test....**

Did you know a simple soil test could save you countless dollars in fertilizer? With the ever-increasing cost of

fertilizer, regular soil tests are critical to ensure your crop receives optimum nutrition... economically.

It is common for many farmers to continue to use 'the same fertilizer as last year', however, this is often not the right option. When choosing your fertilizer program, it is important to consider all 3 aspects of soil fertility: Nutrition, Structure and Biology.

Soil tests provide a snap shot of what nutrients are potentially available to the plant. Unless total nutrients are tested, a soil test does not show what is locked up from previously applied fertilizers or natural reserves in your soil.

This highlights the importance of soil structure and biology because they both directly affect the availability of plant nutrients and are the key to 'tap into locked up nutrients'.

Depending on what you grow, it is often useful to take a leaf or sap test at the same time as doing a soil test in order to determine the uptake of nutrients by your crop in comparison to the nutrient levels in your soil. For example, your soil test may indicate that you have sound levels of Phosphorus, however, unless your soil's biology is healthy and active, this Phosphorus may not be available to the plant.

In addition, applied fertilizer can both reduce the availability of some elements and stimulate the release of others. For example, the use of high levels of Nitrogen can reduce the availability or uptake of Molybdenum, Copper, Potassium and Boron. In addition to this, excess Nitrogen can burn up your soil's organic carbon, reduce water infiltration and dramatically reduce your soil's biology or microbe population.

**Soil structure** is also linked to nutrition. Dark soils that are usually high in Magnesium become sticky when wet and cloddy when worked. Soils high in Sodium are more likely to crust on the surface and become powdery when cultivated, impacting on germination and water infiltration.

These are important points to consider when looking at your fertilizer program and soil amendments. It is also why Natra Min blends are designed to address all 3 aspects as a soil conditioner, biological stimulant and mineral fertilizer.

Call **AgSolutions** now for a complimentary evaluation of an existing soil test, or to have an updated soil test performed.

Warm Regards, Trevor & Wendy Zerner

## Breaking Ties with Super



Father and Son, Giles and Gordon Wollen, of Red Range (near Glen Innes) look to the health of their pasture to ensure optimum health and performance of their stock. Even at the end of Winter and after sixteen exceptionally hard frosts in a row, the stock are still looking good.

### **Making the change from Super...**

15 years ago Giles Wollen commenced his search for an alternative to continual applications of Super Phosphate. Despite a history of regular applications, Super was failing to trigger a positive response in both his soil and cattle.

As a grazier, Giles has always considered both the short and long-term effects of applied fertilizers and monitors both pasture and stock health carefully. In 2003 the Wollen family, (comprised of Giles, Liz, Gordon and Sally), were amongst the first in the New England region to trial Natra Min.

### **Non Response Forces Change...**

*"Our country has had a strong Super history with additional applications to some areas being made when dollars permitted. In a good year, we'd apply an extra 200 weight of Super (250kg/ha)... in hind sight, we now know that it was the wrong thing to do."*

Giles acknowledges... "The New England area wouldn't be what it is without Super in the 1950's... but when Super has been applied for 20, 30... or in some cases up to 40 years, it's time to look for something else... especially when two thirds of the Phosphorus locks up.

Our results from Super were dramatic in the first 5 - 10 years... but then things were going backwards and our stock health was a concern. We haven't applied Super since 1990 and since then, we've tried several other fertilizers including other rock mineral blends."

*continued...*

### **In this Edition...**



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Cattle prefer to graze re-mineralized area of property.

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Improved health of soil results in high quality, disease free crops

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Time to break the Super Phosphate cycle.

# Breaking the Ties with Super...

## Natra Min first applied in 2003...

*continued ...*



*"When Natra Min was first applied in 2003, the first thing we noticed was the great improvement in the condition of our cattle... going from a rough, dull coat... to the shiny beast that we were once familiar with."*

*Our pasture response has kept up and stock weights have increased and continue to improve. The ability of our pastures to hold on in dry periods has been very noticeable.*

*We are now getting a response in both our pasture and stock that we never saw prior to using Natra Min."*

### A Long Term Relationship...

Giles recommends the use of Natra Min be viewed from a long-term perspective. "Depending on the state of your soil, you may not immediately see a dramatic response, however, pastures will continually improve along with stock health."

The Wollens have developed a particular interest in soil health, mindful of its critical impact on both pasture and stock. Giles is proud that worms are back in his soil... "we've just dug 45 holes for tree planting and plenty of worms are about again!"

Grazing management (rotational or "observational" as Giles calls it) is a key focus for the Wollens' operation, although they don't "cell" graze as it does not suit their single sire breeding program. Maintaining healthy pastures that include legumes and herbs such as Tonic Plantain has been possible since using Natra Min.

