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Test your soils now to avoid ploughing in your profits

With crop and pasture planning underway across the country, farmers are reminded that a simple soil testing program to generate a variable rate application can save up to 60% in fertiliser costs – the largest single variable cost in grain production according to the International Plant Nutrition Institution.

Australian producers drive up to \$500 million worth of nitrogen fertiliser into their paddocks each year, however figures from Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) surveys showed soil testing rates have experienced a 50 per cent decline from 2018 compared to 2010, resulting in potential wastage and reduction in profitability.

Director of the Australian Fertiliser Services Association (AFSA) Craig Swan also acknowledges the direct impact on cost per hectare when variable rate application is not employed, “A farmer can spend \$40 per hectare on fertiliser for pasture. An uneven fertiliser application can cost another \$40 per hectare in lost production, effectively doubling the fertiliser cost,” he said.

Speaking to the GRDC University of Adelaide researcher Dr Mike McLaughlin says that the gains far outweigh the small investment in soil testing: “The benefit for the bottom line is something that should not be ignored.” Mr McLaughlin acknowledged that completing soil testing at the start of the calendar year is a deterrent for some producers, despite its importance, saying: “It’s hot, you’re out in the paddock when you just want to be on holiday – it does put people off.”

This is where Precision Agriculture (PA) is providing solutions for farmers. PA’s General Manager of Research and Innovation Ben Fleay said a range of testing services were now available to give producers the ability to make informed, science-based decisions for their business, rather than going on ‘gut-feel’.

“Precision Agriculture’s technology has the unique ability to streamline any combination of soil pH, phosphorous, potassium, sodium and nitrogen measurements on your property into one process. From this we build a highly detailed picture of your farm’s soil characteristics to enable growers to precisely match fertiliser rates to nutrient availability and determine the areas in which to invest in soil repair programs,” Mr Fleay said. “Many of our customers have seen lime costs reduced by up to 60% and phosphorous rates cut by up to 25% whilst maintaining production.”

For more information on soil testing for your farm business, please contact Precision Ag on 1800 773 247 or visit the Precision Agriculture website: www.precisionagriculture.com.au For media enquiries, please contact Dee Wilkes-Bowes: dee@saucecommunications.com.au

ABOUT PRECISION AGRICULTURE

As a leading provider of precision agriculture services, we aim to improve our customers’ productivity and profitability through better, more informed management decisions.

It’s all about data, insight and action. Whether it’s on-farm, for industry or government we collect, measure and interpret data to find opportunities for technology to deliver savings and unlock potential. We provide practical assistance and support to apply our findings to the real world.