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# agriculture

An aerial photograph of a vast agricultural field. The field is divided into long, straight rows of young green crops. A prominent white irrigation pipe runs diagonally across the field, supported by orange stakes. The rows of crops are densely packed and extend far into the distance, creating a strong sense of perspective. The background shows a flat horizon under a clear sky.

Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS.

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# Preparing For Difficult Growing Conditions And Beyond

## *Starter Fertilizers Can Make A Difference!*

Noel Garcia, CCA  
Senior Consultant, TPS Lab

Cold, wet weather with low PAR light and few or shortened growing degree-days has made 2019 a disastrous year for agriculture in many parts of the United States. It has delayed planting in some areas and prevented planting in others – all resulting in a shortened growing season. Much of the same has been predicted for 2020. Developing a plan to mitigate the effects of difficult field conditions is essential for the farmer to survive and crops will need all the help they can get at the very start. So, what do we do to play catch-up and even avoid having to replant?

“Pop-Up”/Starter Fertilizers can be game-changers to your ultimate success. Getting your crop off to a healthy, strong start is more important than ever in persistently poor conditions. Conditions such as compaction, crusting, cold soil temperatures, salinity and wet/dry soils are detrimental to most crops. Achieving good starts with rapid and strong early root development is essential - then followed by in-season monitoring utilizing sap analysis to proactively achieve balanced nutrition. While season-long balanced plant nutrition is needed to minimize plant stress for best yields and quality, phosphorous is the foundation for good roots, early fruiting and uniform maturity.

Utilizing proper adjuvants based on soil type is essential for keeping the phosphorous plant-bioavailable for an extended period of time to keep the rhizosphere active during less than ideal conditions. The solubilities of other elements to form compounds holding or binding phosphorous are directly related to soil pH. The pH range of greatest phosphorus availability is 6.0 to 7.0. At a lower pH (< 6.0), when the soil is very acidic, more iron and aluminum are available to form insoluble phosphate compounds. In strongly alkaline soils (> 7.0), more calcium and magnesium are available forming insoluble phosphate resulting less available phosphorus.

The use of starter fertilizer is a source of debate for many agronomists. Most growers see the benefit of early uniform harvest but are likely to over-fertilize. There are hazards to using fertilizer in close proximity to the seed and this scares-off many advisors from recommending it. Like physicians, advisors' first concern is to “do no harm”. It is easiest to say, “Just Don't Do it”.

But in dire times, the battle for profitability and survival requires stepping out of a traditional “safe” zone.

Due to their close proximity to the roots, starter fertilizers

in particular, with high salt indices are to be avoided, as they cause reverse osmotic pressures on the roots resulting in dehydration of the plant – resulting in stress or death. Accordingly, components of starters must be carefully researched and selected. The risk of seedling injury is higher in sandy soils due to the low CEC of such soils causing more nutrients to remain in solution. The injury risk increases under dry conditions because of higher concentration near the seed for extended periods of time. Salt injury from fertilizers is typically not a problem if fertilizer and plant roots are separated by time, distance, or both.

Starter placement for maximum benefit has been shown by research to be most beneficial when germinating seeds' first roots immediately hit a band of high phosphorous - especially in cold, wet soils. It is safest to place the band of starter fertilizer in-furrow in a 2x2 band (two inches below and two inches on each side of the seed). With this placement, the risk of seedling injury is virtually nonexistent. Be aware that the benefit of early phosphorous decreases by each additional half-inch away from the seed. Seed treatments are now available for sown crops. Dr. F.L. Fisher of Texas A&M University was one of the first researchers in starter fertilizer in the early 1960s.