### The Phosphorus Bank... and Making Withdrawals

CSIRO research in 1997 confirmed that just 10 - 20% of Phosphorus applied by way of fertilizer was released to the crop... with the other 80% becoming locked up... resulting in an accumulated Phosphate bank in the soil.

As well as providing broad spectrum minerals, the use of Natra Min can assist to release fertilizer lock up. Country inherently low in Phosphorus which has had no "P" applied may need to have those levels boosted.

### Measuring and Monitoring results...

Giles believes that soil health is critical and that it is important to measure the effectiveness of fertilizer applications. "We've had this place since 1966 and seen the changes. We measure everything we do with our stock and pastures so that we have records on which to base our management and budgeting decisions.

We soil test and monitor our paddocks, so if in the future we need to re-apply Super or similar types of products, we know the history of Phosphorus levels in our soil. Healthy and balanced soil ensures that the 'Phosphorus bank' is able to be released."

### Minerals and trace elements are essential...

According to Giles, "one way or the other we're stripping soil minerals... either through the sale of livestock... or through fertilizer imbalances that can be caused by the application of high levels of specific nutrients. Manure can provide a source of nutrients but we also need to replenish what goes out the front gate... and that includes both minerals and trace elements.

Because Natra Min restores broad spectrum minerals and stimulates biological activity, it really makes sense for us to use this product to replenish our soil."

To date, mainly Natra Min and Natra Min HI-Phos has been applied on the Wollens' property since 2003. To provide extra Sulphur, Natra Min Cal-S has also been used on lighter, granite soils.

### Rye Grass...



Based on soil tests, the Wollens use some Nitrogen at planting, and this year, in addition to Natra Min, Sulphate of Ammonia was used at ½ bag / acre for planting Rye grass.

### Investment Results...

According to Giles, the results have proven worthwhile. "The growth of our pastures has been good and with the good weather conditions in the last 2 years our legumes and clovers have been strong."

Not to be outdone, Liz Wollen maintains an immaculate garden and has applied Natra Min K-Phos at high rates to the garden and lawn. Soil pH readings have gone from 5.0 to 6.23 in these areas.

**For further information on how to make the change from Super, call AgSolutions for a management program for your soil.**

**NATRA MIN**

**SUPERIOR**  
MINERAL SUPPLEMENT

**MEGA MINERALS**  
LICK BLOCKS

### Animal Health is a Reflection of Soil Fertility...

Over decades of farming, mineral elements have been leached from the soil, resulting in clinical or sub-clinical mineral deficiencies that can restrict animal performance even during good conditions.

The symptoms may be vague unthriftiness or lowered performance, often seasonal in nature. They are so common and widespread that the slightly lowered production or reproduction rates are often considered normal.

Natra Min restores broad spectrum minerals and trace elements to your soil and in ideal conditions, stock may not require supplementation. During Winter and dry conditions, mineral supplements such as Superior and Mega Minerals can assist to maximize stock performance.

# Plentiful Pastures with Natra Min...



When Peter and Glenda Ballard moved to their Copmanhurst Droughtmaster property near Grafton 8 years ago, clover was virtually non-existent. Today, clover abounds. The stimulus for this dramatic change was a friendly chat with another local farmer who recommended the use of Natra Min.

## Clover & Kikuyu Respond...

Based on soil test results, Peter Ballard applied Natra Min HI-Phos at 200 weight (250 kg/ha) on his river flats. "Soon after the first application of Natra Min HI-Phos in 2005 we noticed cattle wouldn't leave the river flats, preferring to graze where Natra Min had been applied.

Prior to using Natra Min, there was virtually no clover... now there is clover where we've never seen it before. A lot of the natural white clover returned and we've since planted other clovers which have established and are growing well."

The Kikuyu on the Ballard's property has also responded to Natra Min and according to Peter this continues to improve, and they often run close to a beast to the acre with no other fertilizer.

## Improved soil structure with Natra Min...

Aerating soil in combination with the applications of Natra Min is delivering results. According to Peter, "the first time we used an aerator on this place the ground was hard and the aerator barely scratched the surface. In the area where Natra Min was first applied, there was soon a noticeable difference with the soil being softer... allowing the aerator to work deeper.

*What impressed me the most is I had some Natra Min Cal-S left over last year and spread a trial strip in one paddock where it definitely showed up. The difference in colour stood out and it's growing well."*

The Ballards have now applied two applications of Natra Min HI-Phos and one of Natra Min Cal-S across most of the property, and continue to be pleased with the response in pastures.

According to Glenda, it is the garden and in particular her roses that provide the icing on the cake. "I use very generous applications of Natra Min on everything in my garden. It's my hobby and I love my roses. Many people comment on the colour and how big my roses are. They are beautiful thanks to a little Natra Min ..... and loads of TLC."

## BIG results for SMALL crops

## NATRA MIN



The practice of re-mineralising soil with essential minerals and trace elements is not new to Terry Gordon, Kingaroy. Having used Natra Min blends for at least 10 years, Terry recalls first applying Natra Min to broadacre grain crops, and now uses regular applications on specialised vegetables.

