

Joint Project between Precision SoilTech and the Department of Agriculture



Precision SoilTech was founded in 1998 and has rapidly become the premier contract soil sampling service for farmers in Western Australia. There are currently 8 regionally based sampling contractors in the Precision SoilTech team.

While many of the more innovative farmers have long recognised the value of the Precision SoilTech sampling strategy as a way to better manage and monitor soil fertility, wider recognition of the approach is now occurring.

The Avon Catchment Council (ACC) has recently provided funding to the Department of Agriculture (DAWA) and Precision SoilTech to enhance the monitoring of soil acidity and ultimately increase lime application in the Avon River Basin. This important initiative aims to better manage the valuable soil resources of the state and ensure profitable and sustainable farming continues.

Chris Gazey, Senior Research Officer with DAWA, will manage the cooperative project with Precision SoilTech titled **"Identifying land management practices contributing to soil acidity and development of sustainable land management options."**



Joel Andrew, a graduate in biological sciences who specialises in land management, has recently been appointed as a Research Officer with Precision SoilTech to work on the ACC project. Joel hails from a farm in Naremben and possesses a unique combination of specialised land management, computing and practical farming skills.

Chris said: "We are delighted to have obtained funding from the ACC for the project, and this will enable us to comprehensively re-sample many long term lime trials including those established by Dr Lorelle Lightfoot at Aglime during the 1980s, and DAWA during the Time to Lime campaign in the 1990s."

"We now have a very unique opportunity in this program to combine the resources of government and the private sector - the DAWA research team specialising in soil acidity, and the staff from Precision SoilTech with their unique soil sampling and monitoring systems."

"We are confident that some relevant messages on liming and soil management will be key outcomes of this ACC project."

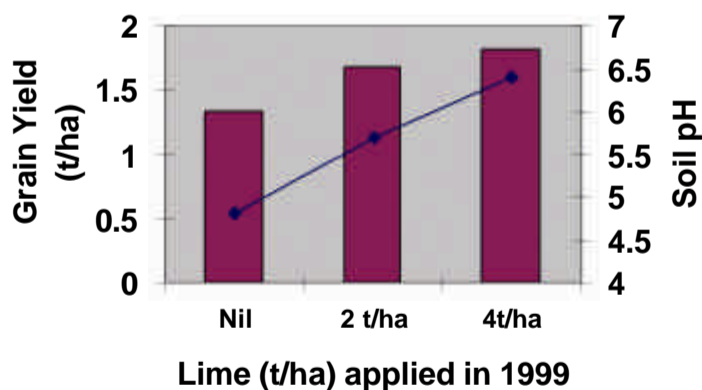
A key role for Joel will be encouraging growers to collect soil samples from deeper into the profile to make more informed liming decisions. All growers that use the Precision SoilTech soil sampling regime receive a detailed liming strategy from Aglime of Australia, based on their soil pH values, and yield data collected from over 25 years of comprehensive field based research. This approach ensures growers apply lime to paddocks that will have the best chance of producing economic responses and therefore maximising farm profit.

Dr Steve Carr from Aglime of Australia explained: "Our liming recommendations are all based on a comprehensive understanding of the soil acidity problem, and by sampling deeper in the soil profile we can provide more reliable liming strategies that will result in the best economic returns for the growers we deal with."

Paddock	Site	Zone	Easting	Northing	Soil Type	Topsoil pH	Midsoil pH	Subsoil pH	Recommended U/ha over 10 Years
DAM	1	50J	046000	6621999	SL	5.1	4.4		2-4
DAM	2	50J	046000	6621999	SL	5.1	4.3		2-4
DAM	3	50J	046000	6621999	SL	4.9	4.3		3-4
DAM	4	50J	046000	6621999	SL	5.0	4.7		2-4
DAM	5	50J	046000	6621999	SL	5.0	4.1		3-4
DAM	6	50J	046000	6652199	SL	4.7	4.3		3-4
NO DAM	1	50J	047999	6610000	SL	4.8	4.3		3-4
NO DAM	2	50J	047999	6610000	SL	5.1	4.9		1-3
NO DAM	3	50J	047999	6610000	SL	5.2	4.8		1-3
NO DAM	4	50J	047999	6610000	SL	4.8	6.3		0-2
NO DAM	5	50J	047999	6610000	SL	5.7	6.4		0-1
NO DAM	6	50J	047999	6610000	SL	5.3	5.1		0-2

Joel will also be working closely with David Gartner and Adam Clune from DAWA to reassess many old lime trials throughout the wheatbelt. Chris Gazey said: "There are many long term lime trials in the state that yield very valuable data that is used to continually refine liming recommendations and the suggested rates of application."

Wongan Hills Wheat 2003



Chris explained that soil acidity was a major limitation to agricultural production throughout much of Western Australia, particularly the Avon River Basin that contained some of the most ancient soils in WA. "Basically these soils have been around such a long time, they have acidified naturally over time, and our agriculture processes over the past 150 to 200 years have just helped the process along," said Chris.

"The application of lime is really the only practical answer to counter soil acidity," said Chris. "Our research has shown the positive economic returns from liming to increase soil pH, and we see it as very important that growers adopt the outcomes of this research."

- Darrel Beattie** Mingenew 0429 726 048
- Murray Falconer** Wongan Hills 0428 711 126
- David York** Manager 0419 917 742 1800 644 951
- Simon Witham** Moora 0427 548 022
- Geoff York** Meckering 0428 251 217
- Phillip Crute** Brookton 0427 250 877
- Brad Minchin** Esperance 0427 716 457
- Brad Smallwood** Borden 0427 281 048
- Dean Morgan** Wagin 0428 611 732

Precision SoilTech's Trained Sampling Team
For more information on soil pH, liming or soil sampling visit the website or call the number below