

# **PLANT-SOIL INTERACTIONS**

---

**ADAM THOMS  
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
March 2, 2023**

# INTERPRETATION IS THE KEY

- CHEMICAL TESTS  
CONSISTENT
- INTERPRETATION VARIES

# **BASIC PRINCIPLES AND TERMINOLOGY**

---

REPORT NO. 809629

I.D. NO. 95635

DATE REC'D. 07-Dec-93

DATE REPORTED 08-Dec-93

SAMPLE WILL BE KEPT UNTIL 07-Jan-94

LABORATORY NUMBER



# Soil Analysis

Conducted by

**HARRIS LABORATORIES INC.**

**THIS ANALYSIS RUN FOR:**

RANDY CARPENTAR  
MEADOWS FARMS GC  
4300 FLAT RUN RD  
LOCUST GROVE VA 22508

**THIS ANALYSIS REQUESTED BY:**

Robert Herrings  
7303 Native Dancer Dr  
Midlothian VA 23112  
PH804-739-1050 77L

**ALL NUTRIENT RESULTS EXPRESSED IN PPM**

| CODE                        | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     | 8     | 9     |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Sample Description          | GRN11 | GRN12 | GRN13 | GRN14 | GRN15 | GRN16 | GRN17 | GRN18 | PG    |
| CEC                         | 3.4   | 2.8   | 3.1   | 4.2   | 4.4   | 3.2   | 2.5   | 4.1   | 2.7   |
| Soil pH                     | 6.7*  | 6.7*  | 6.7*  | 6.9*  | 6.4   | 6.8*  | 7.1*  | 6.8*  | 6.7*  |
| Buffer pH                   | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- | 7.2   | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Soluble Salts               | 0.14  | 0.14  | 0.12  | 0.18  | 0.18  | 0.20  | 0.14  | 0.18  | 0.23  |
| Exchangeable Calcium (Ca)   | 454*  | 366*  | 417*  | 597*  | 641   | 452*  | 334*  | 586*  | 344*  |
| Exchangeable Magnesium (Mg) | 104   | 92    | 102   | 119   | 116   | 97    | 79    | 115   | 90    |
| Exchangeable Sodium (Na)    | 10    | 10    | 9     | 10    | 10    | 8     | 7     | 14    | 16    |
| % H Base Saturation         | 0.0   | 0.0   | 0.0   | 0.0   | 0.0   | 0.0   | 0.0   | 0.0   | 0.0   |
| % K Base Saturation         | 5.4*  | 5.2*  | 4.8*  | 3.7*  | 4.0*  | 3.8*  | 5.3*  | 4.0*  | 7.5*  |
| % Mg Base Saturation        | 25.8* | 27.5* | 27.2* | 23.7* | 22.0* | 25.1* | 26.4* | 23.3* | 27.3* |
| % Ca Base Saturation        | 67.5  | 65.7  | 66.8  | 71.5  | 73.0  | 70.1  | 67.1  | 71.2  | 62.7  |
| % Na Base Saturation        | 1.3   | 1.6   | 1.3   | 1.0   | 1.0   | 1.1   | 1.2   | 1.5   | 2.5   |

**CODING INFORMATION**

| Sample Description | Composite Information | Plant Variety | Sample Nature |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 GRN11            |                       | GART          |               |
| 2 GRN12            |                       | GART          |               |

|           |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| VERY HIGH | EXCESSIVE |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| HIGH      | VERY HIGH |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|           | HIGH      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

X  
X X X  
XXXX XXXXXX

# FIRST THREE LINES FILLED WITH INFORMATION

CEC

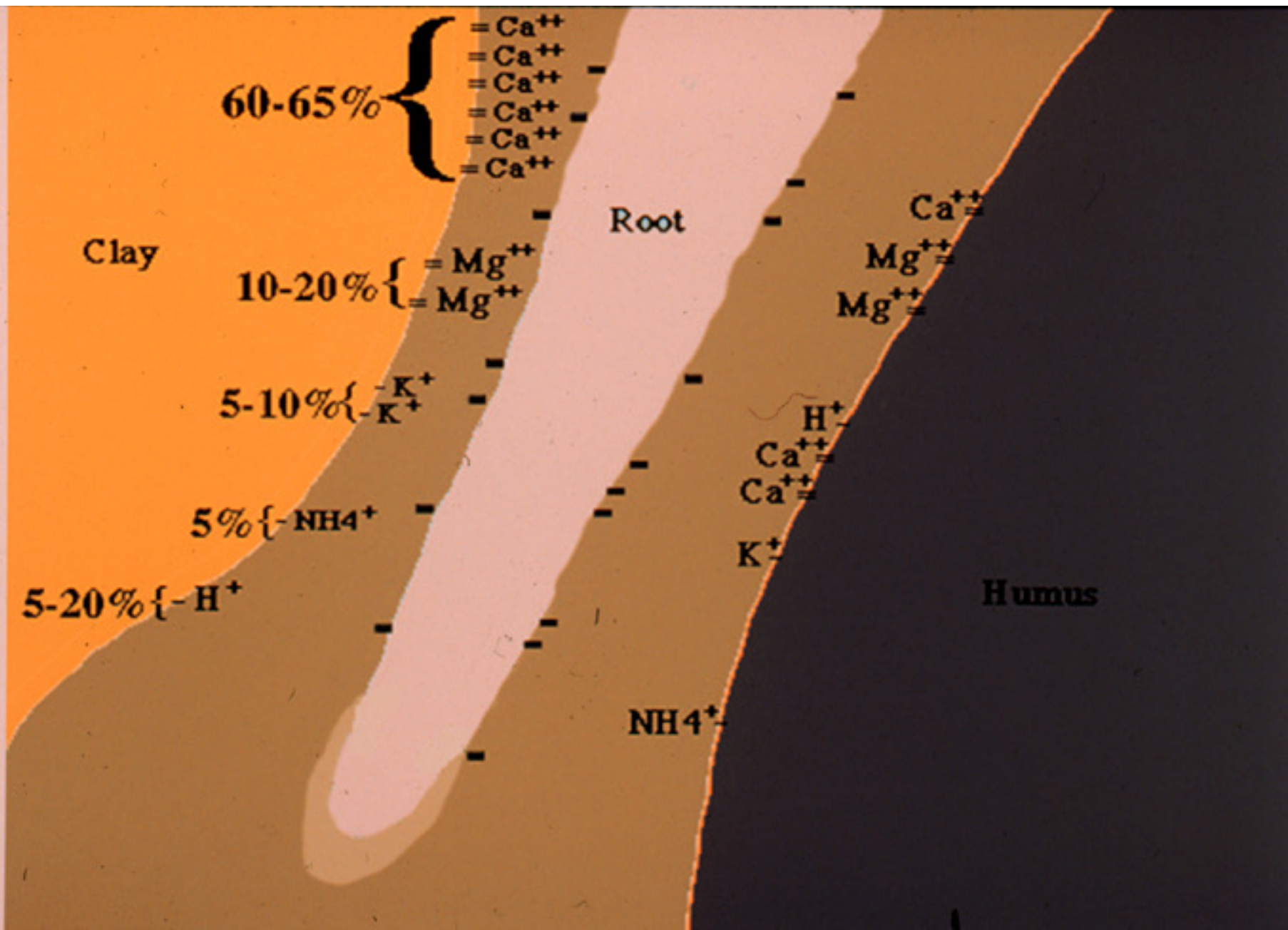
pH

BUFFER pH

# **CATION EXCHANGE CAPACITY (CEC)**

---

**THE ABILITY TO  
EXCHANGE CATIONS**



60-65%

=  $\text{Ca}^{++}$   
 =  $\text{Ca}^{++}$   
 =  $\text{Ca}^{++}$   
 =  $\text{Ca}^{++}$   
 =  $\text{Ca}^{++}$   
 =  $\text{Ca}^{++}$

Clay

10-20%

=  $\text{Mg}^{++}$   
 =  $\text{Mg}^{++}$

Root

$\text{Ca}^{++}$

$\text{Mg}^{++}$

$\text{Mg}^{++}$

5-10%

=  $\text{K}^{+}$   
 =  $\text{K}^{+}$

$\text{H}^{+}$

$\text{Ca}^{++}$

$\text{Ca}^{++}$

5% {  $\text{NH}_4^{+}$

$\text{K}^{+}$

5-20% {  $\text{H}^{+}$

Humus

$\text{NH}_4^{+}$

# CATION EXCHANGE CAPACITY

1 milliequivalent (meq)

