

ADVANCING FAR



By Terry Panbecker

Preparations for planting season are well underway for many of our MAPS customers. When that has wrapped up, what will you begin planning for next? Farming requires a lot of preparation and planning before each season. As applications and input costs increase, proper planning becomes even more important. Your MAPS team has the ability to help you prepare well in advance so that you are not wasting valuable time when field operations are needed.

In the last newsletter, we introduced to you our Grid Sample Loyalty Program. This program allows your grid sampled acres to be automatically enrolled for grid sampling according to their current sampling cycle and in addition offers a discount on grid sampling of those acres. You have peace of mind that your field information is kept accurate when enrolled in the Grid Sample Loyalty Program.

In this newsletter, I would like to inform you of an additional way of allowing yourself to better plan and manage your fields. Over the last few years, a large number of our customers have transitioned their soil sampling to take place during the summer. This is due

to the great benefits achieved through sampling soils in-season, versus the traditional spring and fall seasons. In fact, soils are in the best condition during the summer. They are less likely to be dry and compacted, and are more accurate due to the nutrients from the previous crop residue having been released and available for plant uptake. Acres that are soil sampled at this time allow entire farms to be sampled no matter the type of crop. This means recommendations will include soil information derived from across all the acres, regardless of whether the crop lines change or not. Summer soil sampling not only means having the ability to recognize what nutrients are available to the plants in-season, but it also allows you more time to analyze the results before fall operations. More time and more information mean better recommendations.

Other MAPS customers are also using more information to achieve greater knowledge and field management through their involvement with our MAPS DM program. As the MAPS DM program has progressed, so has the information and knowledge able to be derived from it. The MAPS DM program was originally established to bring higher value to growers' soil and field information by analyzing multiple year data to develop reports that allow for better management plans. Addi-

MAPS DM Reports Available for 2012-

- NEW Cooperative Benchmark Report (corn and beans)
- Grower Benchmark Report (corn and beans)
- Field Planter Report
- Field Correlation Report
- Field History Report
- Evaluation of Crop Rotation Options (group, grower, and field levels)
- Yield by Population for Test Blocks (and surrounding area)
- Yield Comparisons for Variety by-
 - Soil Type
 - Fertility Ranges
 - Management Zones
 - Fungicide Application

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M MANAGEMENT

tionally, the MAPS DM program hosts grower meetings for those in the program that allow discussion of current crop issues and provides collective group reports to be distributed at the end of the season. The MAPS DM participants for the 2012 growing season will have the opportunity to view a variety of reports. You can see a list of these below this article.

Although advancements continue to be made to the program, one of the highly received items is the development of variable rate planting population prescriptions. These prescriptions are exceptionally accurate through the use of soil type, historical yield data management zones, and/or electro-conductivity management zones to create them. These managements zones are then used as an approach not only to planting, but fertilizer applications as well when combined with overlying grid soil samples. The ability to draw information like this and use to more accurately manage your farming operation requires extra steps in addition to our regular grid sampling program. Even so, they are the next level in site-specific farming and should be greatly considered by many of our growers today.

To continue planning ahead for other seasonal operations, I would also like to make you aware of the technology available today for boom section spray

shut-off options. The ability to control spray sections has helped growers more efficiently handle costs associated with spray applications, especially in eliminating over applications. While Raven spray controls are most commonly used, many growers want to be able to keep all information and data consolidated together on one monitor. This option is available to you with our Raven controller replacement options. The use of a purchased adapter cable from MAPS allows you to combine all of your spray application information into your Ag Leader or Trimble monitor. Not only does this help consolidate display systems in the cab, but it also allows for better integration of application mapping and report generating capabilities. It's another option to help your farm operate more effectively and efficiently.

When you bring together advanced information and technology innovations, you have tremendous opportunities to better manage your farm's operations and applications on a more efficient level. It is important to take advantage of any opportunities, including those in this article, that provide the ability to do just that. Your local agronomy sales specialist and our MAPS team are available to work with you to see what best fits your farming needs and to make the most of your field data and equipment. ■

The Importance of Calibrating

Pre-spring preparations in the MAPS department have been busy with many new installs of Precision Planting hardware for our customers. It is important that these new and previous installs are working correctly. To ensure this, MAPS has been calibrating customers' Precision Planting meters. This includes both a complete calibration and inspection of your hardware to make sure it is working to its full potential. When your Precision Planting meters are working correctly, there is an ability to see a \$10 - \$15 return due to better seed placement.

For those growers interested in the calibration of their Precision Planting hardware for 2013, contact the MAPS Hardware Team. A meter loyalty program is being developed to bring additional value to those taking advantage of this service. More details will be provided for those interested.

Far left: The calibration of Precision Planting meters includes the testing of 2,000 seeds run through planter unit. Left: Alex Gascho, a MAPS employee, carefully inspects each planter meter to ensure that it is prepared for planting.

