

Phosphite

Phosphite is one of these new products that lots of people are talking about, but what will it do, and how will that turn into a benefit for you and your farm.



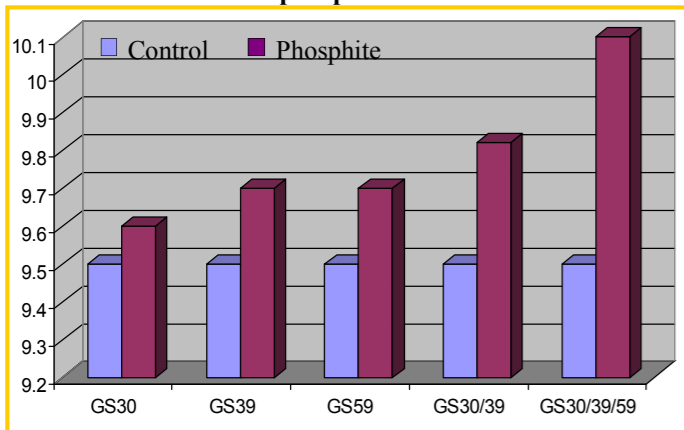
George Hepburn

Phosphate plays a key role in energy transfer within the plant while a continuous supply is necessary for maximum growth and health, this is often difficult to achieve as root uptake depends on many factors such as phosphate availability, soil temperature, moisture, pH and size of root system.

The phosphite in *Vita-Fos* is highly soluble and quickly taken in through the foliage, once inside it is fully systemic and quickly reaches all parts of the plant. It helps to improve efficiency of phosphate uptake from the soil by stimulating subtle changes to the plants root structure, increasing the plants ability to find and absorb more phosphorous from the soil reserves.

Our Phosphite foliar spray is a formulation of Phosphite, Phosphate, Potassium and Magnesium with Copper, Manganese and Zinc. These provide not only nutritional benefits but stimulate plant health and vigour. *Vita-Fos* is a multi-nutrient biological product that can kick start root growth and satisfy immediate demand until the roots are fully functioning and can be applied to most crops; I have used it with success on winter wheat, winter barley, sugar beet, potatoes, spring barley beans and peas.

Trials with phosphite in winter wheat



Independent trials have shown that when phosphites are applied as part of a complete nutrition programme it can help to reduce the reliance a crop has to some of the more expensive fungicides. Trials have also shown that comparing untreated wheat crops with those sprayed with phosphite plus a full nutritional programme resulted in yields increased by 2.7 - 2.77 t/ha.

One of our clients in the South now uses *Vita-Fos* on all wheat and barley in the late autumn and early spring to give vigour and boost root growth because they have a tendency to drought out, and extra depth and mass of rooting can be a real benefit. Low cost and simple to apply this is now part of his crop management plan, I wonder if it should be yours?

NOTE

The best results come from low application at the various growth stages, maybe added to your tank mix but do check first for compatibility. A yield benefit of only 350kg is worth £50 - the cost of *Vita-fos* is £25. Ask for details.

STOP PRESS!

**C.A.N. prices have just dropped -
phone the office for details
01366 384899**

Scotland a washout!

Jenna says: "HELP! Some clients up here have had **DOUBLE** the normal rainfall, instead of 30 - 40 inches it's been 70 - 80 inches which means soils are more seriously water-logged and nothing has been done since early autumn. Amazingly, where we applied the *Better Grass* stock has thrived. The grass is still growing and has remained palatable."



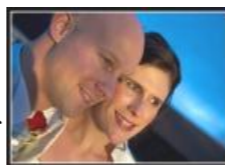
George Sommerville said: "*Better Grass* works in the wet."

Four Years pH results Scaur Hill Dumfries

July '08 (pre <i>Better Grass</i>)	July 2009	July 2010	July 2011
5.2	5.8	5.9	6.2

***Better Grass Xtra* = YOU NEVER NEED TO LIME AGAIN**

Congratulations - Danny and Kelly got hitched at Christmas and Danny's family came over from Australia; we had the pleasure of their company at our Christmas 'do'. Kelly's family are from the Ely (Cambridgeshire) area, where her dad still farms, it was great to see them altogether.



Sad news - Nick's wife Jane lost her mum when she died suddenly just before Christmas - our sincere condolences go to them. Nick says: "We are starting to get over it now and I'm back at work; it's tough for Jane especially with 2 small children to look after."

