

MEDIA RELEASE

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VARIABLE RATE NITROGEN HELPING NSW FARMERS MAXIMISE PRODUCTION

(Wagga Wagga, NSW): Deep nitrogen soil testing is in full swing in Southern NSW, with more farmers taking up smart farming techniques in an effort to continually maximise production.

Combining on-farm measurements of soil nitrogen with crop biomass maps (satellite imagery) can help farmers understand current season nitrogen requirements, with potential for variable rate application of nitrogen.

Precision Agriculture's General Manager Farm Services, Andrew Whitlock, said matching nitrogen supply with crop demand can be a key lever for maximising production in a good season.

"The aim is to deliver the optimum rate of nitrogen across the entire paddock ensuring strong nitrogen use efficiency and potential for maximising yield," he said.

"In our experience, the most profitable farmers are those who are able to maximise profitability in the favourable years and with variable rate nitrogen we have seen production increases of up to 15 percent.

"Working together with our farmers we analyse a combination of soil nitrogen level measurements, crop canopy and forecasted yield potential to develop a management strategy specific to each paddock."

However, making decisions on the go as the season develops can be difficult without the right tools, which is where technology can play a key role.

"Early and mid-season NDVI satellite images are a fantastic tool, giving you real time information on how your crop is developing.

"This type of information is incredibly powerful and really is a common-sense approach. We believe this is where farming is heading – in years from now we believe this will be standard practice."

Mr Whitlock said adoption of variable rate nitrogen remains low overall, mainly due to lack of confidence in climate models and the ability to accurately forecast yield targets.

"There is no doubt nitrogen topdressing decisions are difficult and the more objective the information used to help guide this decision, the better," he said.

"Our strategy of combining targeted soil tests, crop biomass maps, farmer knowledge and agronomic input is all about offering more information to help guide our farmers with this challenging decision."

Mr Whitlock said there has been a shift away from traditional soil testing as farmers lose faith in the accuracy of results from out-dated sampling methods such as random cores across a paddock.

"Many of our customers are requesting split depth soil analysis, typically 0-30cm and 30-60cm to improve their understanding of where the nitrogen sits within the soil profile," he said.

“Sampling strategies should be based on existing management zones for the paddock or current season biomass maps. The logic is that better information will guide better decisions and technology is paving the way for us to get more from every hectare.”

For more information phone 1800 773 247 or visit www.precisionagriculture.com.au.

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Note to editor

For more information, contact Jo Chaseling on 0448 244 677 or email joinbyron@gmail.com.

Available:

- Examples of NDVI and soil maps
- We can source customers for you to speak with about their experiences

Precision Agriculture

Established in 2009, Precision Agriculture is one of Australia’s most experienced providers of precision agriculture services.

Operating from five locations around the country and with approximately 600 customers across primary production, agribusiness and industry, we aim to help our customers improve their productivity and profitability through better, more informed decisions.

We measure and interpret data to find opportunities to integrate spatial technologies with farm management practices and provide practical assistance to apply our findings on farm.

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