

# AGVISE LABORATORIES

SUMMER 2009

## NORTHERN NOTES

Late planting and cool conditions will delay the harvest season. Hopefully we will get another late frost. Many northern areas struggled to get crops planted and many acres did not get seeded at all. About 2 million acres were not seeded in North Dakota alone. While the crop has struggled in some places, other areas will have average to above average yields.

Fertilizer prices have backed off a bit so we will probably see growers trying to do a little catch up on their P and maybe K this fall. Splitting fields into management zones for soil testing continues to grow. While extra time and effort are required to do soil testing this way, most of our customers and their growers are happy with the results. AGVISE customers with hydraulic samplers mounted in the cab of their trucks give themselves a big advantage. These systems allow you to get the highest quality sample because you can look at each soil core before it goes into the bucket. This system is fast and it also allows you to sample through up to 12" of frost late in the fall.

We are again offering special pricing on our in cab sampling system this fall. The first 25 sampling systems sold this fall will receive a \$200 credit on their account for soil analysis. Please let us know what you need for soil testing supplies. We can usually ship them to you in a day or so. We hope you have a safe harvest season.



**JOHN LEE**  
SOIL SCIENTIST/CCA

## Special Offer on 24" Sampling Systems

AGVISE is offering special pricing on the first 25 soil sampling systems sold this fall. The special price is on our 24" electric/hydraulic soil sampling system. AGVISE will credit \$200 of free laboratory analysis to your account with the purchase of one \$2,500.00 sampling system. This offer is good for the first 25 sampling units sold this fall. You can view all of the components of this sampling system on our web site. Just go to [www.agvise.com](http://www.agvise.com) and click on "Products and Equipment" then "Hydraulic Sampling Equipment."

Last fall we sold all of the specially priced systems before September 15. If you need a new sampling system or just want to improve the equipment you are currently using, don't wait too long.

## New probe and tip designed for wet soils!

The Giddings Machine Company is making a new probe and tip for AGVISE that is designed to handle very wet soil conditions. Many of you will recognize the Giddings name from sampling equipment used by soil survey people to map soils in the U.S. and Canada the past 45 years. Due to very wet soil conditions last fall and this spring in many areas, we wanted our customers to have one more option in sampling tubes and tips to try on wet soils in their area.

The new sampling tube from Giddings has the same quicktatch collar as all AGVISE probe tubes. The new probe tube is solid (no slot)

hardened steel and has an outside diameter of 1 1/4" compared to 1 1/2" for our standard tubes. The extra space inside the tube allows sticky soil cores to slide with less sticking to the side-wall. The new tip for the Giddings probe has an opening which is 1/8" and a lip on the inside of the tip to

reduce plugging. AGVISE will continue to handle all of our regular line of stainless steel probe tubes and tips.

We are only making 100 of these new Giddings probe tubes and tips for this fall. We do not have a price on them yet, but we know they will cost

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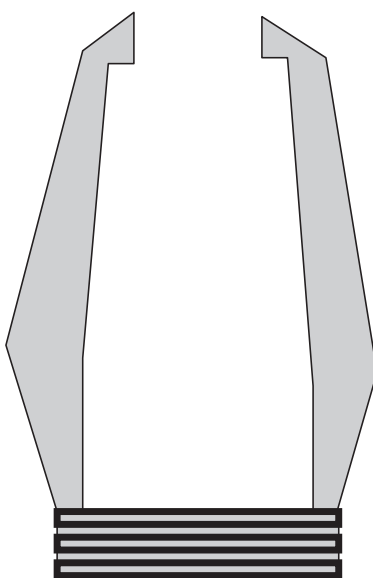
## New Probe continued...

more than the other probes we offer. Customers have told me that they will pay more if they can find a probe that works well under sticky wet soil conditions. We will do our best to keep the price down. If the Giddings tubes perform well this fall, we should be able to reduce the price of the tubes with a larger order next year.

The new Giddings probe and tip should be available by mid August. Give us a call if you want to buy one of these Giddings probes to use on wet soils in your area.



