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# The Growers Solution

WINTER 2011

VOLUME 24 ISSUE 1

## Farming Differently Is Good

**By Mike Bulcher**

Our family has been with Growers since 1959, and not until my teenage years did I start noticing we were farming differently than our neighbors. Whenever us kids brought up the subject about the differences, we were told, "Farmers can do what they want, but because we have to pay our bills we do it this way." That generally ended the conversation. Meanwhile, it worked out and our farm did grow even if it seemed slower than our neighbors.

Because of our growing dairy, we needed more feed, and I was told the only way was to grow the feed ourselves using the Growers Program. ounces of Growers Nutritional Additive foliar spray. In the spring we plowed down alfalfa, but no nitrogen sidedress or weed control was used. When the corn was harvested it yielded an average of 139 bushels per acre. It sold for $4.83 per bushel, so, doing the math, it grossed $671.37 per acre. Seed cost was $43.84 per acre, and the Growers with NA cost $78.48, making a total expense of $122.32 per acre which leaves $549.05 net profit per acre. Not necessarily a lot of yield, but a very good net. In other years the corn has yielded more here, but with all the heavy rainfall we never had a chance to sidedress our usual 50 pounds of N.


***Mike Bulcher and his folks, Ed and Rose. Ed's dad, Orville, was an early Growers user. The generations add up.***

So in 1972 Dad bought a farm up the road from our home place. He explained to Mom the place was in bad shape and needed a lot of work. He got busy hauling lime to the new farm which us kids really liked because we could ride along in the lime truck. Dad hauled lime onto that place for four or five years, and later I was told it had had around 40 or 50 tons of lime to the acre over the years. The farm has always been in rotation with alfalfa hay, then corn, soybeans, wheat, and then back to hay. I know it has never had dry fertilizer on it since 1972.

This year on that farm, the 2010 season, we planted a conventional variety corn at 26,000 population on April 20th. The corn got 4 gallons of GMS in the row and 2 gallons with 8

Anyway, with the crop year behind us, we really have no complaints about the end result. And, as far as the program being different from the neighbors', I am really glad it is. ■

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# Fifty-Five Year Growers User

**By Staff**

In 1955 Eugene Pagett of Xenia in southwest Ohio was 25 years old and in the process of buying and taking over his grandfather's 10 cow dairy and 200 acre farm operation. He had been using Brand X, a liquid fertilizer then offered by Dr. Tiedjens and J. P. Henry.

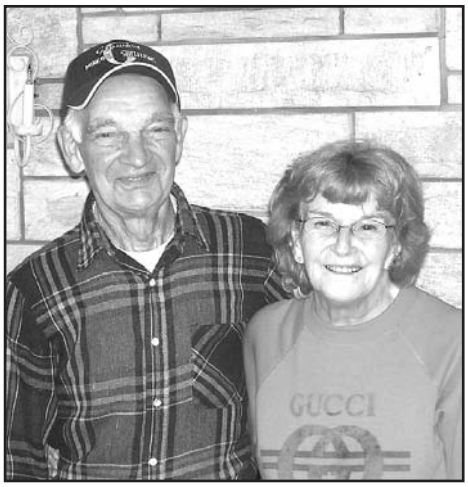
But along about that time, Doc and Joe came to realize the Brand X people were not at all interested in having Doc perfect his new concept of foliar feeding crops, because, to them, sales were all important. So 55 years ago, in order to follow up with the needed and important research, Joe and Doc decided to form their own company, Growers Chemical Corp. Gene Pagett became one of the company's first customers in the new company's first year in business.

Gene, Barbara his wife of 60 years now retired from her in-town-job, sons Barry and Rocky both full time on the farm, and Barry's daughter, Laura, the family farm's sixth generation, who also works at a Dayton area veterinarian hospital, are all active in the farm's daily operation, which is now about 345 acres and the dairy, space-wise is at full capacity, has 70 cows. 90% of the corn, beans, and hay they grow is used through the dairy.

Barry admits to having been somewhat distracted away from Growers and the Growers Program after having graduated from Ohio State's Ag. School, but now, other than some 28% N, they use Growers and lime exclusively. Gene wants it known, "The farm has never had any anhydrous."

