

# Autumn 2014

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# BioAg COUNTRY



## 2013 Trial Results

Not having the backing of a multi-national parent company to market our products means relying on other strategies to get product and program benefits accepted in the Australian agricultural market. For us, this means undergoing a range of trials and tests in order to prove our products efficacy.

After a raft of positive responses in Australia and the sub-continent, in 2013 we shipped our liquid products Soil & Seed, Balance & Grow, and Fruit & Balance to the US so that they could be trialled in the birthplace of modern agriculture. Currently the US have around 40% of the country under farmland and are the largest soybean and corn, and third-largest cotton producers in the world.

The US trials were conducted by AgriCenter International which has headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee. The middle and south of the continent are key growing areas for a

range of crops (including cotton, corn and soybean) and the standard fertiliser practices in those areas have undergone extensive research and experimentation in order to deliver optimum results.

Under the supervision of Dr. K. Bruce Kirksey the Director of Research at AgriCenter, BioAg products were subjected to replicated and strip trials of corn, soybean and cotton.

Each trial used the standard practice for the area as the control treatment, and then used three different combinations of BioAg products to make a total of four treatment combinations for each trial.

### Standard practice

A typical standard practice delivered by AgriCenter International for the trials consisted of the following:

1. General fertiliser applied in March (N-20, P-80, K-80).
2. 150 units of 32%N knifed in. The '15% less' treatment went out at 125 units knifed in.

### Trial Results

**All trials, no matter what the proportion of BioAg products resulted in increases of both yield and return on investment** however it was the district practice combined with the full rate of BioAg liquids that resulted in the highest yields and ROI.

All amounts have been calculated based on the Australian dollar cost of materials. Further details on all trial results are freely available by calling us directly.

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## Early-bird deals END SOON

As we write, the international prices for DAP and MAP have reached \$500 at ports of loading. That represents an \$700+ for future sales to Aussie farmers.

As many of our existing customers will know, each year we offer our early-bird deals. The current offer runs from December 2013 through to April 2014.

**Deal 1: Early-bird incentive for pre-payment of the solid fertilisers range.**

**Deal 2: Volume Discount for BioAgPhos and BioAgPhos S10 (10% S as elemental sulphur).**

As we discussed in our last newsletter (Summer 2013), world prices for P were at long-term lows and our deals were able to reflect this.

Since that time however prices for P have started and continued to rise. Ammonium phosphates have increased around \$200/mt.

Many customers have purchased BioAgPhos and BioAgPhos S10 in the lead-up to Christmas and will have it delivered when needed, while many others have taken delivery in order to avoid autumn transport shortages and have product already on-farm for when it's needed.

If you haven't already made your purchases there's still time to catch a deal.

Visit our website, your local agronomist or distributor, or phone us directly on 1300 599 911.

# 2013 Trial Results

- continued from cover

## Yield Increases

| Corn  | Soybean | Cotton                    |                           |
|-------|---------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 26.9% | 36.2%   | Lint yield increase 17.9% | Seed yield increase 16.1% |

## Return on Investment (ROI)

| Corn | Soybean | Cotton |
|------|---------|--------|
| 736% | 374%    | 472%   |

## Harvesting the 2013 corn trials



## Conclusions

Going into the trials and based on the past performance of our products we expected the results would be good, however as the existing practices in the US were already so well scrutinised, just how good an effect our products would make in the trials was an unknown to us.

High yields and high ROI's are expected outcomes of any fertiliser regime but especially regimes that include inputs on top of fertiliser such as soil conditioners and yield enhancers.

Talking to a customer recently, such increases would have to be in the range of 10-15% to make any addition to a more traditional fertiliser regime worthwhile.

In the 1980's and 90's when our products were being developed we understood that the key to a crop's yield and ROI going from good to great relied not just on looking at what could be delivered to the plant to produce a crop. It relied also upon what could be given to improve the soil's health, and see the benefits of those improvements flow on to

the crop. Essentially it was less about short-term band aid answers to growing a crop and more of a proactive long-term one.

Now-days there is an increasing amount of research by organisations such as the CSIRO and GRDC that support our methodology of healthy soils leading to healthy crops, yield and ROI.