## Giddings Wet Tip Design



## Estimating Soil Texture by CEC

AGVISE now provides you more information on soil samples when you test CEC (Cation Exchange Capacity). Soil CEC and soil texture are permanent soil characteristics and are highly correlated to each other. In general, the lower the CEC of a soil, the more coarse textured or lighter the soil is. Knowing the soil texture is important information when making decisions for nitrogen management. AGVISE has examined soil test data from thousands of samples tested for both CEC and for soil texture by the hydrometer method. We found the relationship to be strong enough to use the CEC to estimate the soil texture for most soils. We are now using the CEC information to report "Estimated Soil Texture" for samples with a pH less than 7.6. Soils with a pH higher than 7.6 may have high levels of calcium carbonate, which inflates the CEC value and does not allow us to estimate the soil texture.

Estimated Texture	CEC
Sands (Coarse)	0 to 10
Coarse Loams (Medium)	11 to 20
Fine Loams (Medium)	20 to 30
Clays/Clay Loams (Fine)	31+
Peat/Muck	if OM >20%

## Benson Lab Expansion Update

Construction at our Benson lab is going strong. In the next few weeks we will be moving instruments and equipment into the new addition. This expansion will just about double the size of our facility in Benson. The new addition will increase the capacity and efficiency of our lab by increasing the size of our sample prep area, sample storage, drying and grinding and laboratory analysis. Please stop by for a tour of the new addition when you get a chance!



# AGVISOR Gold 2.8 Update

Most users of our PC-based AGVISOR Gold program are currently using the 2.7 version. The 2.8 update is now available from our web site. Some bugs have been fixed and some new features have been added. One new feature is the ability to import field pictures/images into each soil sample report from the FSA Internet mapping service offered through AgriData, Inc. Some other new features include new soil test summary choices, new SMBSC nitrogen guidelines, revised 2-depth University sulfur guidelines, soil test reports printing in pdf format and reporting "Estimated Soil Texture" on samples that have CEC tested. The 2.8 version will still run on older Windows operating systems and is now compatible with newer Vista operating systems (including the 64 bit systems) and Internet Explorer 8.0. The fertilizer guideline changes from 2.7 to 2.8 are minor, so if you are happy with the 2.7 version you are running now, that is fine.

The 2.8 update can be accessed and easily installed from our website, [www.agvise.com](http://www.agvise.com). Note, be sure that the AGVISOR Gold 2.7 program is **CLOSED** while you are doing the 2.8 update process.



## Postcards to Promote Soil Testing!

This is the 6th year that AGVISE has provided our customers with free "Post Card Mailers" to promote soil testing. Many customers comment on how these post cards work to get their growers attention directed towards soil testing. By using these post cards, customers have told us they have been able to start testing earlier and they end up soil testing more fields for each of their growers.

AGVISE will customize the message on your post cards so you can tell the growers exactly what you want! Here is an example of what one customer had us print on his post cards last year:

**"Give Dave a call today to sign up for soil testing (320-123-4567). Soil testing is the first step towards a profitable crop next year!"**

Once you receive your post cards with the customized message, all you have to do is write the growers name and address on the

post card, add a stamp and put them in the mail. These post cards also fit into most statement envelopes so you can include it with the statements if you want.

Any AGVISE customer who tested more than 50 samples last year should have received a mailing with an example of the free post card. All you have to do is write the message you want on

the post card on the form you received and fax or mail it back to us. If you did not receive this mailing or have questions on how to use the post cards, please give John Lee or Richard Jenny a call.



# Prevented Plant Acres? What to do for 2010?

If you live in an unlucky area where many acres did not get planted, you are probably formulating a plan right now to give those fields the best chance for good yields in 2010. In most situations, growers have already taken care of weeds with herbicide, tillage or both. Many of these fields will be seeded with a cover crop to reduce erosion and to use up some of the excess water in the soil profile. Some western areas will be seeding winter wheat into this cover crop. This is a good plan because a crop will already be growing on these fields next spring if we get too much rain again. The key is to make sure the cover crop is killed and all green matter is gone for 10 days before the winter wheat emerges to avoid disease. Don't forget a good starter fertilizer for the winter wheat too!