$$6.02 \times 10^{20}$$

602,000,000,000,000,000,000

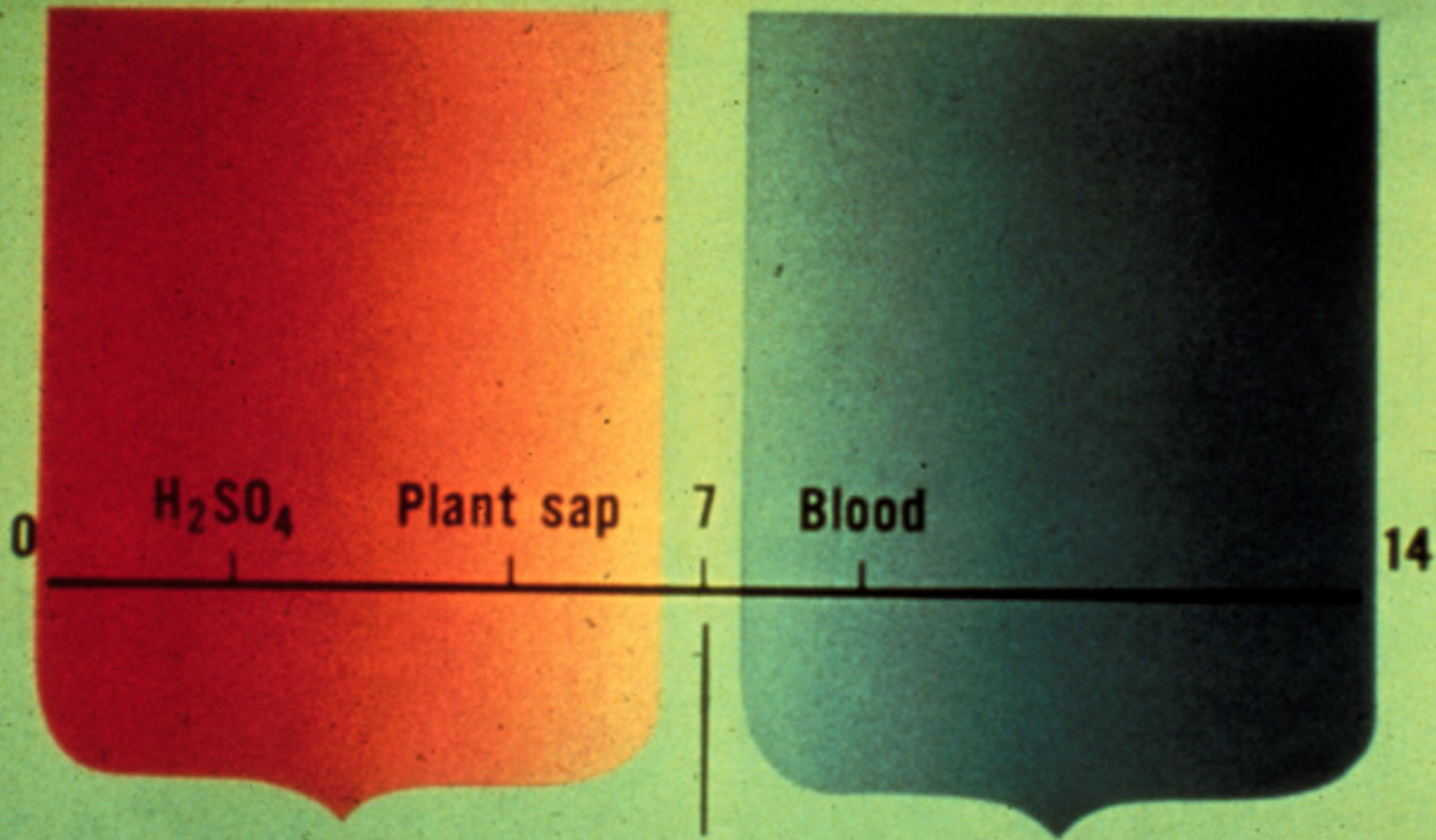
# CATION EXCHANGE CAPACITY

| <u>SOIL TYPE</u>   | <u>meq/100g</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| • SAND             | • <1 - 8        |
| • CLAY             | • 80 - 120      |
| • ORGANIC MATTER   | • 150 – 500     |
| • CLAY LOAM SOIL   | • 25 – 30       |
| • SAND-BASED FIELD | • <1 - 14       |

# PH

---

# Acidity-Alkalinity Scale-(pH)



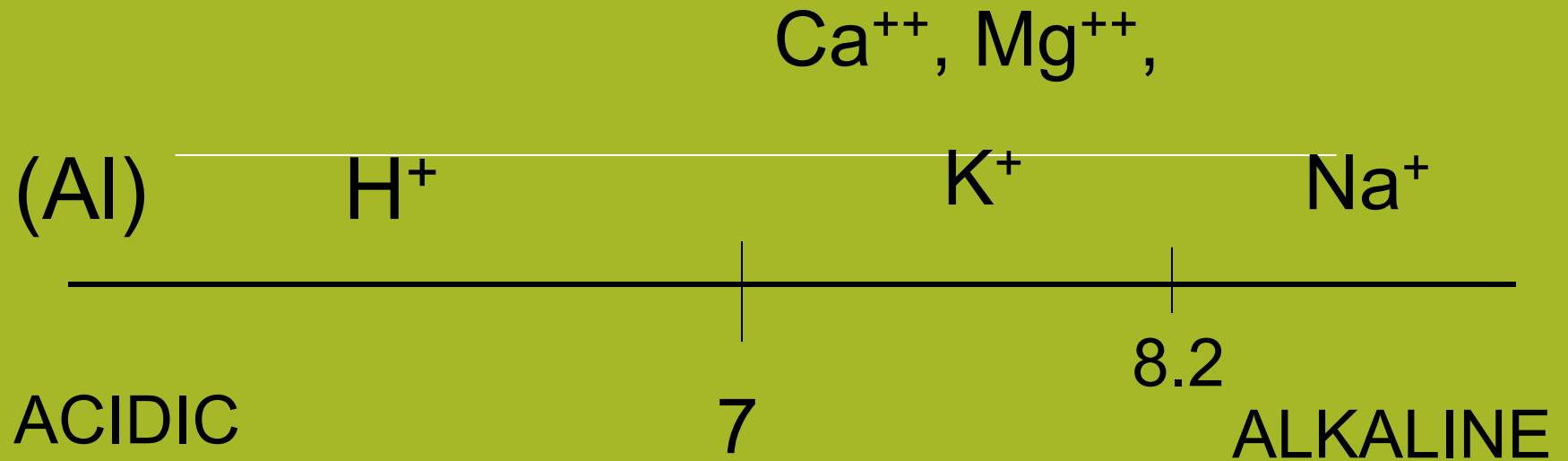
ACID

NEUTRAL

ALKALINE

pH SCALE

# PH



# HOW SOIL pH AFFECTS AVAILABILITY OF PLANT NUTRIENTS

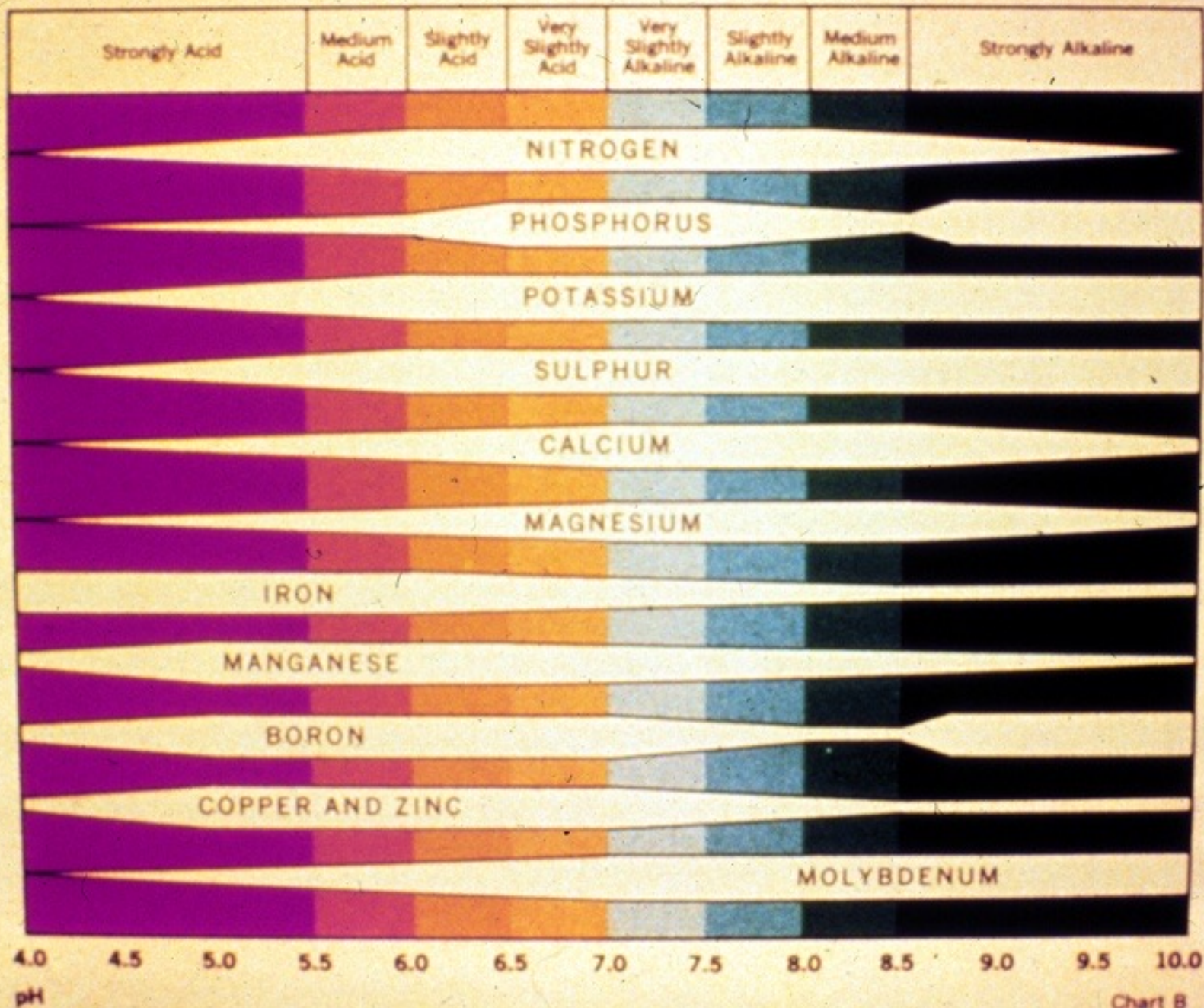


Chart B

**LIME**

**CALCIUM  
CARBONATE**

---

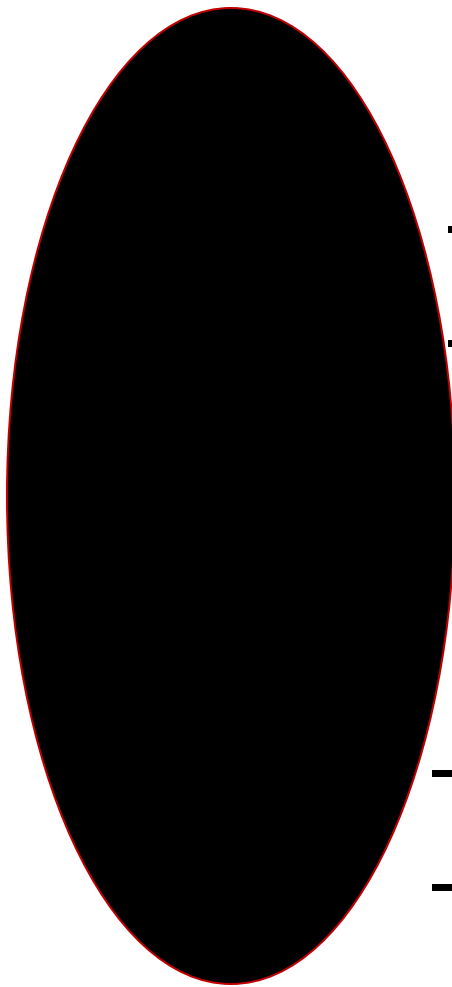
**$\text{CaCO}_3$**

**LIME**

---

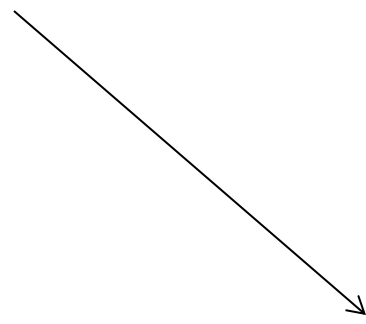
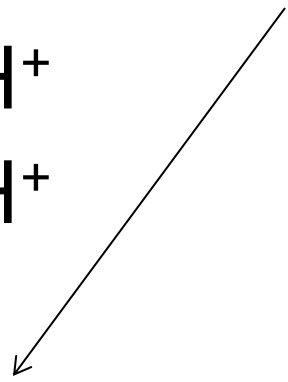
**RAISES**