The Pagetts put together their own vitamin package for the TMR. Gene says their dairy ration contains high moisture shell corn, roasted soybeans, corn silage, alfalfa haylege, salt, lime, plus 4 or 5 ounces of GMS. And according to Barry every day each cow gets free choice salt and lime and they are all healthy and produce real well.

We are especially proud and appreciative of Gene and his good family for having been such loyal and good Growers customers through all these many years. ■



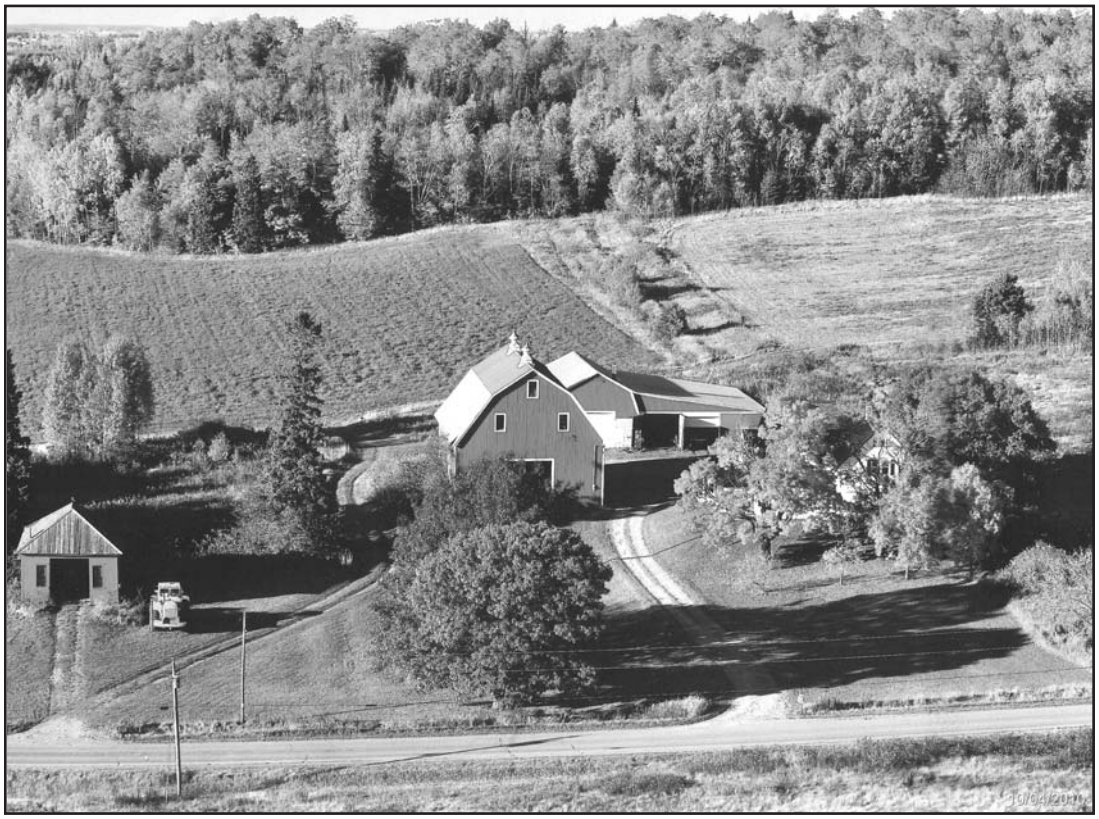

***Gene and Barbara Pagett of Xenia, Ohio, have been using Growers from the company's very beginning.***

# More on Maine's Sam Niblett

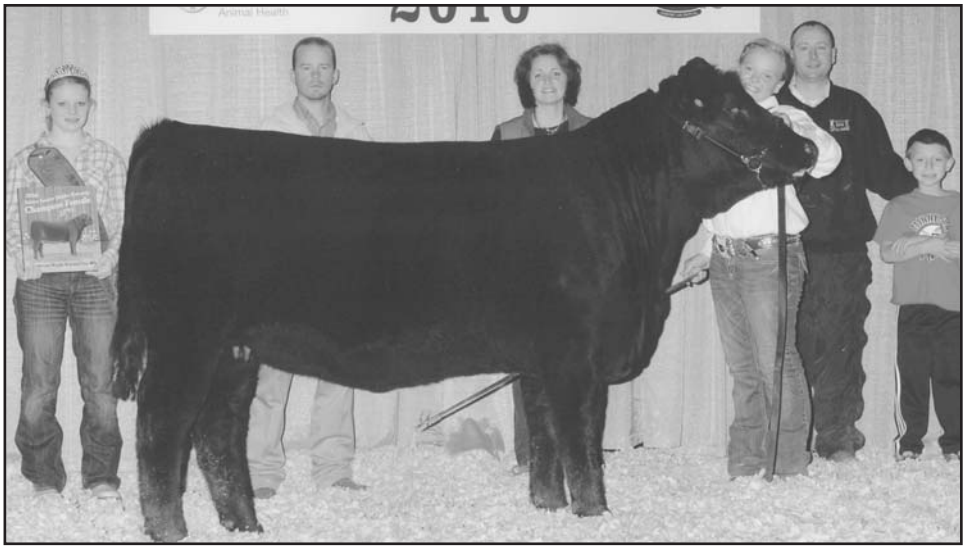
**By Staff**

In early December, 2010, Joe Henry received the accompanying photograph from Sam Niblett, our long time friend and now retired potato farmer from the Easton, Maine area. This is a fall 2010 picture of his farmstead. Sam wanted us to see the difference between the two fields out behind the buildings which were both planted to alfalfa three years ago. He asked Joe to guess which field got 16 tons of lime per acre 32 years ago and which did not. Sam in his note referring to the picture said, "Call me at anytime. I'll tell all who will listen." His cell phone number is 207-227-3085.

Also, for those who never saw them, starting in the Summer 2006 issue and concluding in the Winter 2008 issue, *The Growers Solution* carried a fairly regular series of seriously amusing articles written by Sam recounting his very skeptical introduction into the Growers Program on his then faltering potato operation. All those articles are archived and can be found on the Growers Website, www.GrowersMineral.com. ■



***Which alfalfa field had 16 tons per acre of high calcium lime applied 32 years ago?***



***Long term Growers users, the McIvers of Minnesota are proud of their heifer who won a Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion at the American Royal.***

# Kansas City American Royal Grand Champion is Growers Grown

David, Maryln and Scott McIver of Happy Acres Farm near Farwell, Minnesota bred and raised the heifer who garnered the Grand Champion Salers Junior Futurity Champion and also the Reserve Grand Champion in the Salers Open Show at the American Royal in Kansas City. Kylee Kohls and the Kohls family of Litchfield, Minnesota showed her.