Phosphorous by itself is seldom harmful. It is the other plant nutrients in fertilizer which have high salt that can harm germination and plant growth. Nitrogen, potassium and sulfur have high salt indices and should be kept to a minimum but are beneficial early as are micronutrients such as zinc, iron, manganese, copper and boron in minute amounts. Use fertilizer sources and rates that minimize the chance for injury. In addition to salt injury, some N compounds (such as UAN, urea, and ammonium thiosulfate) produce free ammonia, which can cause poor germination or seedling death. The best fertilizers for seed-row application have a low salt index and N compounds that do not produce free ammonia, and potassium phosphate rather than potassium chloride as the K source. Additions of carbon sources such as humic/fulvic acids, amino acids and sugars also help protect the seed and buffer the fertilizers. They also help keep the fertilizer in a bioavailable form for extended periods - especially in cold or alkaline soils. These carbon sources also feed the soil life thus increasing the microbial activity which slightly raises the soil temperature, enhancing germination. Areas with potential for

Continued on page: 11



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In 1970, there were no commercial soil and plant testing laboratories in Idaho. Farmers applied fertilizers based upon educated guesswork. Dr. Dale Stukenholtz and his wife Joyce saw an opportunity to build a business and started a soil and plant testing laboratory and field consulting service based in Twin Falls, Idaho. Dr. Stukenholtz had an unusually diverse background as an educator at the University of Nebraska, an agronomist in the fertilizer industry, and a farmer, and he saw a need for more modern fertilizer recommendations to produce greater yields at less cost. His clients were the growers, so he could make unbiased recommendations that maximized economic return to the farmer. After extensive field research, he developed these improved fertilizer recommendations that quickly became popular with growers and form the basis for nearly all fertilizer applications in the intermountain west area. Stukenholtz Laboratory clients include growers from all neighboring states and several foreign countries including Australia, Canada, Egypt, Russia, Mexico and New Zealand.

Stukenholtz Laboratory provides 1 to 2 day service, including picking up and delivery time, across Southern Idaho from St. Anthony and Grace to Parma and Homedale. Results can be delivered, mailed, faxed, or pulled from the Laboratory's webpage: [www.stukenholtz.com](http://www.stukenholtz.com). To improve their service, Joyce and Dale Stukenholtz expanded the laboratory 21 years ago, installed the latest in computerized instrumentation and quality control, and made it the most modern and well equipped agricultural laboratory in their market area.

Critical to the success of Idaho's most efficient laboratory and largest field consulting firm has been its personnel. Dr. Stukenholtz has had a PhD in Soil Fertility and Plant Nutrition since 1964 and his son and Laboratory Manager Paul has nearly completed his own. Consulting agronomists include

J.P. Kruckeberg of American Falls, a 39 year veteran of field consulting and the most successful single agronomist in the state, and Bart Kunz. The Laboratory and office staff are equally good.



Analysis room at Stukenholtz Laboratory Inc.

Stukenholtz Laboratory continues with research and improvement. In conjunction with the Idaho Crop Production Association and University of Idaho CFEP research project, Stukenholtz Laboratory has helped to ensure that fertilizer recommendations in Idaho are the most cost efficient possible and produce the maximum economic yield while protecting the environment. Stukenholtz Laboratory personnel have conducted field research on over 40 different products and continue to be the experts at "cutting edge" agricultural technology. As we end our first 47 years of business and begin our next, we would like to thank our current and former employees for their dedicated work and our customers and clients for their years of support.

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## Preparing For Difficult Growing Conditions And Beyond

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heavy surface crusting that may interfere with germination, over-the-top applications of soil inoculants (beneficial soil bacteria) can help alleviate this potential problem.

Additionally, a multiple hormone (auxin, cytokinin, gibberellins, seaweed/kelp) formula can yield dramatic results, especially during prolonged bad weather. Root systems are a plant's lifeline and the use of plant hormones with starter fertilizers or foliar-applied can give a plant the best chance at success.

The bigger and healthier the root system, the bigger and healthier the plant. It has been proven that the use of these products can:

- Promote the growth of roots and shoots;
- Improve early season vigor;
- Enhance a crop's ability to produce its own natural growth hormones;
- Reduce early season stress with increased healing abilities;
- Increase the overall health of the plant, and
- Increase both yield and quality.