**PH**

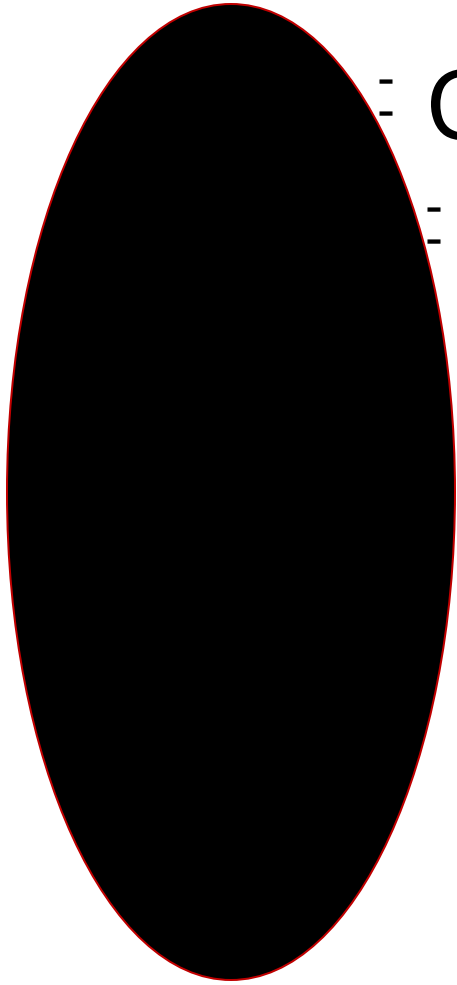


- H<sup>+</sup>  
- H<sup>+</sup>  
-  
-  
-  
-  
- H<sup>+</sup>  
- H<sup>+</sup>

Ca<sup>++</sup>



H<sup>+</sup>  
H<sup>+</sup>



- Ca<sup>++</sup>

- Mg<sup>++</sup>

- K<sup>+</sup>

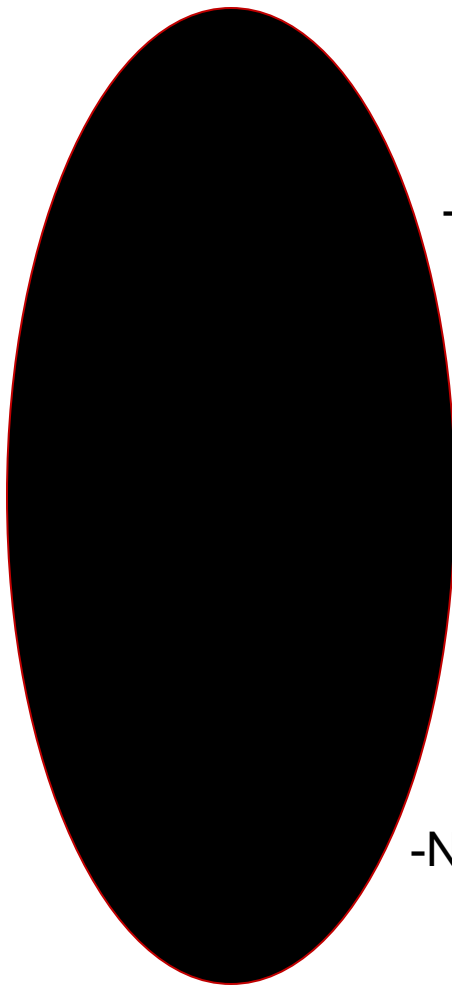
- NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>

- H<sup>+</sup>

# GYPSUM

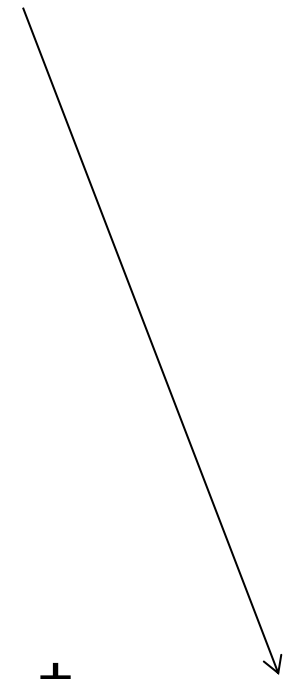
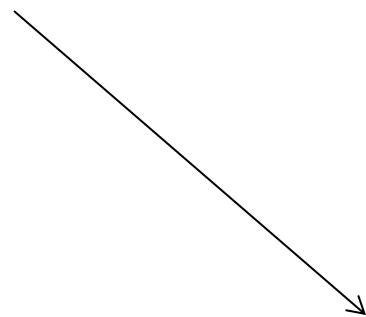
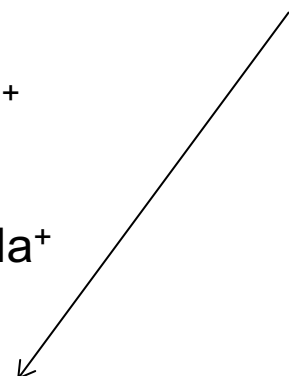
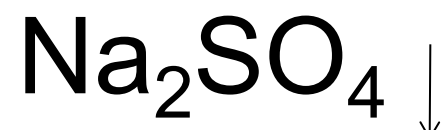
---





-Na<sup>+</sup>  
-Na<sup>+</sup>  
-  
- Ca<sup>++</sup>

-Na<sup>+</sup>  
-Na<sup>+</sup>



# SOIL TESTING

# 17 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

- CARBON C
- HYDROGEN H
- OXYGEN O
- PHOSPHORUS P
- POTASSIUM K
- NITROGEN N
- SULFUR S
- CALCIUM Ca
- IRON Fe
- MAGNESIUM Mg
- BORON B
- MANGANESE Mn
- COPPER Cu
- ZINC Zn
- MOLYBDENUM Mo
- CHLORINE Cl
- NICKEL Ni

# 17 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

- CARBON C
- HYDROGEN H
- OXYGEN O
- PHOSPHORUS P
- POTASSIUM K
- NITROGEN N
- SULFUR S
- CALCIUM C
- IRON Fe
- MAGNESIUM Mg
- BORON B
- MANGANESE Mn
- COPPER Cu
- ZINC Zn
- MOLYBDENUM Mo
- CHLORINE Cl
- NICKEL Ni

# 17 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

- CARBON C
- HYDROGEN H
- OXYGEN O
- PHOSPHORUS P
- POTASSIUM K
- NITROGEN N
- SULFUR S
- CALCIUM Ca
- IRON Fe
- MAGNESIUM Mg
- BORON B
- MANGANESE Mn
- COPPER Cu
- ZINC Zn
- MOLYBDENUM Mo
- CHLORINE Cl
- NICKEL Ni

# MACRONUTRIENTS

- 1000 mg/kg or more
- C, H, O, N, P, K, S, Mg, AND Ca

# MICRONUTRIENTS

- Less than 100 mg/kg
- Mo, Cu, Zn, Mn, B, Fe, Cl, and Ni

# TAKE A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE

- Collect from several locations
- Depth depends on lab
- Combine and mix samples
- Take a sub-sample, approximately 1 cup
- How often?

# SOIL TESTING

SLAN--sufficiency level of available nutrients

---

BCSR--basic cation saturation ratio

MLSN minimum level for sustainable nutrition

# SLAN

- Oldest method
- 80 Years + Research
- Interpretation varies with crop, soil type, climate etc.
- Public labs

| Test           | Results      | SOIL TEST RATINGS |     |        |         |           | Calculated Cation Exchange Capacity<br>2.5<br>meq/100g                               |
|----------------|--------------|-------------------|-----|--------|---------|-----------|--|
|                |              | Very Low          | Low | Medium | Optimum | Very High |  |
| Soil pH        | 5.8          |                   |     |        |         |           | Calculated Cation Saturation<br>%K 6.5<br>%Ca 56.9<br>%Mg 16.9<br>%H 18.8<br>%Na 0.9 |
| Buffer pH      | 6.90         |                   |     |        |         |           |  |
| Phosphorus (P) | 34 ppm       |                   |     |        |         |           |  |
| Potassium (K)  | 67 ppm       |                   |     |        |         |           |  |
| Calcium (Ca)   | 354 ppm      |                   |     |        |         |           |  |
| Magnesium (Mg) | 55 ppm       |                   |     |        |         |           |  |
| Sulphur (S)    | 9 ppm        |                   |     |        |         |           |  |
| Boron (B)      | 0.4 ppm      |                   |     |        |         |           |  |
| Copper (Cu)    | 2.4 ppm      |                   |     |        |         |           |  |
| Iron (Fe)      | 210 ppm      |                   |     |        |         |           |  |
| Manganese (Mn) | 70 ppm       |                   |     |        |         |           |  |
| Zinc (Zn)      | 9.6 ppm      |                   |     |        |         |           |  |
| Sodium (Na)    | 5 ppm        |                   |     |        |         |           |  |
| Soluble Salts  |              |                   |     |        |         |           |  |
| Organic Matter | 1.5 % ENR 74 |                   |     |        |         |           |  |
| NO3-N          |              |                   |     |        |         |           |  |