HA Sara W906, born March 3, 2009, was sired by JGK Blk Pld Jasper 634R. Jasper is a herd bull for Happy Acres. Sara's mom, sister and brother are still on the farm. They have all been raised on the Growers Program. David explained, "we feed Growers Mineral Solutions (GMS) to the animals using a lick tank. In the winter, we'll sprinkle GMS on the corn silage too. The crops are all planted and foliar sprayed with Growers. We use Redmond products and calcium also."

The McIvers raise both Polled Hereford and Saler cattle. They have sold breeding stock throughout 20+ states in the United States and Canada. Check out their website, www.mciversshappyacres.com.

HA Sara will next compete with the Kohls at the National Western stock show in Denver in January. ■

# More Nutrients for the Money

**By Jim Halbeisen**

As our GMS sales representatives make contacts, some prospective clients have called us wanting to hear more about Growers Chemical Corporation's approach to crop fertilization.

A few argue they are getting more nutrients for their money when purchasing bulk liquids and dry fertilizers. In response, Growers asks, "Yes, but how much of those nutrients are actually available to the crop and not lost to the environment?" The final answer as to which of the various crop fertilization approaches has the best profitability needs to come from the results of test plots in their own fields.

But, now, producers in the United States and North America need to carefully consider other issues taking shape. In February, 2010, one of our Florida Growers Sales Representatives sent us an e-mail with an attachment entitled "A Guide to EPA's Proposed Numeric Nutrient Water Quality Criteria for Florida". Numeric Nutrient Criteria enumerates, or limits, the amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus and potash allowed to be used on certain fields. According to the publication, "...in July 2008, an organization called Earthjustice, representing the Florida Wildlife Federation, the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, the Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida, St. John's Riverkeeper, and the Sierra Club filed a lawsuit against EPA. The suit: 1) claimed that there was an unacceptable delay by the federal government in setting limits for nutrient pollution; 2) claimed that EPA had previously determined that numeric nutrient criteria are necessary as described in the Federal Clean Water Act; and 3) further argued that EPA was obligated to promptly propose these criteria for Florida."

