

SOIL FERTILITY SERVICES LIMITED

NEWSLETTER

Issue 9

GET READY—THE REVOLUTION IS COMING

CEREALS 2010

Next year's event is on Robert Law's farm, just east of Royston, easy to get to just off the M11 at Duxford. To ease traffic flow they are going to open the event to visitors from 7 a.m. and provide off site parking with a 'Park & Ride' system. This should enable you to get in and out more easily.

If you do want to leave home early and get in easily, then we will provide a full breakfast – tea/coffee/juice, full English (including Black Pudding) F.O.C to our friends and customers. Hangers on and tyre kickers pay £5. **More information nearer the time.**

BIO-LOGICAL FARMING IS HERE NOW

The importance of the soil biology is gaining recognition with more companies offering various ideas and products including coatings on phosphate and nitrogen e.g. 'Avail', although this is not biological and misses the point that we need to make the phosphate in your soil more readily available. It is another interesting product to look at and trial results do show crops responding to the improved 'available' phosphate. The problem with phosphate in fertilisers is that it has a powerful negative charge and is quickly attracted to the positive charged ions in your soil especially calcium and iron. It is also extremely immobile only moving 3mm in 3 months. That is great news, it means you are not going to lose it through leaching – **when you put it on the soil you keep it until your crops use it.**

The ability of plants to find and take up phosphate is a Bio-Logical function – one of the most important organisms in this respect is something called **Mycorrhizal fungi**.

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE
OR WOULD LIKE TO TRY OUR NEW
BIO-LOGICAL PRODUCTS
CALL 01366 347247



Above: Forage Grass. Left without and right with mycorrhizae. (Density shown by presence of plastic bottle).

This amazing organism will imbed itself in the root of the growing plant where it feeds from the sugars produced and in return spreads out into the soil much like a cobweb and effectively increases the exploration area of the plant by up to 50,000 times. It is this amazing organism that will solubilise phosphate and transfer it directly to your plant, not only phosphate but other minerals as well, including sulphate and trace elements. This beautiful fungi should be in your soil, but in modern farming systems it has been wiped out – over zealous cultivation, ploughing, glyphosate and other chemicals are all bad news for this organism.

Now at last a breakthrough, **we can restore this Mycorrhizae to your soil** where it will spread throughout the top soil, building humus capturing carbon and providing nutrition to your crop. **AVAILABLE NOW** in a stable freeze dried powder form it can be mixed with seed at very low ratios – especially good for permanent pastures and new leys, when just one application will last the life of the pasture i.e. until you plough it up. I will be sending out a Technical Note on this product as soon as I can get it done.

NITROGEN FIXING ORGANISM

Mixed success with this organism, but we are still learning how to use it:

- In cereals, potatoes and vegetables we have had great success with increased yield and higher quality produce;
- But on grass land it was not consistent enough with some good responses and some where we could see no difference.

This ability to fix nitrogen from the atmosphere and the soil is happening and we now know much more.

SO WATCH THIS SPACE

The future lies in
BIO-LOGICAL FARMING SOLUTIONS

BETTER GRASS

I am very grateful for the kind comments made by so many of you that have used '*The Better Grass System*'. Your reports included:

- improved animal health
- faster growth of spring lambs
- reduced or no mineral supplements required
- excellent quality grass
- stock grazing paddocks clean

We also made some special 'Horse' paddock mixes and will do more of these next year.

The "**How to Grow Better Grass**" booklet is being updated with this year's results and more interesting stuff on the importance of these trace minerals.

**AVAILABLE IN OCTOBER
WITH AN EARLY ORDER OFFER**

BASIC SLAG

Sales of '*Slag*' just continue to go up and up and it is a good alternative to putting on lime – so **when you need to lime 'Slag It'**. Only one tonne will supply 34 units of phosphate plus boron, manganese, magnesium and lots of other essential trace elements.

Some people are putting around scare stories about the content of Fe (iron) in the slag and suggesting it will cause iron poisoning or 'lock up'.

THIS IS JUST NOT TRUE:

One tonne *Basic Slag*

- will supply 300 kg of available calcium.

One tonne of lime from Mid-Herefordshire

- will supply just 2 kg of available calcium

One tonne of lime from Scotland

- will supply only 0.5 kg/he available calcium.

UK soils generally have high levels of iron (Fe) and this is not a problem until the soil becomes acid. When the acidity solubilises the iron together with the aluminium, manganese and other metals, it is then these can become toxic and cause 'lock up'. To reduce this effect you need to increase the available calcium and lift pH. *Basic Slag* supplies a very 'available' calcium and 'locks up' the iron – every test I have done after *Basic Slag* has been applied shows increased available calcium and lower iron. The iron in the *Slag* is no more available to your crops/soil than the iron in a gate or plough parts would be – it is not a problem – so **don't let them put you off using this excellent product.**

**When you need to use Lime
- SLAG IT -**

SELENIUM

The importance of selenium in your diet has been further confirmed by the science correspondent for The Daily Telegraph, Richard Alleyne in an article on Thursday 9th September, when he pointed out that selenium should be in the bread we eat – hence in the wheat that you grow.

The levels in good Canadian wheat range from 3.5 to 5.1. In our own work at Dorstone, we got high quality bread making wheat with selenium levels up to 5.78 mg/kg at very low cost. But nobody wants it. JG has been unable to find a miller that wants to make high quality selenium rich bread – what a waste. Short sighted or what? Here was an opportunity to create a highly profitable 'niche' market for health conscious people – these same people would then buy other mineral rich foods from that supplier. By the way, in non-treated wheat, selenium was 0.011. (I know which I would rather have).

IS IT DRY OR WHAT?

In the South especially, arid conditions mean no drilling other than early drilled OSR. Which is looking great, if it got its roots down into moist soil and was drilled with minimal soil disturbance.

What to do about wheat drilling. Drill it now, it will rain and it will grow when it does. October is here and nights are pulling in, you need to get these crops established as soon as possible. Using the new *Bio-Mulch* will help early vigour as well as provide protection against soil borne disease next spring. The new range of beneficial bugs now include a range of microbes that will eat Septoria for breakfast. They love it and will protect your crop from this nasty little microbe.

FUTURE EVENTS

Events coming up are:

- **The Royal Welsh Winter Fair** in December;
- **The LAMMA** in January at Newark with Plumb's amazing hot soup and warming toddies.

We will be doing a number of evening talks around the country and will let you know when we are in your area. The first being on the 12th October in Durham for the Grassland Society.