Again, many consultants avoid using these, as they don't well understand them and they must be fairly precisely applied.

Phosphorous can be sprayed directly on the seed but caution is advised, as too much of any good thing can be harmful. Use products that are designed for foliar application and have low salt indices. Only one quart per acre of a high phosphorous formula next to the seed is needed to produce benefits. It is generally recommended that one to three gallons per acre of a high P formula be used that contains a balance of nutrients. This should be mixed with enough water to allow accurate application. Five gallons per acre total solution is minimum but a 10-gallon per row-acre rate would be much better for dilution as well as accuracy of application.

Application equipment must also be functioning properly to deliver uniform rates of starter fertilizer when using in-furrow placement. Fertilizer injury often occurs from problems with application equipment on the planter. A common problem is getting rates too high due to improper settings or calibration, or unequal distribution on liquid systems (some rows receiving more than others) that can lead to over-application and fertilizer salt injury.

Foliar applications while crops are under stress from excess soil moisture and cloudy conditions for extended periods are highly effective. Plants under prolonged anaerobic conditions will be stressed and have retarded development. Supplementing with a balanced phosphorous formula can boost plants while mitigating stress and enhancing development. Guidance from sap analysis at critical stages of plant development is used to formulate the proper foliar program and customize it to specific crop needs. This is essential to playing catch-up in times of duress.

First feeding the soil and then the plants with a balanced diet at their critical stages of growth will accelerate maturity, lower production costs and increase yields and profits. ❖

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Walinga products represent the best in manufacturing excellence. Our in-house engineering and design teams utilize the most current

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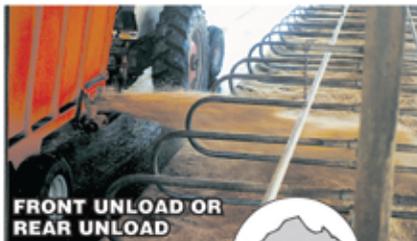
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# Sunny D Mfg., Co. Inc – *The Oregon Roadrunner*

The Oregon Roadrunner, manufactured by Sunny D Manufacturing Company, Inc., is the all purpose machine when it comes to loading and unloading blocks of hay, everything from a stack of bales in the field to a six-pack of 3x4 bales. What used to take several people hours to buck the hay, whether loading trucks, unloading trucks, or moving the hay from one truck to another, now takes one person just minutes to accomplish. There is no other machine that can match it.



## Humble Beginnings

In 1971, Art Davina – then a rancher in Bonanza Oregon – saw the need, designed and built the first Oregon Roadrunner.

That machine is still being used today.

While struggling through the hard times, redesigning to incorporate new ideas and improving on old ones, and building a strong customer base one customer at a time, Art managed to build his back-yard business to a point where he was able to open his first shop. By 1985 the business was large enough that he began the process of incorporating it. Later, needing more space to meet customer demand, he bought a larger property, and moved the business to its current location in Klamath Falls.

When health problems forced Art to take a step back and de-stress his life, he wanted to find the perfect person to take the reins. Ed Majors took over as GM in 1998 and in 2003, began the process of buying the company from Art. Today, Ed officially owns it.

## Sunny D Today

From those humble beginnings in 1971 to the 21st century, Sunny D Manufacturing Company Inc. has grown to a business totaling 15 employees. Welders, fabricators, mechanics, a painter, and various support personnel create from bare metal the machine that called “The Oregon Roadrunner.” What used to be only available in white with your choice of stripe, a customer can now choose their color and design. For more information, call 1-541-884-2361, or write 4343 Highway 39, Klamath Falls, OR 97603. 

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# Meet the all-new Bale Baron 5250!