BioAg has never shied away from trials as a way to prove that the BioAg method was superior. We have a lot of trial data that we make freely available to any who are interested. In a future edition of the newsletter we will however look at the results we are achieving outside the scope of trial work. Our customers continue to offer amazing and useful insights and anecdotal evidence gathered from ongoing use of our products.

For the moment however, I think you can safely assume we are pleased with our US experience.

*Michael Douglass*



**BioAg's Jephtha Gates inspects the 2013 cotton trials.**

# 104 year-old farm reaps benefits of soil health management

**A fourth-generation farmer uses BioAg programs to maintain the quality and sustainability of his operation which allowed for a shift to continuous cropping of their 104 year-old farm.**

Recently we spoke to Colin Falls, a fourth-generation farmer with a property that has been in his family for 104 years. Since making the move to BioAg programs some years ago, they were able to increase the quality of their product and maintain a sustainable continuous cropping cycle.

"The BioAg programs we have been provided address the health of the soil as well as providing for the plant", said Colin. "And from this we have seen a consistent increase in the quality of our crops. The program has more than paid for itself".

"After using the program we were in a position to move to continuous cropping because the soil was not depleted after each harvest. It's now a sustainable operation".

Colin's father Lindsay, who is now in his mid 70's still works with him on their property located near Dingee, 50km north of Bendigo in Victoria where they grow canola, wheat and barley in a continuous cropping situation. Colin's son has just finished a course in agriculture and is spending some time travelling around Australia before re-joining his father and grandfather on the farm.

The Falls family first came across BioAg products in the late 90's however took a few years to do some trials and watch the results before being convinced to commit to a program. During the trialling phase, there were some key observations that led to on-going use.

"One time we sprayed a strip down the middle of a paddock and you could see the improvement to the very edge of where we had sprayed".

Colin also spoke of a trial he conducted in the middle of a drought.

"We treated half of a paddock as we normally would and got three bags an acre which ended up being cut for hay. The other half we sprayed with BioAg and harvested nine bags to the acre".

The Falls' program includes regular soil tests, traditional cropping nutrients MAP and urea along with BioAg liquids Soil & Seed, Balance & Grow, and Fruit & Balance in quantities as prescribed. These BioAg liquids, in particular Soil & Seed, improve the efficiency of uptake of soluble fertilisers and the nutritional value to crops, even under continuous cropping regimes. This results in more balanced plants, which better withstand the shocks and stresses that the weather imposes on crops during the growing season. The net result is higher yields and improved quality with residual soil fertility enhancement.

**"Nearby farms are producing ASW grains but at the same time we are getting APW, H2, and even H1"**

Colin noted that this has had positive effects on grain size and quality including grains more consistent in size, less smaller grains (screenings), and overall they are in the range preferred by the market.

Neighbouring farms have been producing wheat classified as ASW in the same seasons that Colin and his family are producing the higher grades APW, H2 and even H1.

"I've got neighbours to the north who get more rain than us and neighbours to the south who get less. In dry seasons, they all end up growing feed as their screenings are too high. That same season we are getting anywhere from \$10 to \$50 per tonne premiums for grain quality.

"We've really come to understand how important the health of the soil is for growing a healthy plant. When a plant is healthy then it will use as much nutrient and moisture as it can and this maximises its quality and yield potential", said Colin.

With the demand for food increasing the challenge for farmers is how to increase yields using the same amount of land. Sustainability needs to be built into any farming enterprise, but not at the cost of good returns.

Colin is a successful modern farmer, quick to avail himself of improved practices and leading edge machinery. Whilst acknowledging the vagaries of the weather and the impact that the weather can have on yields and profit, Colin is an optimistic farmer who recognises that appropriate investment in soil fertility and plant nutrition ensures that the economic outcome is maximised, even in the tough years.

His final words on the matter? **"At the end of the day you have to be content with controlling the things you can"**.



The Falls family farm near Dingee in Victoria has been in the family for four generations and 104 years.

Last year, nutrients were added as fert, and crops were grown and harvested...

**So what's left in the ground for this year?**

BioAg nutrient programs, still working next year. Sustainable farming with returns.

Better soils. Better crops. Better stock.™

# Q&A with McGeechan Farm Supplies

Recently we spoke to James Fraser of McGeechan Farm Supplies in Crookwell. This is what he had to say.