In eastern areas, cover crops will be seeded as well, after weeds are controlled. Making winter wheat work in eastern areas like the Red River Valley will be a little more difficult. Most of these fields will be black from tillage and have no crop residue from previous years on the surface like no-till areas out west. In eastern areas, a cover crop seeded in late July or August will provide some protection for winter wheat, but most of the seeding equipment in the area will bury the residue from the cover crop. This will leave the winter wheat more susceptible to winter kill.

For growers who do not consider winter wheat an option, there are still things to do which will increase the odds of good yields next year. Having a cover crop growing on these fields is extremely important. Cover crops can remove several inches of water and will increase the chances of these fields being planted on time next spring. Improving the surface drainage this fall to remove as much water as possible the rest of this year is also very important.



## AGVISE Soil Fertility Seminar 2010 Dates Set

We have had several requests from customers to let them know as soon as we have solid dates for our Soil Fertility seminars next January. The dates and locations for our 2010 Soil Fertility Seminars are listed below. We are in the process of confirming speakers and topics for these meetings. A registration letter will be sent to AGVISE customers in early November to sign up first. A week or so later we will also send an email to everyone on our mailing list about registration for these seminars. If you received this newsletter you are on our mailing list, but we may not have your current email. If you want to be sure to receive an email announcing our seminars, please call Teresa at our Northwood office (701-587-6010).

**January 5, 2010**  
Willmar, MN

**January 6, 2010**  
Watertown, SD

**January 7, 2010**  
Grand Forks, ND

## Drying and Grinding Bulk Soil Samples Fee Starts This Fall

AGVISE has been drying and grinding soil samples of all sizes since 1976. Through the years, AGVISE has built our drying and grinding system to handle large and small soil samples. About 90% of soil samples arrive in our paper soil sample bags and weigh about 2 pounds. These small sample bags represent a portion of the 15-20 cores collected from the whole field or a zone/grid in a field. All of the cores collected from the field are blended and a portion taken to fill the paper sample bag to send to the lab for testing.

The remaining 10% of samples arrive in large plastic bags and weigh up to 10 pounds. These large samples

require more energy to dry and more labor to grind before testing. These samples represent all of the cores collected from a field or zone in a field. Most of these large sample bags come from areas where the soil texture is clay loam or heavier and is difficult to blend, especially when wet. Because it is difficult to blend these samples, AGVISE has encouraged customers to send in the whole composite soil sample in the large plastic bags provided by AGVISE. AGVISE then dries and grinds these large samples to get the highest quality data from the sample collected.

We still encourage customers to send us their large soil

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samples in plastic bags if they are difficult to blend. Our laboratories in Northwood and Benson are equipped to handle the large samples. Due to the extra energy used to dry the larger samples and the extra labor needed to grind them, we now

have to charge \$0.50/sample depth for all samples arriving in the plastic sample bags. For customers who have sent in samples in large plastic bags for many years, we do not want you to change anything. Because the soils are hard to blend in your area, you will get better soil test data by letting us dry and grind the whole

sample before testing. You will also save time in the field because you will not have to try to blend these heavy soils. We encourage you to make sure this slight price increase for bulk samples is covered in the price you charge growers for soil sampling this fall. Please give us a call if you have any questions.

## Zone Soil Testing Continues to Grow

Our technical support staff continues to get questions on zone soil testing. For customers who are just getting started in Zone or grid testing, they have a lot of questions on equipment and computer programs. Most of their questions revolve around how accurate their GPS equipment needs to be, what computer programs they should have and how much extra time and man hours are required to do zone soil testing each year. Our staff of Soil Scientists and Agronomists can answer questions on what nutrients you should test for and how many probes should be taken in each zone. We can also help customers with any sampling equipment they need, but we are not experts on the latest GPS equipment and computer programs.