Building on the original design principles that Bale Baron owners appreciate, the new 5250 models feature many impressive upgrades designed to improve productivity and serviceability while still maintaining the outstanding reliability the Bale Baron brand is all so well known for. This year Marcrest Manufacturing Inc released 2 new models; the all-new 5250 and the refined 4250. Both of these units are available in the P (pick-up) and T (trail) models. The 5250 has a hydraulic requirement of 40 gallons per minute while the 4250 requires 30 gallons per minute.

Let's walk around the 5250 and see what fantastic upgrades have been made. At first glance you can immediately notice the wider front stance and wide flotation rear tires which keep the 5250 firmly planted. You will also see that the body work has been completely remodeled and looks fantastic! The ladder has been conveniently attached on a generous angle allowing for safer climbing to the knotter. Upon opening the knotter cover the relocated and re-engineered knotter miss-tie sensors cannot be missed; the new sensor location is a sure-fire way to detect actual knotter miss-ties. Another upgrade to the already extremely reliable low maintenance Rasspe knotter is the 4-lobe knotter sprocket which reduces the knotter cycle time by 25%! After the easy climb down the angled ladder you will notice the massive twine boxes, which swing out to allow full exposure to the compression chamber

and hydraulic lines for inspection and maintenance purposes. While walking around the 5250 one can easily notice that there are no grease nipples on all pivot points; this is achieved by using nitride treated pins paired with composite bushings. This design has been proven and adopted from the 6240 self-propelled Bale Baron. A serious feature that has not been mentioned is the ISOBUS compatible PLC. What does that mean? It means that if your tractor has ISOBUS the 5250 can be fully controlled and monitored right from the seat in your tractor! Ahh, no, my tractor doesn't have ISOBUS?... No worries, there are ISOBUS screens available from Marcrest! And for those who aren't into the latest and greatest technology, the 5250 can easily be operated by our ever-proven standard cab control box.

Now let's take a quick look at the 4250. It has maintained the same body work and stance as the 4240/4245. However, it shares some of the fantastic upgrades mentioned on the 5250 such as the greaseless pivot points thanks to the nitride treated pins and composite bushings. It also has the new 4 lobe knotter sprocket on the low maintenance Rasspe knotter for faster tie cycles. And like its big cousin the 4250 also has the new ISOBUS compatible PLC which means ISOBUS connectivity is ready and available for the 4250 when you are.

For more information please contact your nearest dealer or visit our website: [www.marcrestmfg.com](http://www.marcrestmfg.com)



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# livestock



Photo courtesy of Willet Farms.

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Pro-Tech offers four different system sizes - the only company that offers such a variety, guarantee of quality and price range for their clients.

Facilities for dairy, beef cattle, equine, swine, poultry, and even veterinary benefit from the various Pro-Tech fly-insect and odor control systems.

Additionally, many commercial, industrial and municipal facilities can also reap the benefits from the use of Pro-Tech's systems. In fact, even back yard pool and patio areas –

any location where you want to control flies, mosquitoes, gnats, malodors, etc., while creating a healthier environment for you and your cherished animals.

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Py-Tech, the insecticide used in Pro-Tech's system, is made from pyrethrum, a natural ingredient found in chrysanthemums. This low odor insecticide effectively controls flies, mosquitoes, and other flying insects, while providing low toxicity to mammals with no unpleasant odors and no petroleum distillate fillers.

Pro-Tech's insecticide and odor control solutions are specially formulated for Pro-Tech's spraying systems with safety and performance in mind. They will not damage the seals and o-rings found throughout the pump, valves, and spray nozzles. Nor will they separate out of solution in the reservoir and tubing. Therefore, you will receive optimum performance with no nozzle clog. Using solutions other than Pro-Tech's undermines the effectiveness of the Pro-Tech system.

Turn to Pro-Tech Livestock Corporation for effective and efficient fly and odor control products. Their more than 30 years of extensive experience in the industry serves as your assurance of their knowledge in insect and odor control.