## SOIL FERTILITY GUIDELINES

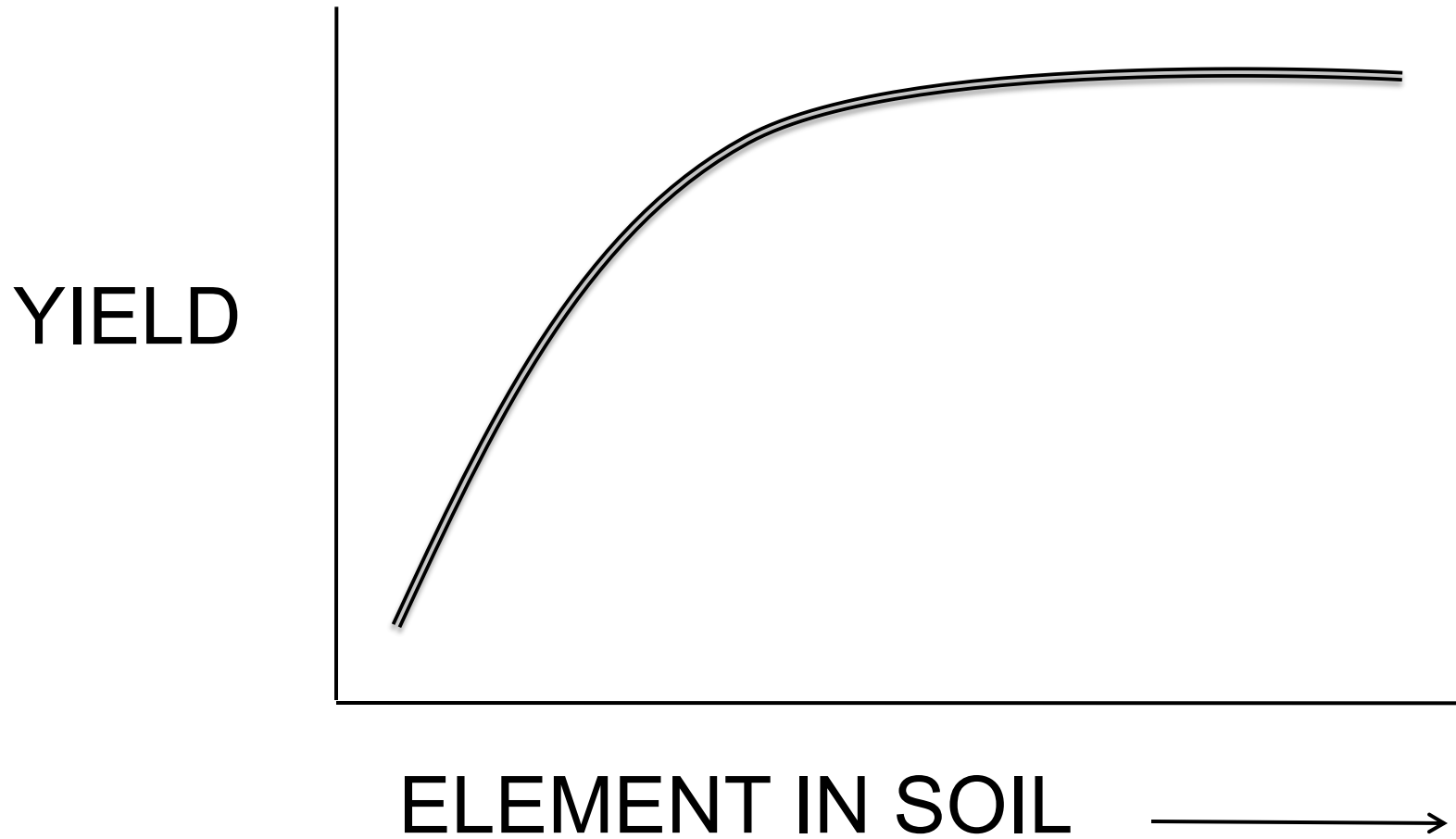
Crop : BENTGRASS GREEN

Yield Goal : 1

Rec Units: LB/1000 SQ FT

| LIME         | N   | P2O5 | K2O | Mg  | S   | B | Cu | Mn | Zn |
|--------------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|---|----|----|----|
| 40           | 4-6 | 0.5  | 5   | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| Crop :       |     |      |     |     |     |   |    |    |    |
| Yield Goal : |     |      |     |     |     |   |    |    |    |
| Rec Units:   |     |      |     |     |     |   |    |    |    |

# YIELD CURVE



# BCSR

## Basic Cation Saturation Ratio

- Based on an ideal ratio of cations on exchange sites
- Newer method
- Less research
- Private labs
- Tends to overestimate
- Do not use for turfgrass

# Minimum Level for Sustainable Nutrition

- Developed recently by PACE Turf and Asian Turfgrass Center
  - Dr. Larry Stowell and Dr. Micah Woods
- Replacement for SLAN
- Set minimum required for optimal turf growth
  - Baseline soil nutrient concentrations
    - Keep soil levels above this value
  - Gives minimum values instead of a range
  - Tells how much to apply
  - Incorporates turf “growth potential”

# Why Use MLSN?

- Focus on sustainability
- Reduce inputs
- Reduce maintenance costs
  - (or redirect costs, more on this later)
- Maintain expected turf performance
- Show reception to environmental concerns
- Plant health and soil health

# Minimum Level for Sustainable Nutrition

- Apply all nutrients at ratio determined by MLSN
- Why a ratio? Nutrient uptake driven by nitrogen
- Only apply what the plant can use
  - Amount determined by clipping nutrient content

| Nutrient | Tissue ppm | Ratio:N |
|----------|------------|---------|
| N        | 40,000     | 1       |
| P        | 5,000      | 0.125   |
| K        | 20,000     | 0.5     |
| Ca       | 4,000      | 0.1     |
| Mg       | 2,000      | 0.05    |

This gives us a nutrient use ratio:

**N:P:K → 8:1:4**

# MLSN

- Good start, Going in the right direction
- Basically SLAN for turf based on turf quality
- Turf quality not always the best guide
- MSLN 6 YEARS, SLAN >86 YRS

**HOW ABOUT  
PASTE EXTRACT?**

# Paste Extract Tests

- Water-soluble test for short term results
- Tells what nutrients are soluble in soil
- Factors influencing paste tests
  - Weather (amount of rain), irrigation, poor water quality, high bicarbonate levels, recent fertilizer applications, topdressing etc.
- Great tool for accessing soil salinity

# Paste Extract Tests

- Should be used with standard soil tests every time
- Expect low extraction values for fertility
- Bicarbonates will show up (they dissolve easily in water)- they don't cause structure problems or sealing in the soil
- Data is lacking between turf quality and soluble nutrients

**THE USEFULNESS OF A SOIL  
TEST DEPENDS ON PROPER  
INTERPRETATION**

**LABS TEND TO OVERESTIMATE  
HOW MUCH P IS NEEDED AND  
UNDERESTIMATE HOW MUCH K  
IS NEEDED**

# PHOSPHORUS P

## FUNCTION

- ENERGY TRANSFER
- STARCH DECOMPOSITION
- GENETIC MATERIAL
  - GRASSES ARE VERY EFFICIENT USERS OF P

# PHOSPHORUS (BRAY P1)

| <u>PPM</u> |          | <u>LB/A</u> | <u>KG/HA</u> |
|------------|----------|-------------|--------------|
| • 0 - 5    | VERY LOW | 0 - 10      | 0 - 11       |
| • 6 - 10   | LOW      | 12 - 20     | 13 - 22      |
| • 10 - 20  | ADEQUATE | 20 - 40     | 22 - 45      |
| • 20 - +   | HIGH     | 40 - +      | 45 - +       |

# PHOSPHORUS

## P SUFFICIENCY LEVEL BY EXTRACTANT(CARROW)

|             | ppm P    |       |        |      |
|-------------|----------|-------|--------|------|
|             | Very low | Low   | Medium | High |
| BRAY P1     | 0-4      | 5-15  | 16-30  | >31  |
| MEHLICH III | 0-12     | 13-26 | 27-54  | >55  |
| OLSEN       | 0-6      | 7-12  | 13-28  | >29  |

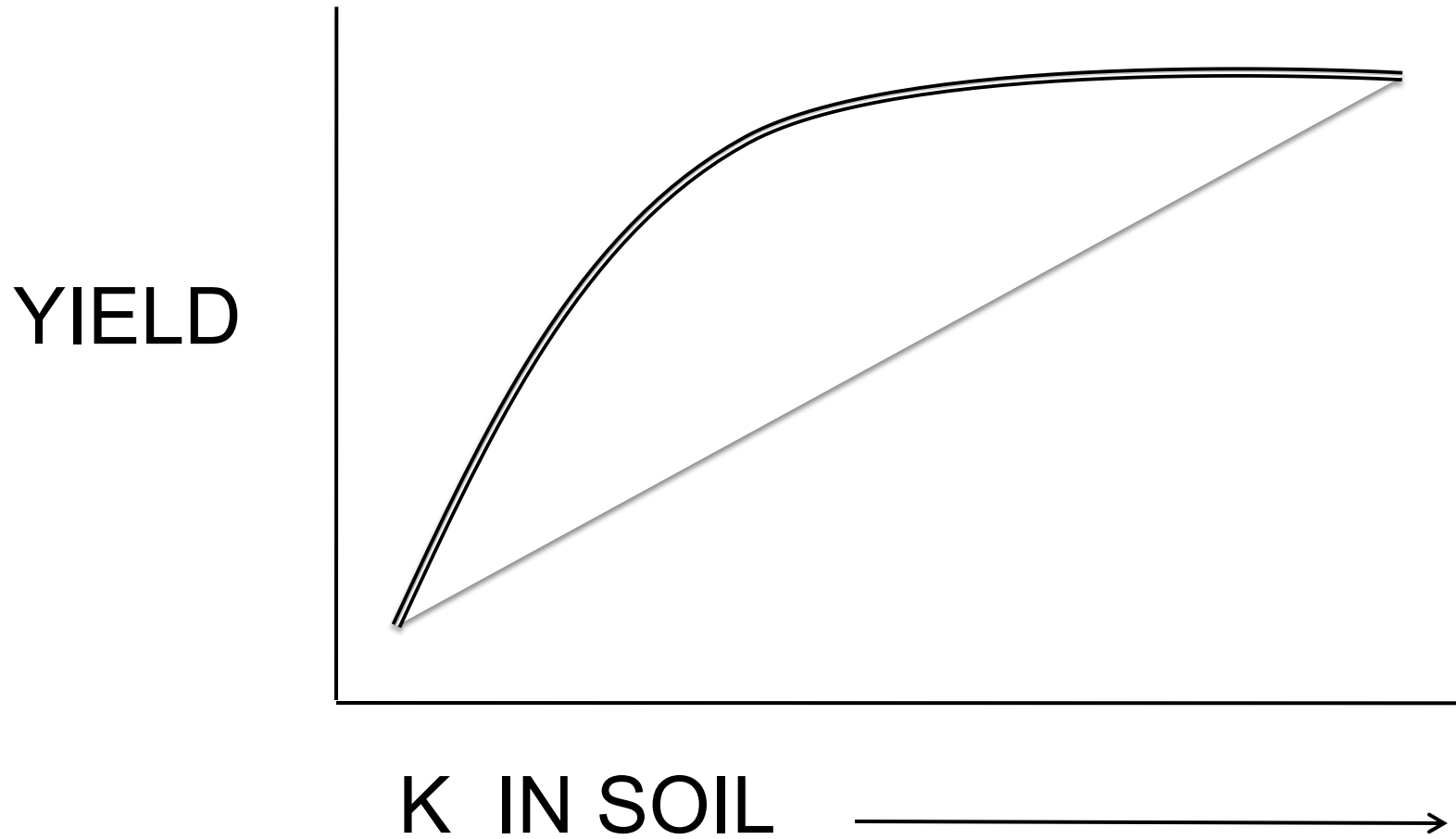
NUMBERS VARY SOMEWHAT FROM LAB TO LAB.