## Q. What would you identify as a benefit of distributing BioAg products?

JF. By selling BioAg products we have been able to stay ahead of the competitive markets and differentiate ourselves from other retailers by selling a well supported product that works, as well as being able to spread product all year round.

## Q. What are some of the comments you have received from customers since you've been distributing BioAg products?

JF. The comments have been very positive and supported by very good visual results. Customers have been shocked at how easily the product is spread, by all methods of application. A popular response is how much they like the 'no tie up' aspect of the products and that they are able to spread enough for two years ahead.

## Q. How would you describe the service of BioAg as a supplier?

JF. Fantastic. We have been shown plenty of support to help us get established with the new products. The reps who I have dealt with have an extensive knowledge and have been able to help us solve some real problems which have been raised.

## Q. How do you identify a quality customer?

JF. One that is ready to listen and try new products, as well as someone who runs a profitable and well diversified system.

## Q. Do you get a specific type of farmer who uses BioAg products?

JF. The majority of our customers are all graziers, so all BioAg products (sold through us) have gone onto pastures so far.

## Q. You use BioAg products on your own property. What are your experiences so far?

JF. Fantastic results so far. The best benefit is there is no tie up in the soil, and the biology stimulating the microbial activity.

## Q. Thanks James. Any final comments?

JF. I feel that BioAg develops products of the future as farmers are now looking for a more natural product that doesn't tie up in the soil, and BioAg is able to offer that solution.

The responses we have received so far have been very positive and the backup service has been second to none.

We are currently searching for a logistics company who is able to provide competitive rates, which will see the sale of bulk products take off.

McGeechan Farm Supplies of Crookwell distributes BioAg products as well as a range of supplies for your farm operations.

**McGeechan Farm Supplies**  
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## Improving your online presence

Many of you who are distributors or agents might already have a website and/or a Facebook presence. More and more farmers are also getting themselves or their businesses online.

While not everyone's cup of tea, there are sound reasons for having at least a Facebook profile but also a website and the key reason is there is probably no cheaper way to advertise yourself or your business.

Facebook is totally free and there are many online tools that allow you to build a website for free as well.

For those already online, the challenge is how to improve your search rankings. Search engines, and especially Google increasingly devise ways to reward good websites with high rankings, and the higher your ranking the easier it will be for people to find you. However, there has been little consensus as to what is the best way to be ranked highly. For Facebook, it is a little easier. Simply having people 'like' your page is a good start, and from there they will be able to keep in touch, as well as receive news and other information from you.

### Put valuable content on your site and update it regularly.

One of the key approaches to a better search ranking is to write good content. This should be relevant to your sites purpose. For a distributor or agents website, product lists, product specifications, price lists, industry news and weekly specials are all relevant. For a farmer, it may be details of what crops you grow, animal breeds, farming practices and the like.

Regular updates need not be that hard, one small update each week like adding some sort of 'what's

new' or other news relevant to your business is good. Even more is better as long as it is pertinent.

### Link your site to other businesses

If you write good content, other businesses will want to link to your site. The more sites that link to your site, the more highly regarded your site is perceived to be by search engines such as Google, and so the higher your ranking will be.

### Reciprocal links

Reciprocal links are how we can help each other. If you would like to link to the BioAg website, and in turn have us link to yours, then contact michael@bioag.com.au or phone 02 6958 9911.



Additionally, if you have a Facebook profile, we would be happy to show our support by liking your page, and while you're there don't forget to like BioAg's page.



## Welcome Nino Atanasov - Area Manager, Northern Victoria

Nino Atanasov who holds a degree in Agricultural Science (with honours) joined BioAg from Growth Agriculture and was based in Cairns where he was the Territory and Technical Manager for Northern QLD.



He takes on the role as Area Manager for Northern Victoria and will be working alongside our existing agronomist in that area, Dan Hill.

Born in Macedonia, Nino studied at the University of Agriculture in that country before moving to Australia in 1999 with his wife Maria and their two teenage daughters Evana and Emma.

Nino grew up on his family's vineyard who grew both table and wine grapes as well as producing their own wines.

Nino is a keen sportsman having represented at senior levels in his beloved sport of water-polo however is yet to be inducted into the finer arts of Australia's favourite sports.



Better soils. Better crops. Better stock.™

**For more information,  
phone 02 6958 9911 or visit [www.bioag.com.au](http://www.bioag.com.au)**