For more information, call them at 800-776-5005 or visit their website at [www.ProTech-Control.com](http://www.ProTech-Control.com).



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# Animal plasma in calf milk replacers

By: Rob Costello

**A**nimal plasma provides a unique protein source which is often referred to as functional proteins. These functional proteins contain biologically active albumin and globulin proteins. Immunoglobulins such as IgG are important antibodies that circulate in plasma. Animal plasma is a highly soluble, high-quality protein source with an amino acid profile and nutritive value comparable to nonfat dried (skim) milk and casein.

Animal plasma was introduced in commercial calf milk replacers more than 20 years ago. Today, about one third of all calf milk replacers made in the United States contain plasma. Large calf ranches where calves are co-mingled and often have not received adequate colostrum are the major users of animal plasma milk replacers. These operations recognize the advantage of plasma from a health perspective as well as a cost savings.

## In the digestive tract

As well as being an excellent source of nutrition for young calves, animal plasma has additional beneficial effects in the digestive tract. During the first two weeks of life, the calf secretes a portion of the immunoglobulins it absorbed from colostrum back into its digestive tract. The more colostrum absorbed, the more immunoglobulins secreted. This recycling of immunoglobulins helps protect the calf against disease-causing pathogens. Providing animal plasma in milk replacer increases immunoglobulin levels in the digestive tract and provides an ongoing source after the calf has stopped secreting immunoglobulins from its own bloodstream.

Research with both young calves and baby pigs demonstrates that feeding animal plasma to young animals has a direct effect on the integrity and function of the small intestine. Animal plasma may directly affect antigen growth and attachment in the small intestine, affecting intestinal growth and improving its barrier function.

## Calf performance

There have been at least 30 trials conducted to evaluate the effects of animal plasma on the growth and performance of baby calves. In these trials, plasma always performed as well as or better than all-milk protein milk replacers. Improvements include:

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# Making A Cowman's Best Time Of The Year EVEN BETTER!

The favorite time of the year for cow-calf producers has long been established as being the calving season. That is when the anticipated results of the previous year's breeding program decisions are realized. Jeff Creamer, Lazy JB Angus, a calf catcher owner, refers to his calving season as "Christmas Time." Whether the new calves hitting the ground are from AI, ET or the valued herd sire battery, there is no time of the year that a cowman looks forward to more.

Accompanying that 'special time' are dangers, extra stress and increased labor responsibilities that are often referred to as 'a necessary part' of the business. Over the years, many people have been injured, or worse, by the instinctive mother cow during the newborn processing period. Things can go wrong fast when tagging, vaccinating, banding and weighing new calves — and the results can be devastating. Bud Williamson of West Virginia says, "My calf catcher was a virtual life saver!"



## Safety Is a Priority

"We are all about safety and making calf processing easier," states Dan Leo, a long-time Nebraska rancher and owner of the Safety Zone Calf Catcher business. With the average age of cattlemen getting older, help being difficult, if not impossible to find, their calf catchers are filling a real need. Most cattle operations daily use ATV and UTVs, and now they have an important option to ensure that every calving season is safe and uneventful. Laurel Gilbertson, 74-year-old Nebraska rancher refers to his catcher as "The best piece of equipment I've owned."

Leo added, "The traditional way to tag and process calves can be dangerous and often takes more than one individual to

accomplish. Now, just one person, who can operate an ATV or UTV, can safely work calves." Allen Lippert, a Kentucky cattlemen, says his catcher is "Great for one-man operations. No more waiting for help!"

## Construction and Design

The calf catcher is a durably constructed, welded steel cage that is built to last generations. Bill Helms, a Texas retired mechanical engineer and 71-year-old cattlemen applauds the design and fabrication quality adding "It is simple to use, and it works." Mounting with ball-coupler hitches permits it to perform well in all types of terrains and conditions. The quick and easy mount and dismount process takes only a couple of minutes.

