

## Algoma Fertilizer Best Management Practise Project

By Murray Cochran

### BACKGROUND

We had been asked by local industry to provide bio-mass for a co-generation plant. We felt that we needed to know what our actual cost of production was before entering into a long term arrangement to supply such product. The crop of choice was reed canary grass. Continual hay production has created a large area of lands with low phosphorus levels. Some farmers in the past have reported lower than expected results from their fertility program. Maybe this could be because too much emphasis was put on nitrogen causing a further reduction in phosphorus and potash levels. PH, phosphorus and potash have to be maintained if we want to produce biomass predictably, economically and at a sustainable level. This is a three year project, 2007 being year one. There were two sites, one near Thessalon and the other on St Joseph's Island. Due to high deer foraging pressure there was no credible data on the St Joe's sight. Data for the Thessalon site was as follows

- 2nd year stand of Reed Canary Grass
- Fertilizer applied July 20, 2007
- 10 20X50 plots, replicated 3 X
- Soil type: Noelville silt loam
- Soil test: showed low levels of Phosphorus & Potash
- pH : 5.9

Each replicate of ten plots was set up as shown in table 1.

Table 1:

No lime, no fertilizer	70# N/ac	70# N/ac 120# P/acre	70# N/ac 120# P/acre 215# K/acre	70# N/ac 215# K/acre
No lime, no fertilizer	70# N/ac 2 TN lime/acre	70# N/ac 2 TN lime/acre 120# P/acre	70# N/ac 2 TN lime/acre 120# P/acre 215# K/acre	70# N/ac 2 TN lime/acre 215# K/acre
1	2	3	4	5

The results, taken on November 7, 2007 were as shown in Table 2:

Note: There is some significant deviation between replicates, this is most likely as a result of water availability, or lack thereof

Table 2:

Plot		
Weight (g) for 1ft <sup>2</sup>		
	Lime	No lime
Average		
1	28	27
2	32	46
3	61	55
4	73	55
5	61	33

#### Summary:

In general, we see consistently higher weights for the limed portion in the Wolgemuth test plots than in the unlimed portions. The exact reason for this is unclear, as experience tells us that lime usually has minimal effects until the year following application. Marked increase is also shown by the plots receiving Phosphorous and/or Potassium over those receiving Nitrogen only.

## A Northern Ontario Farmer Run Business in 108th year

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The vice-president is Will Samis, a beef farmer near Iron Bridge. Will has been on the board for about nine years. Will and his wife Elaine have operated Applehill farm for thirty years and are shareholders in Northern Quality Meats, Algoma's only licensed Abattoir, and are also one of the nine farm owners who have recently incorporated as Penokean Hills Farms Inc. to market locally raised and finished beef in Algoma.

Will is chairman of the Algoma Community Pasture and was provincial Chairman of that Association when it was formed to take over ownership of the former ARDA community pastures. He also served on municipal council.

Company Executive Director is Lynn Kent from St. Joseph's Island. Lynn and his wife run a large Maple Syrup Operation and Lynn is also an electrician and building contractor. Their Maple Syrup business is a third generation endeavour that is well known is the business. Lynn is a past president of the Ontario Maple Syrup Producer's Assoc. and is very active with The Legion and the Reserves and a long time member of the Pipe band out of Sault Ste Marie.

Wayne Findlay from Echo Bay is a board member and immediate past-president. Wayne and his wife Carol operated a dairy farm for many years near Echo Bay. His great grandfather was on the first Board of Algoma Mutual in 1899. Wayne has served as director on the milk Board and the Co-op Board and also served as Chairman of both.

Dennis Kirby from Dayton, Ontario has been a Board member for about 16 years and has served a term as Chairman and President during that time. Dennis and his wife Debbie run a larger beef operation and Dennis is the manager of The Algoma Cooperative Livestock Sales in Thessalon. Dennis has been a board member and chairman of most farm associations in Algoma as was his father Len before him. Dennis has previously served on municipal council.

Vernon Bailey from Sault Ste Marie has been on the Board for about 15 years and is well known around Northern Ontario as an Auctioneer. Vernon was Canada's champion Auctioneer a few years ago and he does many farm and cattle auctions around the north. Until recently Vernon operated a beef farm near Thessalon which has now been taken over by his son's Scott and Ben.

Vernon's memory is legendary and he's often called upon to recite poetry at functions, especially Robert Services works. Vernon does many charity auctions each year and has recently been appearing in Musical comedy guild productions in Sault Ste Marie.

Ross believes that the collective skill sets and record of Community involvement the Boards, past and present, has brought to Algoma Mutual has given it great strength when providing the best insurance possible for Northern Ontario Farmers.