# POTASSIUM K

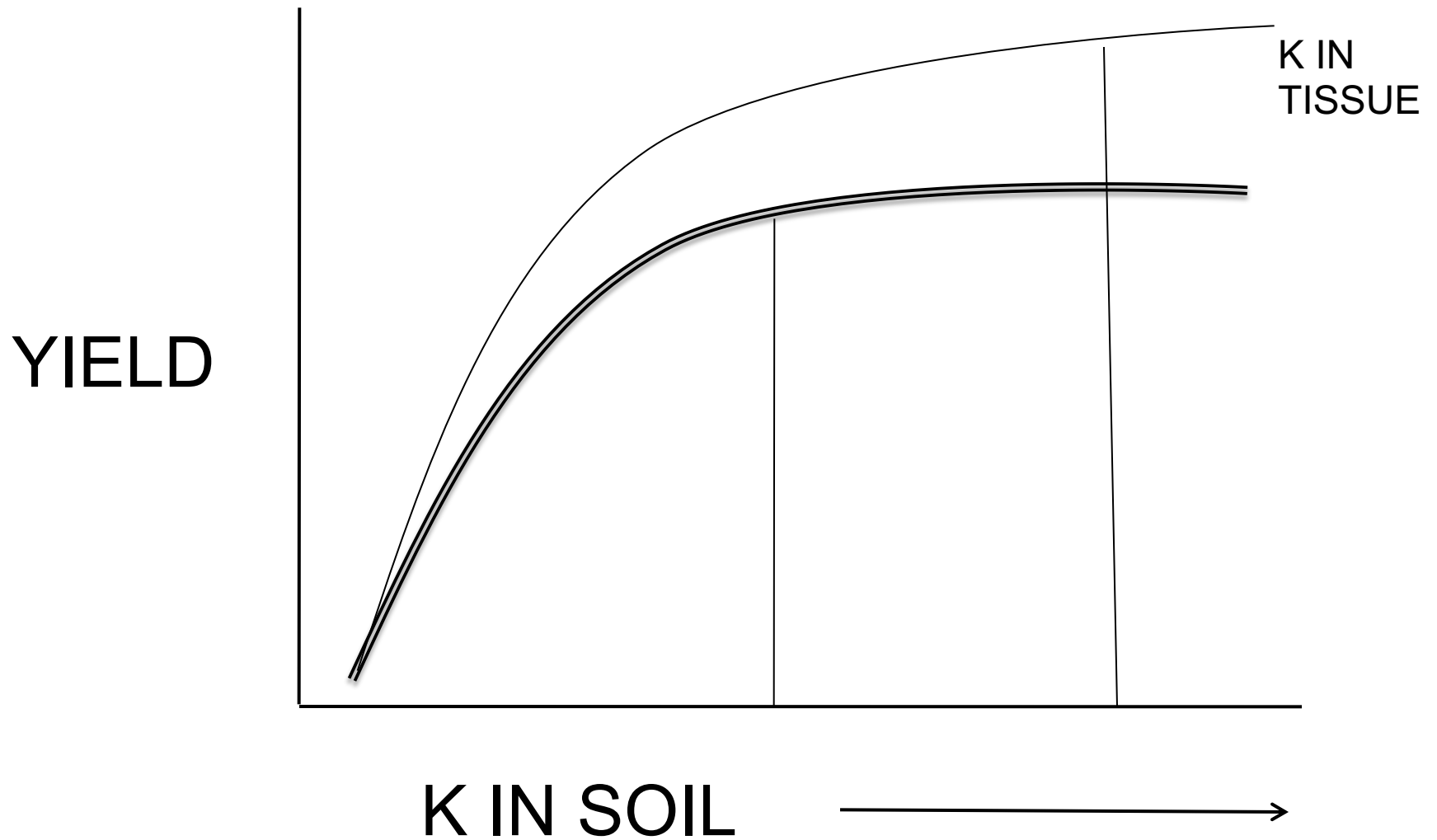
- MYSTERY ELEMENT
- NOT A PART OF BIOCHEMICALS
- ACTS AS COFACTER
- STOMATAL CONTROL

**STRESS**

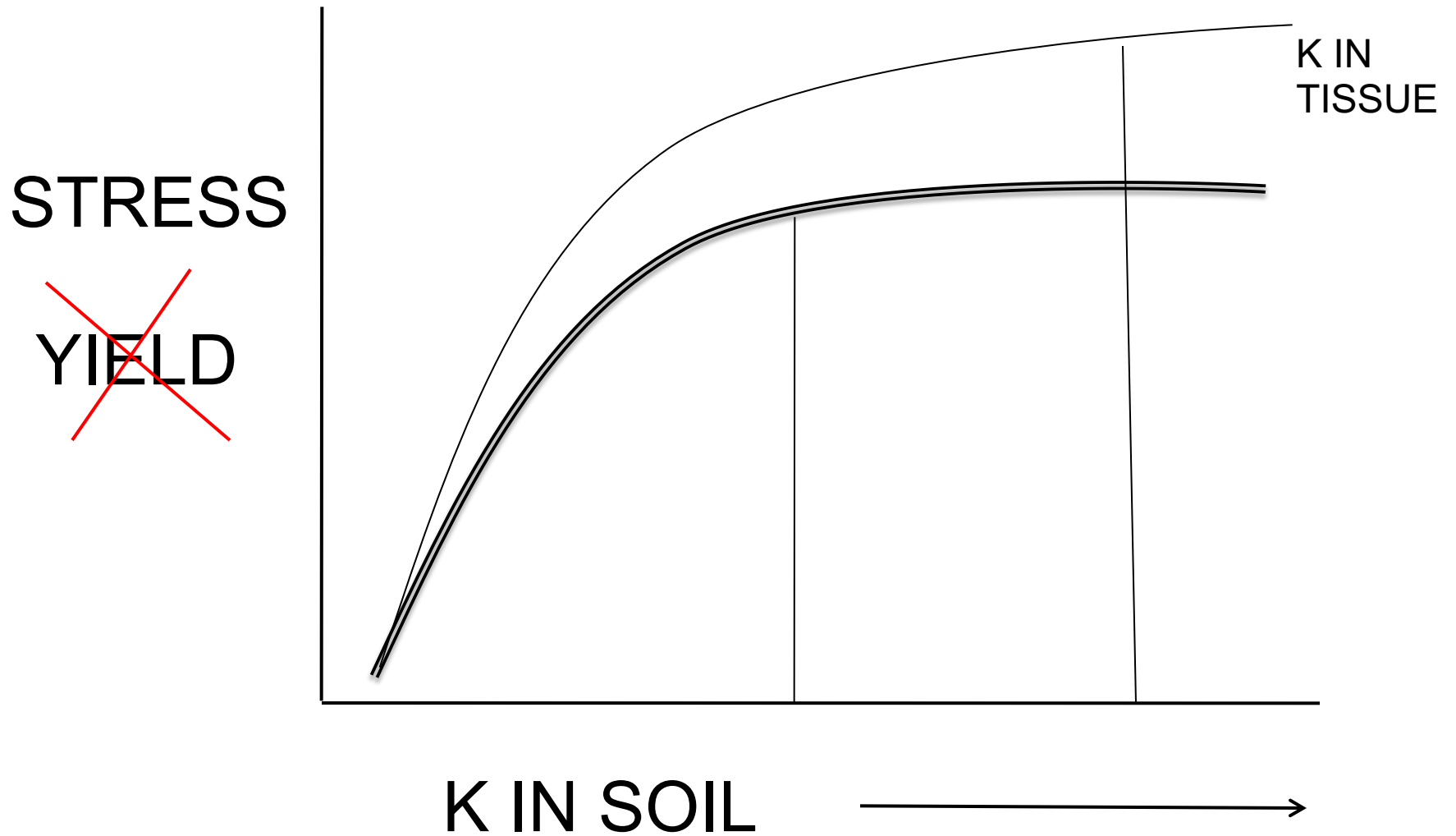
# POTASSIUM RESPONSE



# LUXURY CONSUMPTION



# TURF RESPONSE TO K



# POTASSIUM

| <u>PPM</u> |          | <u>LB/A</u> | <u>KG/HA</u> |
|------------|----------|-------------|--------------|
| 0 - 40     | VERY LOW | 0-80        | 0-90         |
| 41 - 175   | LOW      | 81-350      | 91-392       |
| 175 -250   | ADEQUATE | 350-500     | 392-560      |
| 250- +     | HIGH     | 500- +      | 560- +       |

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Maintain potassium within sufficiency range:
  - Soil K = 100 to 250 lb/acre or 50 to 125 ppm (Mehlich-III)
  - Tissue K = 2 to 3%

---
- If a deficiency in soil K exists, potassium can be applied biweekly at 0.2 to 0.3 lbs  $K_2O$ / 1000-sq ft to build up soil K
- To maintain soil K level, potassium can be applied biweekly at 0.1 lbs  $K_2O$ / 1000-sq ft

**HOW ABOUT Ca, Mg, S and  
the MICRONUTRIENTS?**

# CALCIUM (Ca)

- 0.30 TO 1.25 % IN TISSUE
- YOUNGER LEAVES TURN REDDISH-BROWN
- FADES TO RED
- LOW pH CONDITIONS
- LIMING SOLVES PROBLEMS

# MAGNESIUM (Mg)

- 0.15 to 0.50 % in tissue
- > 0.15 % in tissue deficient
- Soil test levels varies with CEC
  - Less than 4 meq
    - Mehlich 1 (30 to 60 ppm)
    - Mehlich 2 (70 to 140 ppm)
    - Ammonium acetate (80-140 ppm)
  - Higher CEC
    - Double the numbers (Carrow 2001)

# SULFUR (S)

- 0.10 TO 0.50 % IN TISSUE
- YELLOWING OF YOUNGER LEAVES
- SLOW GROWTH
- RARE IN MOST OF U.S. BECAUSE OF HIGH SULFUR COAL
  - 12 to 15 lb/ac in Midwest
- MAY SEE IT IN RARE SITUATIONS

# IRON (Fe)

- COFACTOR FOR CHLOROPHYLL FORMATION
- SYMPTOM - CHLOROSIS
- HIGH pH
- MOST COMMON OF ALL MICRONUTRIENT DEFICIENCIES

# IRON (Fe)

- 100 to 500 ppm in tissue
- Soil tests inaccurate
- Very small amounts applied to tissue (0.3 to 0.5 lb Fe/ac)

# SUMMER INDUCED CHLOROSIS

- David Devetter, MS Student
- Develops during high temperature periods
- Not observed in spring and fall
- Usually on sand, also can be on soil
- It is an iron problem

# OUR OBSERVATIONS

- Summer-induced iron chlorosis
  - Appears from late July to early September
  - Goes away if left untreated
  - Bentgrass and bluegrass
  - Widespread
    - Multiple countries
    - Golf courses
    - Sports fields
    - Home lawns
- \* While common on sand soils it is present in finer textured soils as well