And Finally...

Winston Churchill was in the gent's toilet when the labour leader Aneurin Bevan came in, Winston turned his back on the staunch socialist - the snub didn't go unnoticed: "Don't be shy Winston" said Bevan, "we've all got the same thing". "I know you socialists" said Winston, "as soon as you see something big and successful you want to Nationalise it!"

"Time is more valuable than money, You can get more money but you can't get more time." (Jim Rohn)

SOIL FERTILITY SERVICES LIMITED

NEWSLETTER

Issue no. 24

2012 - Chinese Year of the Dragon

Hell fire and damnation or opportunity and change? Is this the year that the Chinese dragon shows it's real intention as it has been acquiring large tracts of land throughout the world - Australia, South Africa, South America and Central Africa; acquiring major business in Europe and America. It's now probably the most powerful country on the planet, and maybe the richest. Although short of many minerals, it's now leading the world in its green energy projects and their farming methods are progressing in leaps and bounds. But, there are a lot of them and they will take some feeding. Watch out for 'The Chinese Year of the Dragon'!



Do we feed our animals better than we feed ourselves?

YES, of course, because your livestock makes you money. Your ultimate customer however is more of an irritation to letting you get on with your work.

Yes of course Joe public, Mr Tesco & Sainsbury's are far removed from you as a farmer, producer etc and yes milk does come in cartons from the supermarket and burgers have nothing to do with live animals anymore than cheese could possibly come from cows! Many years ago a little girl was intrigued by the idea that milk was coming from the cow she was watching and asked "Why isn't the milk green?" Well -?

How divorced are we now from the people that pay our milk cheques, beef cheques, wheat, Veg - you name it; (better not to mention the subsidy.) You can make money by doing nothing, where have I heard that before? Don't get me wrong, I drive a Landrover Discovery and it is full of amazing stuff that I have no idea how it works. A long time ago I sold tractors and machinery but I never understood hydraulics, it just did what it said i.e. lifted a plough out of the ground.

So why do we expect our ultimate customers to understand where their food comes from? For most of them they never will and why should they? This should not stop you from producing the best quality produce that you can and that means a nutrient rich and well-balanced mineral content.

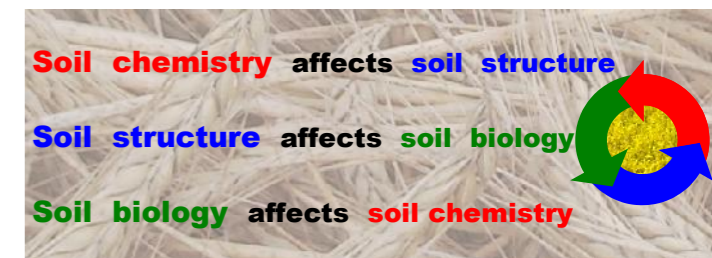
I recently had the unfortunate experience of an afternoon shopping in Tesco with Annie's daughter, screaming kids, salad dodgers, all pushing and shoving buying the 'value' products with 2 for 1 or BOGOF offers - what a rip off. When you look closely, you find that they are giving nothing away, the pack size is smaller, often the meal contains more fat and usually the whole lot is imported. Any 'special offer' is always paid for by the producer and in veg/meat terms, this means you.

So in light of that why should you care if the food you produce is mineral-rich and healthy? The reason is, it pays. A healthy mineral-rich soil will produce a mineral-rich crop. Although many other factors come into play.

The key to producing a high quality mineral-rich food is to find out what is in the produce you are growing and then to supply what is needed. This is exactly the process that we promote:

- Find out what is in your soil (a full and detailed soil fertility audit)
- Find out what is in the crop (a full plant tissue analysis)
- Based on the results, either:
 - find a product to balance your soil or
 - find a product to feed your crop.
- Check and re-check (you cannot manage it if you don't measure it)

The real benefit to you is that growing mineral-rich food pays. Any animal eating grass that contains ALL of the essential minerals in the correct balance, will be a healthy animal and usually be quicker growing, produce higher milk yields and have much lower vet bills. The same applies to crops; a crop of wheat that has a high level of all essential minerals will be a high yielding and low disease crop. Whatever you grow, it will produce a healthy well-mineralised food.