In response to the lawsuit USEPA administrator Lisa Jackson signed a proposed

*Please turn to page 5*

# On The Road Again

## WINTER 2011

Growers Mineral Solutions is scheduled to set up and staff booths at the following upcoming farm shows and conventions this winter. It's a great time to stop in and review your plant food and animal nutrition needs, hear about new developments at Growers or just chat with the folks who make it all happen—your friends and neighbors.

| | |
|---|---|
| Jan. 4-6, 2011<br>Tue-Thu | Keystone Farm Show<br>York, PA |
| Jan. 7-8<br>Fri-Sat | Georgia Fruit & Vegetable<br>Savanah, GA |
| Jan. 11-13<br>Tue-Thu | New Jersey Vegetable Mktg<br>Atlantic City, NJ |
| Jan. 17-20<br>Mon-Thu | Delaware Ag. Week<br>Harrington, DE |
| Jan. 18-19<br>Tue-Wed | Ohio Produce Growers Congress<br>Sandusky, OH |
| Jan. 18-20<br>Tue-Thu | Virginia Farm Show<br>Fishersville, VA |
| Jan. 18-20<br>Tue-Thu | Fort Wayne Farm Show<br>Fort Wayne, IN |
| Jan 20<br>Thu | Georgia Peanut Farm Show<br>Albany, Georgia |
| Jan. 26-27<br>Wed-Thu | Empire State Fruit<br>& Vegetable Expo<br>Syracuse, NY |
| Jan. 29<br>Sat | N. Michigan Small Farm Conf.<br>Grayling, MI |
| Feb. 1-3<br>Tue-Thu | Mid Atlantic Fruit & Vegetable<br>Hershey, PA |
| Feb. 2-4<br>Wed-Fri | Southern Farm Show<br>Raleigh, NC |
| Feb. 3<br>Thu | Southern Indiana Grazing Conf.<br>Odon, IN |
| Feb. 4<br>Fri | Northern Indiana Grazing Conf.<br>Shipshewana, IN |
| Feb. 8-9<br>Tue-Wed | Alexandria Area Farm Show<br>Alexandria, MN |
| Feb. 8-10<br>Tue-Thu | Canadian International<br>Farm Equip<br>Toronto, Ont., Canada |
| Feb. 10<br>Thu | AL/FL Peanut Trade Show<br>Dothan, AL |
| Feb. 16-19<br>Wed-Sat | National Farm Machinery Show<br>Louisville, KY |
| Feb. 22-24<br>Tue-Thu | Central Minnesota Farm Show<br>St. Cloud, MN |
| Feb. 23-24<br>Wed-Thu | Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Conv.<br>St. Catharines, Ont., Canada |
| Feb. 24-26<br>Thu-Sat | New York State Farm Show<br>Syracuse, NY |
| Mar. 29-31<br>Tue-Thu | Wisconsin Public<br>Service Farm Show<br>Oshkosh, WI |

*Hope to see you!*

# La Nina and Dry Weather For 2011

By Jim Halbeisen

The moisture conditions were very dry during the 2010 fall harvest in most of the US corn belt. The US drought monitor in late November 2010 was showing increasing areas of significant dryness in the northern US east of the Mississippi River and very large areas in the southeast as well. Heading into December 2010, these dry areas seem to be expanding and government prediction services are suggesting the situation could continue on into the 2011 planting season.

The following synopsis is a consolidated effort of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and their funded institutions such as the Climate Prediction Center.

"La Nina is expected to last into the northern hemisphere spring 2011.... A large majority of models also predict La Nina to become a strong episode by the November-January season before gradually weakening. A few models... suggest that La Nina could persist into the Northern Hemisphere summer 2011. However, no particular outcome is favored beyond northern hemisphere spring due to large model disagreement and lower model skill during the period. Likely La Nina impacts are... below average precipitation is most likely across the south-central and southeastern states."

Should NOAA's predictions come to pass, producers electing to follow the Growers Program will find it lends itself quite well to environments tending to the dry side. In dry weather, the calcium side of the Growers Program can help hold water in the soil profile by encouraging increased micro biological growth. Also, the reduced size of the calcium cation tends to help the growing crop function properly with less volume of water.