# Chlorosis



# Conclusions

- Summer-induced chlorosis was caused by an iron deficiency
- Soil temperature may play a role in summer-induced iron chlorosis
- Summer-induced iron chlorosis can be treated with iron fertilization
- Higher rates of iron lead to more color recovery
- Treating before symptoms occur does not work
- Control of chlorosis depends on timing of iron fertilization

# MANGANESE

- Activator of at least 35 plant enzymes
- Formation of chlorophyll
- Root growth
- Cofactor for lignin formation
- 20 to 500 ppm in tissue
- Soil tests misleading

# MANGANESE

- YELLOWING SIMILAR TO IRON DEFICIENCY
- VEINS REMAIN GREEN - TIPS MAY REMAIN GREEN
- LEAVES DROP (lignin)

# ZINC (Zn)

- Catalyst of enzymes
- Regulates gene expression
- Membrane function
- Stress management
  - Saturation
  - High temperature
- 20 to 55 ppm in tissue sufficient
- 15 to 20 ppm deficient

# COPPER (Cu)

- Catalyst in photosynthesis and resp.
- Carbohydrate formation
- Lignin formation
- 5 to 38 ppm in tissue
- Deficiencies in high pH soils (rare)

# COPPER (Cu)

MIKE FAUST MS PROJECT '98 TO '99

- 0 to 600 ppm Cu
- Cu reduced Bentgrass rooting at 200 ppm and above. Approximately 50% reduction at 600 ppm

# BORON (B)

Membrane and cell wall formation

Sugar transport, carbohydrate metabolism

Respiration

---

Little needed (5 to 10 ppm in tissue)

Deficiencies rare

Very narrow range between deficiency and toxicity

Sewage effluent (1 to 2 ppm can be toxic)

# MOLYBDENUM (Mo)

- Enzyme reactions
- Sulfur metabolism
- Function of P in plant
- 0.1 to 1 ppm in tissue
- Deficiency
  - older leaves pale green
- Toxicity by mines in mountains

Chlorine (Cl)

Nickel (Ni)

# SUMMARY

USING SOIL TESTS TO  
DEVELOP A FERTILITY  
PROGRAM

THINGS TO BE AWARE OF

# Turfgrass Rooting Response to Humic Fertilizers

- Objective
  - Determine if the addition of humic substances to fertilizers benefits turfgrass rooting



# Materials & Methods

- Greenhouse Study
- Rooting Tubes
  - 45° angle
- CRD – 4 reps
- Repeated in time
- Kentucky Bluegrass
- Bermudagrass



# Materials & Methods

| <u>Treatment</u>  | <u>Application Rate</u> |
|---|-------------------------|
| 22-0-4 Synthetic Fert. w/ Black Gypsum  | 1#N/M                   |
| PCHCU 2.5%  | 1#N/M                   |
| Urea + Humic DG (HDG)   | 1#N/M + 0.9#/M          |
| 18-24-12 Starter Fert. + HDG  | 1#N/M + 0.9#/M          |
| 18-24-12 Starter Fert.  | 1#N/M                   |
| Uflexx  | 1#N/M                   |
| Urea  | 1#N/M                   |
| Non-treated   | -                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•KBG 56 d interval</li><li>•BG 28 d interval</li><li>•Harvest 120 d after seeding</li></ul> |                         |

# Data Collection



**Syn. + BG**

**PCHCU**

**Urea + HDG**

**Starter + HDG**

**Starter**

**Uflexx**

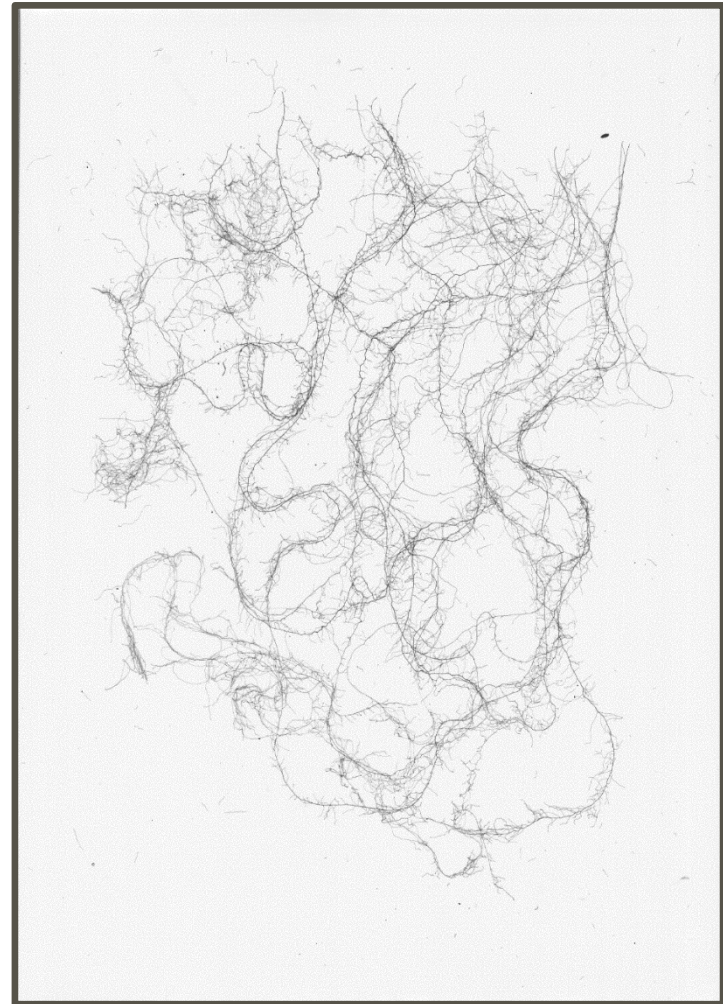
**Urea**

**Non-treated**

- Visual root and shoot length
- Longest root and shoot length

# Data Collection

- WinRHIZO
  - Total root length
  - Root surface area
  - Root volume
- Root and shoot biomass



# Kentucky Bluegrass

| Treatment                          | Nutrient Analysis              | Longest Root<br>cm | Total Root Length<br>cm | Root Surface Area<br>cm <sup>2</sup> | Root Volume<br>cm <sup>3</sup> | Root Biomass<br>g |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Synthetic Fert. w/<br>Black Gypsum | 22-0-4, 30%<br>gypsum, 4.7% HA | 44.0               | 2884                    | 150                                  | 0.62                           | 0.09              |
| PCHCU                              | 45-0-0.2, 2% HA                | 47.7               | 3572                    | 184                                  | 0.75                           | 0.10              |
| Urea + HDG                         | 46-0-0 + 70% HA                | 44.2               | 3117                    | 154                                  | 0.61                           | 0.08              |
| Starter Fert.+<br>HDG              | 18-24-12 + 70% HA              | 53.3               | 5508                    | 333                                  | 1.61                           | 0.25              |
| Starter Fert.                      | 18-24-12                       | 54.2               | 5334                    | 327                                  | 1.61                           | 0.24              |
| Uflexx                             | 46-0-0                         | 39.9               | 2145                    | 103                                  | 0.39                           | 0.06              |
| Urea                               | 46-0-0                         | 42.3               | 2601                    | 130                                  | 0.51                           | 0.07              |
| Non-treated                        | No added nutrients             | 39.7               | 1704                    | 85                                   | 0.34                           | 0.05              |
|                                    | LSD <sub>0.05</sub>            | 6.1                | 495                     | 33                                   | 0.20                           | 0.04              |

# Kentucky Bluegrass

| Treatment                       | Nutrient Analysis           | Longest Root<br>cm | Total Root Length<br>cm | Root Surface Area<br>cm <sup>2</sup> | Root Volume<br>cm <sup>3</sup> | Root Biomass<br>g |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Synthetic Fert. w/ Black Gypsum | 22-0-4, 30% gypsum, 4.7% HA | 44.0               | 2884                    | 150                                  | 0.62                           | 0.09              |
| PCHCU                           | 45-0-0.2, 2% HA             | 47.7               | 3572                    | 184                                  | 0.75                           | 0.10              |
| Urea + HDG                      | 46-0-0 + 70% HA             | 44.2               | 3117                    | 154                                  | 0.61                           | 0.08              |
| Starter Fert.+ HDG              | 18-24-12 + 70% HA           | 53.3               | 5508                    | 333                                  | 1.61                           | 0.25              |
| Starter Fert.                   | 18-24-12                    | 54.2               | 5334                    | 327                                  | 1.61                           | 0.24              |
| Uflexx                          | 46-0-0                      | 39.9               | 2145                    | 103                                  | 0.39                           | 0.06              |
| Urea                            | 46-0-0                      | 42.3               | 2601                    | 130                                  | 0.51                           | 0.07              |
| Non-treated                     | No added nutrients          | 39.7               | 1704                    | 85                                   | 0.34                           | 0.05              |
|                                 | LSD <sub>0.05</sub>         | 6.1                | 495                     | 33                                   | 0.20                           | 0.04              |

# Conclusions

- Starter fertilizer
  - Phosphorus (P)
  - Humic substances no added benefit
- Absence of starter fertilizer, humic substances increased KBG rooting
  - P limitations or bans
- Future research
  - Timing
  - Species and cultivars

# Soil Health Response to Humic Fertilizers

- Objectives
  - Evaluate the effects of the addition of humic substances to fertilizers on turfgrass soil health
    - Microbes, structure, and chemical properties
  - Evaluate reduced rates of nitrogen w/humic substances on turfgrass color and quality

# Materials & Methods

- Randomized Complete Block
- Granular applications
  - Scotts Box
- Native Soil – Kentucky Bluegrass, sports field height
- USGA – Creeping Bentgrass



# Materials & Methods – Native Soil

| Treatment   | Application Rate    | Application Timing      |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 22-0-4 w/BG | 1#N/M               | April, May, Sept., Oct. |
| PCHCU       | 1#N/M               | April, May, Sept., Oct. |
| PCHCU       | 0.75#N/M            | April, May, Sept., Oct. |
| Urea + HDG  | 0.75#N/M+0.92#HDG/M | April, May, Sept., Oct. |
| Urea + HDG  | 0.5#N/M+0.92#HDG/M  | April, May, Sept., Oct. |
| Urea        | 1#N/M               | April, May, Sept., Oct. |
| Uflexx      | 1#N/M               | April, May, Sept., Oct. |
| HDG         | 0.92#HDG/M          | April, May, Sept., Oct. |
| Non-treated | -                   | -                       |

# Data Collection

- Visual Quality
- Digital image analysis
  - Percent green cover
  - Dark green color index (DGCI)
- Soil water content (TDR)
- Soil compaction (Soil Penetrator)
- Clippings