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The future lies in
BIO-LOGICAL FARMING SOLUTIONS

The problem is that you don't get paid for producing high quality mineral-rich food; you get paid for tonnes of produce, or kg of animal, so therefore there has to be some benefit to you. There is - your crops will produce more, your animals will grow more quickly and be much healthier, lower vet bills, lower supplement costs. With lower chemical bills there's less disease pressure, a healthier crop and a real bonus, your soil fertility improves, that is the real fertility nourishing micro-organisms, earthworms, fungi and bacteria.

They all need balanced nutrition and that is not NPK, important they are but your soil, your crops, your stock, you and me, we need more like 27 different minerals; in fact we cannot make the essential vitamins without the minerals. You all know the importance of cobalt to produce vitamin B but what about selenium to produce vitamin C, iodine for the thyroid and vitamin B12, manganese and zinc? - All hugely important affecting skin condition in all things including you, me and potatoes, directly stimulates production of a wide range of vitamins.

Okay, okay I hear you say, what do we need to do? If you are a grassland farmer then make sure you use the appropriate *Better Grass* product, based on your own grass mineral results and soil tests. The correct product can be tailor-made for you - and that includes organic.

Cereals and main stream arable farmers, get your soils analysed and ensure good balance of major minerals, then use biological soil conditioners to 'feed your soil'. In the spring/summer take regular plant tissue samples and use the correct trace minerals for your crops - *Vita-fos*, *Vitaplex* products will be made especially for you as required to 'feed your crop' This is how it works:

You feed your soil - your soil will feed your crop,
You feed your crop - your crop will feed your soil.

Brilliant or what!

Nitrogen

Nitrogen prices are coming down, as I write, Urea is around £350 per tonne - down by £100 in a month, AN34 and CAN 27 have not yet come down, but I believe they will, just wait, the producers have to move product now or they will simply miss the boat, there will be deals to be done.



If you have not bought, then do get covered soon, granular Urea is a good buy at £350 a tonne for 46 units. It makes AN34 around £260 and it will not come down to that level. Normally I am not too keen on Urea for grassland application, but with the price differential where it is, go for it! Use Urea early in the season when the soil is cold and wet and it will be fine, if possible, buy one with some sulphur added as this helps stabilise the Urea and improves protein production.

Better Grass

Better Grass results have been excellent and most people have now re-ordered. Production will start in February in our new hangar. Product this year is much better with a nice free-flowing, easy to spread product. The *Better Grass Xtra* is still dusty and will need a lime spreader to apply it; this product really is the answer to acid soils in high rainfall areas and results over the past 3 years have been excellent - higher yields, improved quality, excellent palatability and stock thriving. George Somerville said: "*Better Grass works in the wet, Dumfries has had its wettest year ever, but the Better Grass has improved water infiltration and lambs thrived on the mineral-rich grass.*"

So, it's not too late to order for 2012; if you have not yet done so, send a silage sample so we can advise you on the best product or make a special for you. This applies to organic producers also, Organic *Better Grass* is essential.

Arable

I have never seen crops looking so well in mid January; with the crazy mild weather, crops have been growing. There is plenty of nitrogen in the soil and the mild, wet conditions are brilliant for biological nitrogen fixers to work. Unfortunately I suspect it is also good conditions for fungal disease, a few good frosts would help no end. This year we will work hard to keep crops healthy with low rate applications of *Vita-fos*, this product has been very successful at improving plant health and reducing disease pressure. It's still too early to do anything yet but if crops keep growing we may want to do some early leaf analysis and see what's going on in the plant.

OSR - You can get some Urea out at the end of the month when you can travel, about 200kg of Urea will supply 90 kg/ha of nitrogen and will be good to take it through to March/April when the rest can be put on, just right for stem extension and flowering. Last year's big yields came after the dry time when rain made available the nitrogen and growing conditions were perfect; the same could apply this year.

Personally I think we are heading for another very dry period until July when the heavens will open and you need to make sure fertilisers are on early - anything that will promote deeper rooting will pay. Use *Vita-fos* to stimulate plant growth and increase rooting activity.

Aunt Aggie was upset by the death of Mabel, an old friend:

"Ent tha' a rummun" she say,
"tha's ole Mrs Carter wot bin ailin' fer years an' she's still alive, an' poor ole Mabel weren't hardly ill a week".

Granfa say:

"Tha's how tha' go, some people die all o' a sudden an' some o' them live till tha very last moment"!

Wheat will hit £300 a tonne...