For the Growers Mineral Solutions (GMS) side of the Growers Program, foliar feeding works very well at delivering mineral elements to the crop when the plant is dealing with water stress. Under dry conditions, normal plant absorption of mineral elements is reduced due to less mineral solubility and less micro biological release of minerals. During times of reduced mineral element availability, foliar feeding GMS, a clean balanced mineral solution, can furnish plants essential minerals to help release energy and allow them to carry on normal biological functions. So, when water is reintroduced, plants can return to their normal growth patterns much more quickly and help minimize productivity losses.

Those not familiar with the Growers Program, could find the implementation of the calcium part of the Growers Program taking a few years to receive the rewards of its implementation. But foliar feeding a crop growing in a dry environment very likely will benefit the crop right away when done correctly. Parameters needing to be addressed; fineness of spray, time of day, hardness of water, are among the more important issues.

Growers Chemical Corporation's experience using GMS during dry conditions is extensive, and producers interested in staving off possible dry weather crop losses can discuss the GMS protocols with their local GMS sales representative or Growers Chemical Corporation in Milan, Ohio at 800-437-4769. ■

# More Nitrogen Discussion

**By Jim Halbeisen**

The website *DTN/The Progressive Farmer* recently featured two articles discussing the environmental problems associated with the mineral element nitrogen. They were, "Study Ties Ag to Hypoxia" on September 9, 2010, and "Farm Runoff Criticized in Chesapeake" on October 27, 2010. Also, in the fall of 2010, nitrogen prices went up significantly as the prices of commodities, particularly corn, similarly increased. These occurrences drawing attention to the excessive use nitrogen in agriculture and their rising costs, lend credibility and reason for agricultural producers to follow the Growers Program which calls for much reduced use of the element nitrogen.

Following our attendance in the late 1990's at meetings concerning hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico, we at Growers Chemical Corporation were asked by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to present our comments on the hypoxia problems in the agency's publication *Watershed Events*. In response, our article described how the use of the Growers Program allows farmers to lower or limit their use of the mineral element nitrogen. We related how the use of high calcium lime encourages more vigorous soil microbiological life and increased soil porosity. Also, besides increasing the level of calcium in their diet, soil microbiological life is encouraged to grow when using a small amounts of balanced high grade plant food solutions as opposed to their growth being limited or reduced by the more toxic materials normally found in most commercial fertilizers.

The Growers Program approach to growing crops more efficiently takes advantage of native sources of nitrogen, meaning significantly less nitrogen needs to be added to create profitable crops. Lower nitrogen additions to the soil automatically lessen the chances of wasted nitrogen becoming environmental pollution.

Many farmers are coming to realize they can grow profitable corn crops with a lot less nitrogen than the long advocated "1.2 pounds of nitrogen per 1 bushel of corn." They are finding native nitrogen sources are within easy reach, especially when they understand the earth's atmosphere, the air we breath, is 79% $N^2$ gas ( the source of all fertilizer nitrogen) making it seem reasonable producers should take advantage of some of that resource.

An additional benefit to use less nitrogen in the agricultural system is the reduction of cost. When fertilizer nitrogen is cheap, any nitrogen lost to the environment, Gulf of Mexico or Chesapeake Bay can be easily justified by better yields and higher commodity prices. But as increases in energy prices impact input costs, even good production will find it difficult to pay for inefficient nitrogen use, especially so in years of environmental stress limiting yields.

If producers have reason to believe higher fertilizer prices will continue or they cringe at the sight of farm articles proposing new Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) levels, it is very important they learn how to take more advantage of native fertility.

Note: Those interested in the original article submitted to USEPA should call Milan, Ohio, 800-437-4769, and ask for the article from the Late Fall 2001 edition of *The Growers Solution* entitled "Successfully Promote on Farm Natural Nitrification". ■

# Four Letters (T.M.D.L.) Should We Be Concerned?

**By Mike Grube**

In our Early Fall 2000 issue of *The Growers Solution*, Growers Research Director Jim Halbeisen introduced us to TMDLs. His article was entitled "What are TMDLs?" and it gave us warnings of EPA water regulations to come.