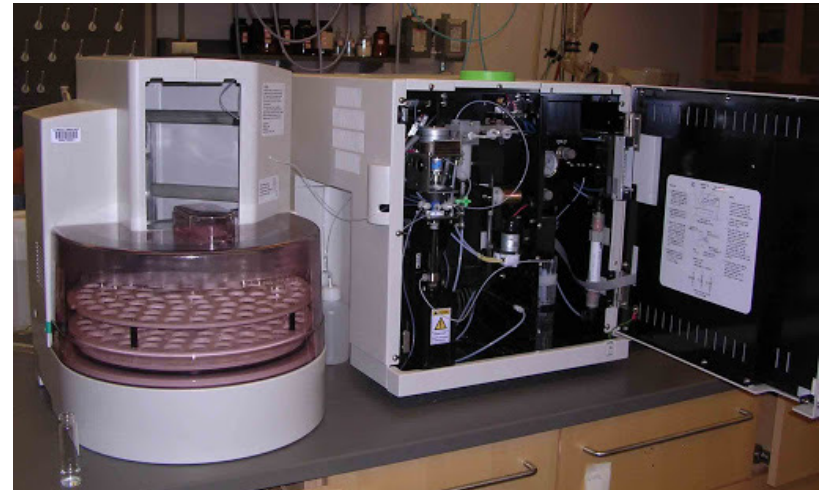
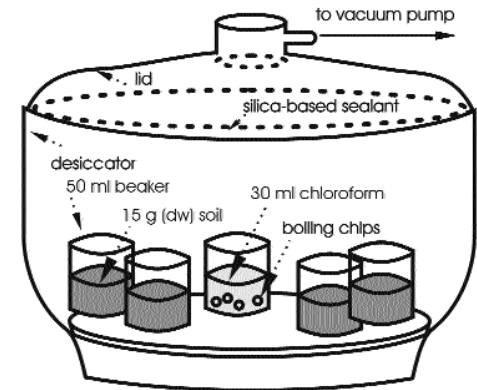


# Data Collection

- Soil test
  - Nutrient concentrations
  - pH
  - CEC
  - Organic matter
- Soil microbial biomass
- Potential mineralizable carbon
- Potential net N mineralization

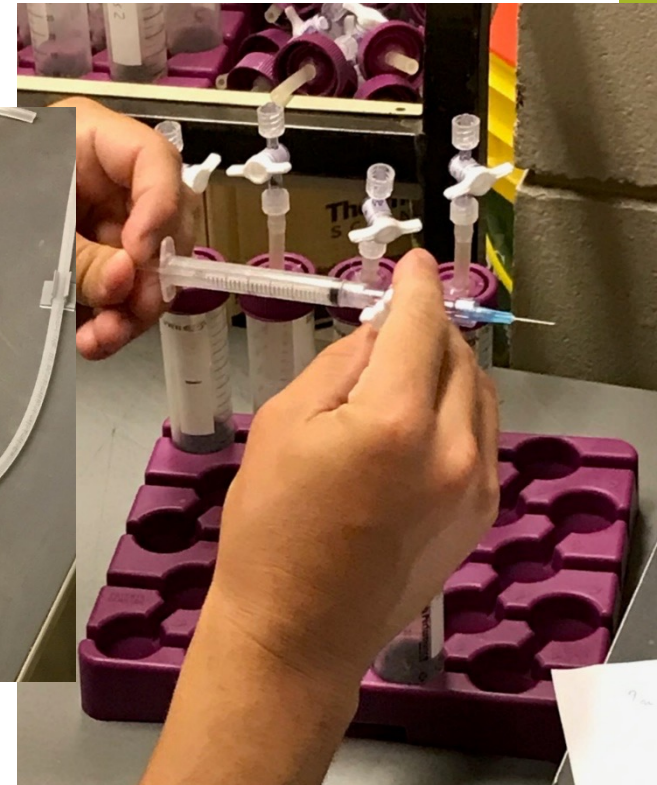
# Soil Microbial Biomass

- Chloroform fumigation
  - Burst cell walls
- Soil extractions
  - Fumigated and non-fumigated
- Microbial biomass C & N
  - Fumigated – non-fumigated



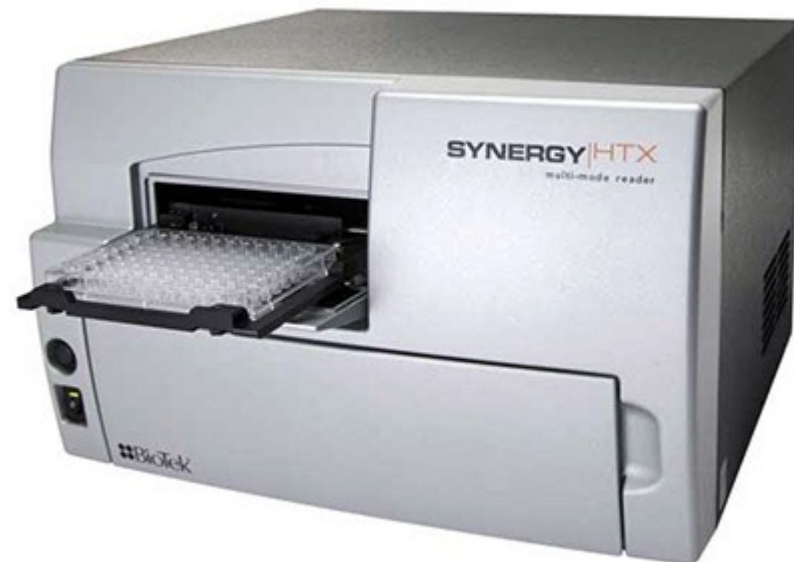
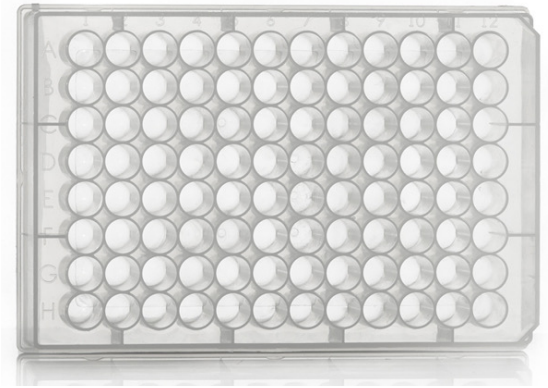
# Potential Mineralizable Carbon

- 2 week soil incubation
- Measure CO<sub>2</sub>
  - 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 14 days after start
- Indicator of soil biological activity