...later this year when the speculators get involved, around June, when they find there is no grain in the stores. China has been quietly buying huge quantities and it would only take a small blip in the USA forecasts for prices to go skywards - we'll see!

Flexi-fert

The work that Neil Fuller did with the Flex Fertiliser System was very impressive and we will be able to offer this system this year. According to Neil, the best approach for this year is to use nitrogen as normal but to foliar or apply 7 -10 kg/ha of nitrogen with the Flex mix and Vitaplex products. 7kg *Foli N* is equivalent to 20kg soil applied, so you can make the choice. Go for higher yields or reduce nitrogen costs. In my opinion, yield always pays. The trick with the foliar nitrogen is the inclusion of trace minerals, especially zinc and magnesium but other traces as identified by leaf analysis. These minerals solubilise the nitrogen to form amino nitrogen which is better assimilated by the plant.

There is no hurry for this and I will let you know when it's the right time to apply; in the meantime, if you have not bought nitrogen, now is probably the right time to do so. Urea at £350 or less has to be a good buy, if possible get one with some sulphate in it, even a blend of sulphate of ammonia and urea would be good.

Potassium - K₂O

This will be necessary on some areas, especially light land. This should be applied in spring, uptake will be similar to nitrogen and although I really prefer sulphate of potash, it is difficult to justify the extra cost, even if you can use less, so MOP applied at around 100 kg/ha to supply 60kg of potassium could be best. (MOP is currently £340 tonne). We will of course advise our consultancy clients.

Phosphate - P₂O₅

Some recent soil results have shown a low level of phosphate in the standard UK test; I am not happy with these results and suspect the drier soils and conditions may have played a part. It really is not possible for a soil to drop a whole index in one season i.e. move from a 2 to a 1 or 1 to 0 as it takes 500 kg of P₂O₅ to do that. Even the best crop of wheat at 12 t/ha with straw removed would only take off 80kg or so.

So just because a soil test shows a low phosphate index - DON'T PANIC! Re-test, look at the trend over the past 10 years, it will not change that quickly; check the crop, look at rooting, soil structure and THEN - only then, if really necessary, think about an application of water waste sludge cake. This has to be the best soil conditioner and will supply large amounts of P₂O₅ and other essential minerals. If you want more information, ring the office or talk to your local water company. Do get an analysis first and let us have a look, we checked a supply recently and the fertiliser levels we found were much higher than those provided by the water company, which means that you don't need to apply as much. Better to do more acres at a lower rate, than put on too much - more is NEVER better.

3rd Oxford Real Farming Conference

Next year BE THERE; this is where it happens, hands on practical advice and discussion on all factors affecting farming but with a leaning towards 'eco' farming growing high value mineral-rich food to benefit the health of the people that eat it. Healthy soil - healthy stock - healthy people. You can see a lot of it by going to

www.oxfordrealfarmingconference.org

Have a look at the Soil Health sessions with Martin Lane, Neil Fuller and me. Food for thought or what?

Cows eat grass - Find out how some farmers are making good money from lower milk yields when cows are out to grass and the grass is mineral-rich; can you do that? "Pasture for Profit" DVD is available if you want one.



Robert lecturing at Oxford Real Farming Conference 2011

'Euroland'

We import 40% of our total food production which amounts to 12 million tonnes per month, of which 60% or more comes from European countries, especially Spain, France, Holland, Belgium, Denmark and Germany. Do you think for one moment they are not going to supply us when we say NO to their Euro bailout requirement - of course not and they will still buy our lamb, Range Rovers and financial services because they are THE BEST. The Euro might just survive but it will mean Merkel and 'Sarcastic Koze' basically setting the rules for all other nations and France ignoring them. We are a strong trading nation and can prosper in or outside the 'Euro-lands' but not in the Euro. Cameron is not a Mrs Thatcher, but he is the best that we have, power to his elbow.

We are ruled by a coalition which between them managed to get just over 50% of the votes cast but of course a lot of people did not vote and therefore we are ruled by a minority - Should everybody vote? I wonder what sort of Government we would have then. Would it be a better, stronger Government for the people? I think we should celebrate our ability to vote out the buggers we don't like and vote in the liars we do like.

Polling day should be a public holiday, but you only get paid for your day off if you voted, NO VOTE - NO MONEY! That would increase the turnout and we should then celebrate the freedom we have to cast our own vote!