The letters TMDL stand for "Total Maximum Daily Loads." TMDLs are the amounts of manure and fertilizer allowed to run off farm land. TMDLs have actually been in place under the clean water act for over 27 years. However, in response to nearly 40 lawsuits filed by environmental groups saying the EPA wasn't doing its job, in August 14, 1999, President Bill Clinton announced the implementation of newer and tougher rules. With the addition of subsequent suits, today there are more than 20,000 watersheds being policed.

President Obama, elected in November 2008, is a very environmentally friendly person and many things have started to happen at the EPA. A strong believer in organics, the President is also concerned with the Hypoxia Effect (dead zone) in the Gulf of Mexico, Chesapeake Bay Watershed, Lake Erie (Ohio) watershed and Grand Lake Saint Marys (Celina, Ohio), which are just a few of the watersheds under EPA scrutiny.

The Grand Lake, Saint Marys case is a prime example of what happens when poluted runoff becomes too much for a watershed to handle. Residential and farm runoff into the lake has led to an overload of phosphorous which is feeding toxic blue-green algae which, in turn, emits toxins harmful to animals and people. Several owners have had their dogs die and many people have been sickened swimming in the lake resulting in the popular lake being closed to the public last summer. In response to pressure from commercial tourism interests, the lake was reopened in December, 2010, but no fish taken from the lake can be eaten.

Lawn fertilizer applications to the many residences and resorts crowding around the lake add to the issue, but evidence shows agriculture, with its large concentration of animals and grain farms in the area, is playing a major role. Large city investers poured lots of money into the recreation activities around the lake, and they are losing dollars, so public officials are feeling the heat and, no doubt, will push EPA for relief by way of TMDLs.

In May 2009 President Obama signed Executive Order #13508, the Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration Order. This created a deadline for TMDL limits to be set in place by December 31, 2010. Basically, this order gave EPA full authority to enforce the Clean Water Act in most, if not all, watersheds.

In Florida the fertilizer industry is proposing to take EPA to court for establishing a prohibitive numerical nutrient criteria. Ford West, president of The Fertilizer Institute, states the values set for nitrogen and phosphate levels found in the waters of the state of Florida are too low and will unduly restrict crop production.

In May of 2010, EPA reached a legal agreement to a case filed in January of 2009, by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Under the settlement EPA will propose, by the end of 2010, new regulations to control fertilizer and animal waste runoff effective by the end of 2014. According to USDA this ruling will cover 9 million acres in Chesapeake Bay watershed. The land mass covered will be all or parts of Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and New York.

So where do we in agriculture go from here? Right now Amish farmers in Lancaster and Chester County, Pennsylvania are being asked to fence livestock out of creeks, etc., and to build manure storage facilities so spreading can take place when the ground is not frozen or snow covered.

The Delmarva Peninsula produces 800,000 tons of poultry litter yearly. To help alleviate the situation, Perdue Farms in 2001 started a manure pelletizing plant, and is now shipping its "fertilizer" all over the country. It is the only plant moving large volumes of manure. Also, Senator Ben Cardin, D-Md, started a 30 million dollar agricultural-animal-waste-to-bio-energy deployment program. This program has allowed a researcher from Virginia Tech University to create a mobile pyrolysis machine which will heat poultry litter and convert it into both bio-oil and bio-char. Of course, as with any and all programs, cost effectiveness will eventually rule.

Other solutions discussed; lime applications to buffer elements which Growers Chemical Corporation has recommended as part of the Growers Program for 55 years, no till, cover crops, crop rotations, etc. And a Growers favorite in an article titled "Bay Watch" in the December 2010 issue of the *Furrow Magazine*, they talked about "precision" or "spoon-feeding" crops. They said the best way is to cut back fertility amounts and apply it at times the crop can better utilize it. Again, another practice Growers Chemical Corporation has been recommending for 55 years. We call it "Target Fertility" or applying crop nutrients to the seed at planting and to the foliage when and where it can be more efficiently and best be utilized by the crop.

I am sure there are many other solutions to this issue of watershed protection. We can also argue many pros and cons of what to do. But it still comes back to, should we be concerned? We in agriculture live in an era in which the consumer runs the show. Agriculture needs to realize the consumer wants clean, safe water, and that it is hard to fight the environmental groups and their money even though some of their proposed ideas make no sense.

We need to be concerned, though, because some form of EPA regulations are coming, whether we like it or not. How much is yet to be seen. Government will still want cheap food for the people, but it will become more expensive as environmentalists continue having their way.