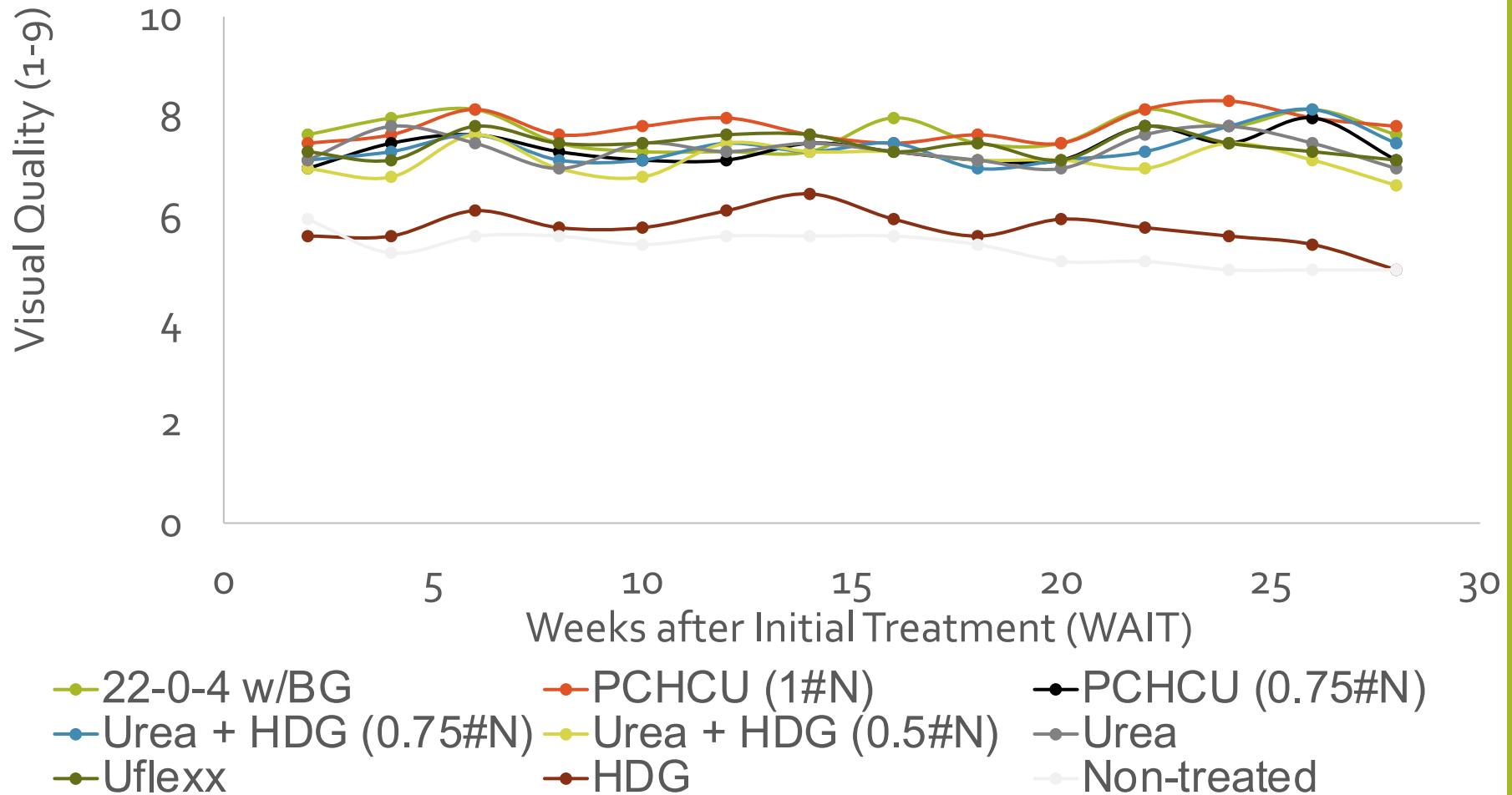


# Potential Net N Mineralization

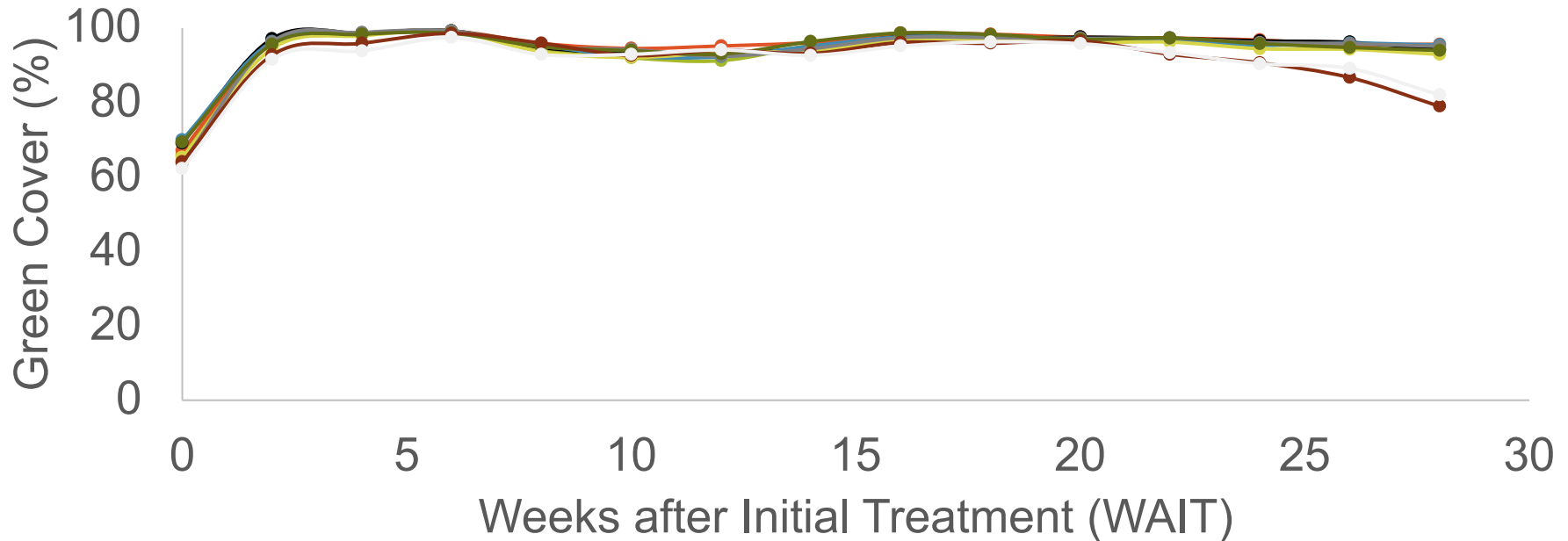
- 2 week soil incubation
- Soil extraction
  - Before and after incubation
- Measure  $\text{NO}_3^-$  &  $\text{NH}_4^+$  concentrations
- Net N mineralization
  - After incubation – before incubation



# Visual Quality – Native Soil



# Percent Green Cover – Native Soil



—●— 22-0-4 w/BG

—●— PCHCU (1#N)

—●— PCHCU (0.75#N)

—●— Urea + HDG (0.75#N)

—●— Urea + HDG (0.5#N)

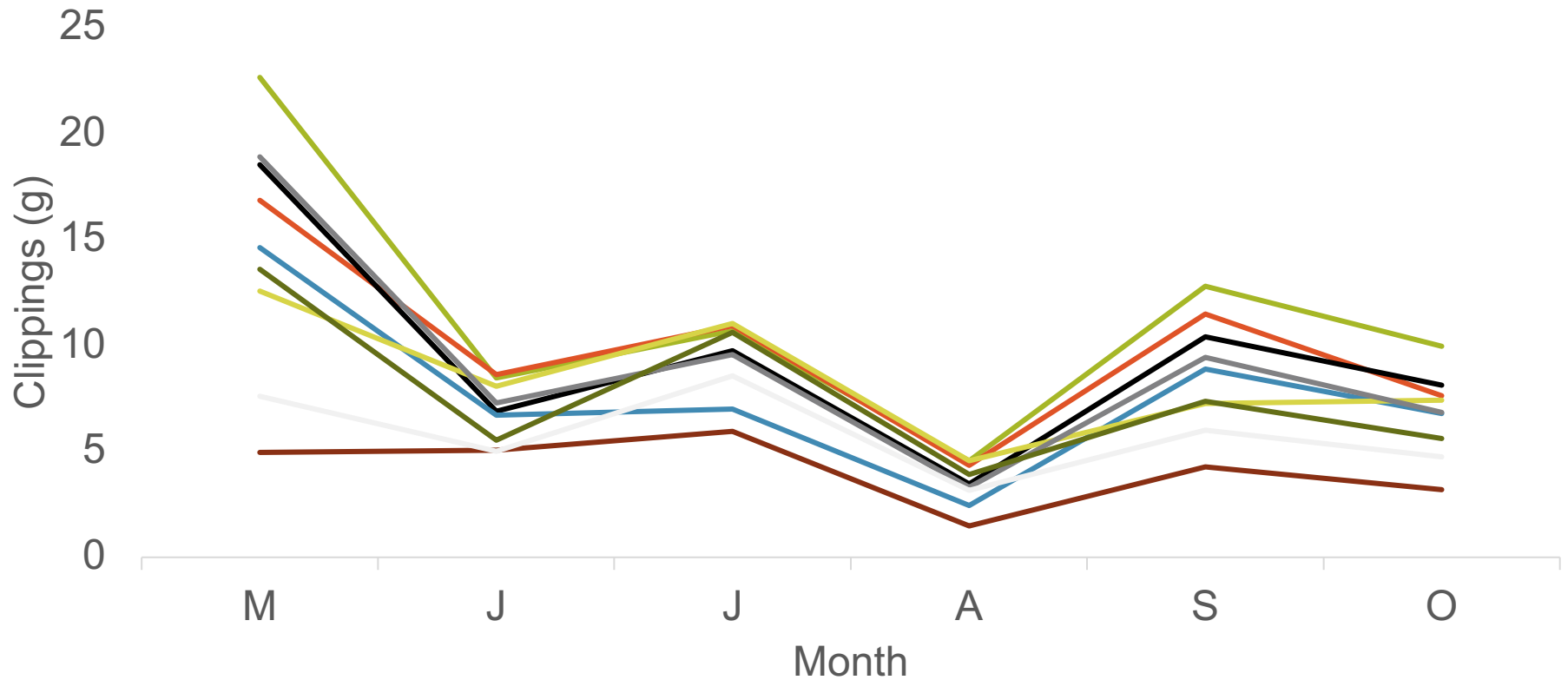
—●— Urea

—●— Uflexx

—●— HDG

—●— Non-treated

# Clippings – Native Soil



— 22-0-4 w/BG

— PCHCU (1#N)

— PCHCU (0.75#N)

— Urea + HDG (0.75#N)

— Urea + HDG (0.5#N)

— Urea

— Uflexx

— HDG

— Non-treated

# Soil Test – Native Soil

| Treatment              | Sulfur<br>Conc.     | pH  | CEC                                | Organic<br>Matter |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----|------------------------------------|-------------------|
|                        | mg kg <sup>-1</sup> |     | cmol <sub>c</sub> kg <sup>-1</sup> | %                 |
| 22-0-4 w/BG            | 7.5                 | 6.9 | 16.8                               | 4.5               |
| PCHCU (1#N)            | 4.8                 | 7.0 | 16.2                               | 4.5               |
| PCHCU (0.75#N)         | 4.8                 | 7.0 | 16.1                               | 4.6               |
| Urea + HDG<br>(0.75#N) | 4.9                 | 6.9 | 15.9                               | 4.2               |
| Urea + HDG<br>(0.5#N)  | 4.9                 | 7.0 | 16.0                               | 4.3               |
| Urea                   | 4.8                 | 6.9 | 16.7                               | 4.3               |
| Uflexx                 | 4.7                 | 7.1 | 16.3                               | 4.3               |
| HDG                    | 5.0                 | 7.0 | 16.4                               | 4.3               |
| Non-treated            | 5.0                 | 7.0 | 15.9                               | 4.3               |
| LSD <sub>0.05</sub>    | 0.8                 | NS  | NS                                 | NS                |

# Microbial Biomass – Native Soil

| Treatment   | Application Rate       | Microbial Biomass Carbon | Microbial Biomass Nitrogen |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
|             |                        | mg kg <sup>-1</sup>      | mg kg <sup>-1</sup>        |
| 22-0-4 w/BG | 1#N/M                  | 493.0                    | 79.7                       |
| PCHCU       | 1#N/M                  | 546.4                    | 88.9                       |
| PCHCU       | 0.75#N/M               | 506.7                    | 82.4                       |
| Urea + HDG  | 0.75#N +<br>0.92#HDG/M | 481.3                    | 98.2                       |
| Urea + HDG  | 0.5#N +<br>0.92#HDG/M  | 508.9                    | 83.0                       |
| Urea        | 1#N/M                  | 510.5                    | 85.2                       |
| Uflexx      | 1#N/M                  | 507.5                    | 80.2                       |
| HDG         | 0.92#HDG/M             | 520.8                    | 82.2                       |
| Non-treated | -                      | 523.5                    | 90.1                       |
|             | LSD <sub>0.05</sub>    | 61.7                     | NS                         |

# Potential C & N Mineralization – Native Soil

| Treatment   | Application Rate       | Potential C Mineralization | Potential N Mineralization |
|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
|             |                        | mg kg <sup>-1</sup>        | mg kg <sup>-1</sup>        |
| 22-0-4 w/BG | 1#N/M                  | 416.0                      | 13.2                       |
| PCHCU       | 1#N/M                  | 394.0                      | 14.0                       |
| PCHCU       | 0.75#N/M               | 324.4                      | 12.4                       |
| Urea + HDG  | 0.75#N +<br>0.92#HDG/M | 237.4                      | 11.1                       |
| Urea + HDG  | 0.5#N +<br>0.92#HDG/M  | 243.0                      | 10.9                       |
| Urea        | 1#N/M                  | 304.2                      | 13.3                       |
| Uflexx      | 1#N/M                  | 388.4                      | 14.0                       |
| HDG         | 0.92#HDG/M             | 315.4                      | 11.8                       |
| Non-treated | -                      | 234.9                      | 8.8                        |
|             | LSD <sub>0.05</sub>    | 142.0                      | 3.4                        |

# Conclusions – Native Soil

- PCHCU (0.75#N) and urea + HDG (0.75#N and 0.5#N) resulted in equivalent visual quality and green cover compared to full rates (1#N)
- Reduced rates had less clippings collected on average, but maintained acceptable quality
- 22-0-4 w/BG, PCHCU (1#N), and Uflexx increased soil biological activity (increased CO<sub>2</sub> production)
- 22-0-4 w/BG, PCHCU (1#N and 0.75#N), Uflexx and urea increased the N supply power of the soil

# QUESTIONS?



[athoms@iastate.edu](mailto:athoms@iastate.edu)

515-294-1957 office

@ThomsTurf