## Ease Of Operation

With the front gate locked open, the driver approaches the calf and captures it in the cage by shutting the spring-loaded gate. Aiding the process, the catcher is designed for quiet operation, thus does not threaten the cowherd. Typically used on newborn to week-old youngsters, but calves up to 300 lbs. can be caught for treatment of pinkeye, foot rot and pneumonia conditions.



The producer enters the cage by stepping through the near side opening, and then moves the calf to the rear holding area where it can be easily processed while being protected from the mother cow. At all times, the operator is inside the cage, and never threatened by the instinctive mother. Daryl Bernard, an Iowa cattlemen states, "I like how the calf holder restrains the calf and eliminates having to wrestle the calves on the ground."

### Mother Cow's Behavior

By design, nearly 100% of the mothers remain at the back of the catcher where the rear calf holder is located. The most protective of cows are much calmer when they can see and smell their calf in a less threatening situation, as compared to wrestling the calf away from the mother.

"The unit works particularly well for pairing out as the cow will follow the calf virtually anywhere! Whether moving pairs to another pasture or during inclement weather, it is a valuable tool," states Leo. When finished processing, the operator releases the calf out the back to its mother, again accomplished from inside the cage to maintain full-time safety. Montana rancher, Andy Dorn says this about his Safety Zone catcher, "It is the best investment we ever made. Easy on the calves and great for the cows too!"

### Making a Better Way

"Traditionally, producers have to get to the calves early after birth otherwise it can be difficult to catch and even hang on to them, and then it can often require two or more people depending on the protective behavior of the mother cow while the processing takes place," Leo notes. His goal is to make the best time of the year, safer and with the labor requirement of only one person.

Catcher user, Wanda Thompson from Missouri comments, "To all you out there still dodging mad momma cows, wrestling big calves, and maybe not getting some of your calves done, the calf catcher is definitely a better way."

Other options developed by Leo's business include a digital,

waterproof scale — especially useful to seedstock producers — and a rear tow hitch to accommodate long-distance travel.

Safety Zone Calf Catchers LLC, internationally trademarked and registered, sells directly to cattlemen and through a growing dealer network. Current sales extend throughout the continental U.S. and into Canada, Australia, France and the UK. Leo states, "Our best salesmen are the users as they cannot keep from telling their neighbors of the catcher's benefits — and the word is traveling fast!"



Interested parties are encouraged to watch the informative action video at [www.SafetyZoneCalfCatchers.com](http://www.SafetyZoneCalfCatchers.com) or to call (877) 505-0914 for more information or to place orders.

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**Wayne Stewart, KY** - "The calf catcher is a product that keeps me safe when tagging new born calves. This product works much better than other ones on the market. A very good company to work with."

**Bob Seely, WY** - "This product has been invaluable. It makes the job of doctoring and tagging calves significantly safer. I am grateful for the calf catcher making the process easier!"

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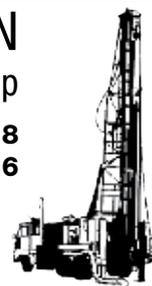
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Sloan Express	<a href="http://www.sloanex.com">www.sloanex.com</a>	28
Stukenholtz Laboratory Inc.	<a href="http://www.stukenholtz.com">www.stukenholtz.com</a>	10
Sunny D Manufacturing Inc.	<a href="http://www.oregonroadrunner.com">www.oregonroadrunner.com</a>	16
Texas Plant & Soil Lab	<a href="http://www.TPSLab.com">www.TPSLab.com</a>	2
Virden Perma-Bilt Co	<a href="http://www.virdenproducts.com">www.virdenproducts.com</a>	24
Walinga USA Inc.	<a href="http://www.walinga.com">www.walinga.com</a>	27
Whatcom Manufacturing	<a href="http://www.whatcommfg.com">www.whatcommfg.com</a>	15
Wilger Inc.	<a href="http://www.wilger.net">www.wilger.net</a>	7



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