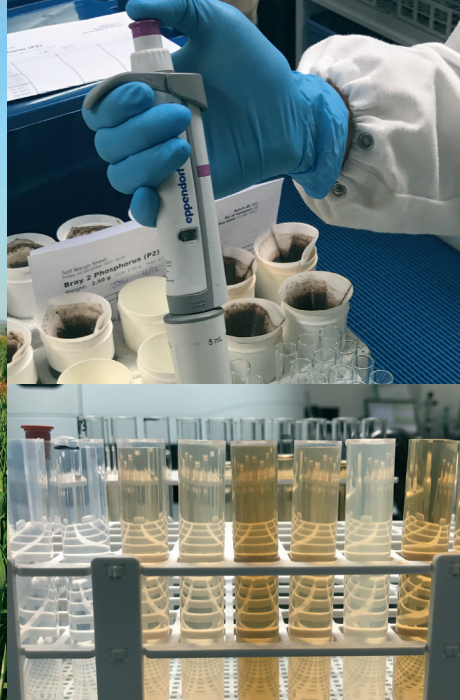




Project adviser Sean Mason, of Agronomy Solutions
Photo: AgCommunicators



SOIL AND PLANT TESTING FOR PROFITABLE FERTILISER USE

A new Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) investment, titled “Using soil and plant testing data to better inform nutrient management and optimise fertiliser investments for grain growers in the southern region”, is focused on increasing growers’ use of soil and plant testing data to better inform their fertiliser decision-making.

The three-year investment, led by Agronomy Solutions in conjunction with Australian Precision Ag Laboratory (APAL), CSIRO, Landmark, Hart Field-Site Group and AgCommunicators, will develop an economic framework to quantify the likely returns from improved nutrient management techniques and the opportunity to boost farm profit while managing risk. The framework will assess soil and plant testing approaches including frequency, phase in the rotation, sampling intensity, soil depths and sampling in controlled traffic paddocks.

From here, an intensive, high-impact soil and plant testing demonstration program involving approximately 100 growers across the southern region will be undertaken. Each participating grower will be provided with Fertcare® accredited soil sampling and analysis, interpretation of results and fertiliser recommendations for six paddocks per year.

At nutrient responsive sites, growers will be supported to instigate fertiliser test strips to illustrate responses, supported by plant tests. The impact on nutrient use efficiency, profit for each grower (costs, input savings and/or increased income) and soil data will be compiled and trends across the region summarised each year. Soil and plant testing data will provide a useful snapshot of nutrient status and soil fertility in the southern region and will help highlight emerging issues such as soil acidity and declining organic matter.

Ultimately, the investment aims to improve nutrient management best practice through the increased use of soil testing and provide grain growers in the southern cropping region (Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania) with the confidence, knowledge and ability to make more effective and profitable nutrient management decisions.

PROJECT FACTS



ABOUT 5000 SOIL
PROFILE SAMPLES
WILL BE COLLECTED
EACH YEAR



AROUND 40,000
INDIVIDUAL ANALYTES
WILL BE MEASURED
EACH YEAR



MORE THAN 100
GROWERS WILL
PARTICIPATE IN A
FERTCARE® SOIL
AND PLANT TESTING
PROGRAM



MORE THAN 200
GROWERS AND
ADVISERS WILL
BE SURVEYED TO
UNDERSTAND THEIR
APPROACH TO SOIL AND
PLANT TISSUE TESTING



THE PROJECT WILL
INVOLVE FIELD DAYS,
CROP WALKS AND
WORKSHOPS

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