*"As a biological farmer I'm into plant health and therefore need healthy soil. Natra Min really gets the microbes going and also provides a great source of Silica, which is essential for plant health and cell strength."*

After working in the previous crop, Terry ensures Natra Min HI-Phos is broadcast at the rate of 1t/ha over the beds and then incorporated as the beds are worked up for planting.

*"I then use foliar applications in our small crops program from then on. Over the years we've improved the health of our crops and now have no disease problems and very few insect problems."*

Terry is farming on old peanut country where the soil was originally extremely hard. However, according to Terry, the condition of his soil continues to improve. "The longer I go, the better it gets... these soils were red but are now becoming browner as the overall soil health improves. The thing I like about the Natra Min HI-Phos is that you can't over do it."



"In a recent soil test Nitrogen was down slightly but everything else was spot on and balanced. This, combined with the feedback that I receive from my customers on the taste, the shelf life and the exceptional quality of our produce, is testament to how well Natra Min and my program is working."

**Contact AgSolutions today for essential tips on how to get BIG results from SMALL crops!**

*Feed Your Soil... and Your Soil will Feed Your Crop*

# NATRA MIN

Mineral Fertilizer  
& Soil Conditioner

## Three Generations of Farming...

## Time to Break the Super Phosphate Cycle



Lance Jerrett, 'Ellera' Santa Gertrudis Stud, Uralla...

*"I'm glad I made the decision to use Natra Min... we definitely saw a response. The big differences have been the thickening up of our grasses and the clover all through our pastures."*

"Ellera" Santa Gertrudis Stud based at Uralla, near Armidale, is owned and run by Lance and Marj Jerrett. Lance is the Jerrett family's 3<sup>rd</sup> generation on this property and has been there for his entire 70+ years.

### Super Phosphate History...

Like most properties in the New England region, the Jerrett's property has an extensive Super Phosphate history as well as various other blends of fertilizer over the years. "I thought it was time for something else; our pastures were good but weren't responding as quickly as they should or once did. I think there are a lot of places like this around the New England these days."

"I was dubious about using Natra Min initially, but I made the decision to try it because of the favourable comments that I had heard. We applied the first application of Natra Min Cal-S in 2006."

### Plentiful Clover since using Natra Min...

Any hesitation Lance initially felt towards trying something completely 'new' was soon forgotten as his pastures responded well to the use of Natra Min.

*"I'm glad I tried Natra Min... we definitely saw a response. The big difference has been the thickening up of our grasses and we now have clover all through our pastures."*

*We had been struggling to establish pastures in an area of old cultivation, however this paddock has responded well to Natra Min applied in 2006 and there is good grass coverage in areas that had previously were bare patches. The clover is a picture!"*

The Jerretts have now applied three applications of Natra Min to the entire property. (Two of Natra Min Cal-S and one of Natra Min HI-Phos).

### Mega Mineral Supplements for Stock...

To ensure that his stock perform at optimum levels, Lance has also adopted AgSolutions' recommendations to supplement his cattle with minerals and essential trace elements during Winter and dry times.

"We've used AgSolutions Mega Minerals lick blocks for a couple of years now, and I have particularly taken notice of how our cattle's manure has softened up."

Intake of the Mega Minerals blocks varies depending on the quality of the feed in the paddock. I moved a mob of cows that were close to calving into a fresh paddock and they immediately slowed down on the blocks. When I initially put the blocks out, the stock generally get into them for the first week and then intake slows down. I also keep rock salt out all the time as cattle chase salt in this country from time to time."

**SUPERIOR**  
MINERAL SUPPLEMENT

**MEGA MINERALS**  
LICK BLOCKS

### Manure provides an Indicator...

According to Lance, the quality of the manure is a clear indicator of the health of his cattle. "I could tell the weaner heifers were eating the blocks as soon as I saw their manure. With Mega Minerals blocks their manure softens up so it's clearly helping their rumen function on the dry feed."

It was even suggested that I put Mega Minerals blocks in with some bulls that I'm feeding on grain pellets. I had assumed that they would be getting everything that they needed and I was surprised when I saw the change in their manure as well. The manure actually firmed up and it was a better colour."

### Mega Minerals results are evident in manure...



With Mega Minerals blocks, I can see the difference in the manure... it is clearly helping the rumen function because the manure softens up despite the dry feed.

Despite a long and strong working relationship with Super, and a relatively brief history of soil re-mineralization with Natra Min, Lance Jerrett is testament to the fact that change can bring with it positive results. Fertile soil is your greatest asset... an asset that can be handed on from generation to generation.

**AgSolutions**  
AUSTRALIA

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**For answers to your animal nutrition and soil fertility questions, talk to one of our trained Field Advisors**

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