We Growers people have solutions which are proven and economically viable for the environmental regulations sure to soon decend on agriculture. And these solutions will also allow us to keep our good environmental stewardship practices in place. Using High Calcium Limestone in following the Growers Program and using Growers Mineral Solutions to "Target Fertility" during Planting and Foliar Feeding we can achieve quality crops and successfully abide by the coming Nutrient Management Plans, TMDLs and be within EPA guidelines.

In November, 2010, we attended a dairy meeting put on by Ohio State Dairy Extension and faculty. Present were people working within the dairy industry; veteranarians, nutritionists, dariymen, etc. A closing comment from the meeting still sticks with me. "If you do not know about TMDLs, you better learn. If you are an agronomist, feed man etc., and do not know the meaning of these letters, you better learn. It will be better to be proactive and prevent problems, than to be reactive and try to solve them later." ■

## More Nutrients

*Continued from page 3*

rule called "Water Quality Standards for the State of Florida's Lakes and Flowing Water". This rule becomes effective 15 months after being published in the Federal Register.

The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) said at their Fertilizer Outlook and Technology Conference that USEPA's rule for Florida is precedent setting and of national significance. This marks the first time that USEPA has attempted to displace a state's effort to manage nutrients by establishing federal criteria. According to TFI this new precedent could lead to USEPA coming into other states and overriding what local government has done or is establishing. The TFI specially discussed Kansas and Illinois as potential targets.

If this type of rule making gains momentum in North America it is paramount for farmers to implement soil fertility programs using <u>less</u> total nutrients for success, rather than more. Typically, the Growers Program is a good example of nutrient conservation for raising corn, or other crops, especially when it can be demonstrated it achieves the same yield as other programs while using 55% less nutrients.

This means farmers who have been following the Growers Program will automatically have better chances of meeting future more aggressive Best Management Practices (BMP) coming from more rigorous USEPA numeric rules. ■

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# WINTER 2011


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# Growers Calendars and Growers Conference Calls

**By Staff**

The 2011 Growers calendar is available from your Growers Sales Representative. They are 11 inches wide and hang down about 18 inches.

The Growers Calendar's second Thursday of each month has a reminder for our regularly scheduled telephone Conference Calls, and gives the call starting time as 9:00 PM EST or EDT except for June, July, and August when it will be 10:00 EDT.

The Conference Call dial-in number and the participant access code number have been changed from last summer. As was the recent December call, the dial-in number now is 1-213-289-0500 and the participant access code number is 8262757. January, 2011's date is Thursday, the 13th, February's is Thursday, the 10th, and March is Thursday the 10th. Join in for an hour's worth of Growers' Program information, pricing, and interviews with knowledgeable customers. ■

## The Growers Solution

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## More About Growers

We hope you will find this newsletter helpful and interesting and we welcome your input. Please send letters-to-the-editor, comments, suggestions, etc. to: Growers, P.O. Box 1750, Milan, OH 44846, call 1-800-437-4769, fax 419-499-2178.

**email: growers@hmcltd.net**
**or visit our Web site: www.growersmineral.com**

# Pricing for the 2011 Season

**By Staff**

Recently most of our raw material suppliers made it possible for a significant lowering of the price of Growers Mineral Solutions. Prices vary with the total quantities purchased during the fiscal year, but fertility costs using GMS should range between $55.00 and $65.00 per acre plus, in some cases, only half the nitrogen normally used. These per acre cost figures should be competitive with almost any other fertility methods, and even more so when taking advantage of January's 6%, February's 4% and March's 2% cash discounts. Growers is hopeful these reduced prices can stay in effect throughout the 2011 farming season, but, at this point, no one knows what will happen. Already one ingredient supplier has announced an increase effective January 1st, and the rest are predicting likewise. Contact your Growers Sales Representative for the latest pricing and ordering information. ■

# Update on Yield Checking

Regarding our "Yield Checking Gives Answers" article in the Late Fall 2010 edition of The Growers Solution, David Kashak of Waterford, PA, confirms it was his inside rows of 200+ bu/ac Genetically Modified Organism corn that suffered more varmint damage than the outside rows of his 321 bu/ac non-GMO corn. This is the opposite of normal experience, but David thinks because there was a bear around, especially during the corn's milk stage, the non-GMO preferring deer stayed away while the raccoons worked on the GMO corn. Eds. ■