When we get questions on GPS equipment and computer

programs, we direct customers to go to our web site ([www.agvise.com](http://www.agvise.com)) and have them click on the "Precision Helpers" button. This is a list of AGVISE customers who can help you decide what GPS equipment you need and what computer program will best suit the zone/grid soil testing program you are putting together (see list of Precision Helper companies). Many of these companies have been doing zone/grid testing for over 15 years now, so they have a lot of experience. If you are a current AGVISE customer and part of your business is to help other businesses to get started with zone/grid sampling and you want to be added to the "Precision Helper" list, please give Richard Jenny or John Lee a call.

### AGVISE Precision Helpers

Company Name	Location	Phone Number
AgroTech Consulting	Henderson, MN .....	507-248-9653
Centrol Consulting	Cottonwood, MN.....	507-423-5423
Centrol Consulting	Twin Valley, MN .....	218-584-5107
Crop One	Clarkfield, MN .....	320-669-7614
Field Technologies	Beardsley, MN .....	320-305-0857
GK Technologies	Halstad, MN .....	218-456-2486
Midwest Independent Samplers	Buffalo Lake, MN .....	320-833-2200
MZB Technologies	Watertown, SD.....	605-882-4214
Precision Ag Solutions	Aberdeen, SD .....	605-380-8595
Precision Partners	Fargo, ND.....	701-364-9175
Precision Soil Management	Redfield, SD .....	605-302-0085
Rx-VRT	Canby, MN .....	507-530-5036
Simplot Grower Solutions	Grafton, ND.....	701-352-0861
Valley Mapping Service	Minto, ND.....	701-248-3536

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

**Update on Global Warming:** At the end of June, Grand Forks ND has had a string of seven consecutive months of below normal temperatures. As I am writing this article, the last few days of July, it is very likely that July will also be below normal temperatures to make it 8 months in a row. Hopefully Global warming will kick in pretty soon!

**Is Farmland the Trade of the Century?** I recently received an email with the headline "Is Farmland the Trade of the Century?" Apparently stocks and bonds are not working well for long-term investors. Many large investors feel the markets are simply too corrupt to play anymore. So what are they putting their money into now? The answer may surprise you: "Farmland." The article goes on to explain that farmland returns 5% -11% annually with less volatility than stocks.

Equity funds already exist to let investors buy farmland in much the same way they buy stocks or mutual funds. Veteran investor, Jim Rogers, recently revealed he is involved with farmland projects in both Canada and Brazil. (Jim Rogers quote from March 2009: "Farmers will be driving Lamborghinis and stock brokers will be driving tractors for farmers.") Most recently, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, China, South Korea, and Egypt have all made investments in farmland.

I don't know if I like all this attention that appears to be coming our way. Will American farmers now have to compete with oil sheiks and equity funds in addition to their neighbor the next time a quarter of land comes up for sale? These investment firms must be anticipating positive annual returns from farmland, in addition to prospects of land prices going up in the future if inflation comes back as expected. Only time will tell.



**BOB DEUTSCH**  
PRESIDENT  
SOIL SCIENTIST/CCA

## SOUTHERN TRENDS

Good progress on our lab expansion in Benson MN has been made. The completion time frame is about mid-August. We will start moving lab equipment into the new addition in late August and early September, with our Open House set for September 1st. The "early summer" topsoil grid sampling season (May thru June) has greatly expanded, with consultants and Ag-retailers being very busy grid sampling this summer. This has been driven by fertilizer prices, increased use of GPS technology and especially by the education and encouragement of growers by agronomists.

**SCN (Soybean Cyst Nematode):** For the past 6 or 7 years, SCN testing has been critical for western, southern and central Minnesota soybean growers. Most soybean varieties grown in these areas are now SCN resistant. In the areas to the north, testing for SCN is increasing and more soil samples are testing positive for SCN each year. If you are seeing symptoms of SCN in fields in your area, it is important to test for SCN and confirm what the problem is. SCN sample summaries (can be viewed at [www.agvise.com](http://www.agvise.com)) show that about 70% of the soil samples tested for SCN at our Benson MN lab have some level of SCN present. The fall soil sampling season is a great time to sample for SCN! Please remember to collect a separate topsoil sample for the SCN test. If you need supplies for SCN testing, please give us a call.



**RICHARD JENNY**  
AGRONOMIST/CCA