

# The Bio-Ag News!

Spring 2021 Edition

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## From The President

Greetings,

If you are anything like me, you are enjoying those longer days and warmer sunshine. It makes it feel like summer is right around the corner. I know we have still got a lot of cold and damp weather to get through first, but it is nice to daydream. Be sure to invest now so you can navigate that cold and damp weather with minimal health issues in your animals!

We are now entering year two of the pandemic. We have made our way through the initial impacts brought about by forced lockdowns. We are just now beginning to see the ripple effects. Undoubtedly, you are seeing price increases in many areas. Supply chains around the world have been impacted and the results of that are trickling out. A major issue is a worldwide shortage of shipping containers. I will not pretend to understand the details of what is happening, but so many of the goods we deal with on a day-to-day basis are imported from around the world or have components that come from foreign countries. Those freight costs have tripled in many cases, having a direct and immediate impact on cost of goods.

Most companies are trying to hold the line on passing on those increases but can only do so much and have to raise prices... Have you tried to buy a 2x4 lately?

Despite all these new challenges, there will be lots of opportunities. Stay on the lookout! Consumers will be changing their behaviours permanently or looking for new ways to shop and learn about their food.

In other news, Bio-Ag is delighted to welcome co-op student Kartar Bhutani and new warehouse assistant Laith Zaidan.

We are also on the hunt for a new dairy rep for south of the 401. If you know somebody with dairy and sales experience that might be a good fit, please send them to: <https://www.bio-ag.com/blog/Sales-Rep-Job.htm> For all the details.

~Parry Bast, President



## Phasing into the Spring Equinox

I'm waiting for spring to burst. I'm sure you are as well.

Spring signifies a rebirth, letting go of the confines of shelter and a slower pace. I always feel excited and a little anxious as spring comes along. During the dark nights and gray days of winter I spend time reflecting and gathering knowledge. This winter I have had to adapt to online and distant knowledge sharing and networking. The upside is that I've been able to tap into the stories from other farmers and researchers from a wider geography and a broader range of perspectives. It's been very inspiring and exciting. However, at last spring is the turning point when the question becomes more urgent; how will I incorporate these ideas into some action? I don't advocate for a wholesale retrofit, well, unless you are really bold. A test or trial is a first step on the learning cycle. Too commonly we hear from people when they are already a few steps into the innovation or change. Every story begins with the first step. The first step may have happened by serendipity or accidentally, and yet for most people, the first step involves overcoming a fear or some hidden resistance to change. I'm going to invite you to take a first step because I'm confident that you can.

Here is my invitation to take this season to test out one or two challenges. Take the first step. Be bold. Be deliberate. There are people willing to help at Bio-Ag, and within your team. Just ask!

There are different approaches to determining your starting point, depending on what is feeling true for you. You may have identified an area that is working well and has the potential for the next level of improvement. Maybe you are motivated by positive incentives such as better quality feed. You may have identified an area that is not working well and needs a different approach. Maybe your tendency is to be motivated by resolving a negative incentive such as avoiding erosion on a field.

Asking questions and helping to find a solution is one of my strengths. I've put together a few nudges. The end result of crafting this article is not creating a literary work of art, more of a scattering of ideas along various entry points in the "Plan, Do, Evaluate, Redo" cycle of iterative learning and adapting cycle.

Here is goes. I hope you take the opportunity to discuss some of these with your advisors and team members. Feel free to contact me or send me your thoughts.

### **Points along the “Plan, Do, Evaluate, Redo” cycle**

Design of your cropping or grazing system

- How does your design address the limiting resource in your system – water, energy, nutrient cycling and diversity? Examples for improving diversity:
  - Interseeding row crops with cover crops
  - Wide row corn with cover crops
  - Strips of row crops with grazing strips for mobile grazing

### **Using new evaluation tools**

- Are you building your knowledge and data system that guides your decision making and does it match your intuition? What do you not know that you need to know? Examples of analysis and data gathering:
  - Adding manure, soil, tissue, water, forage or sap analysis
  - Adding brix measurements
  - Changing the timing or frequency of your evaluation and monitoring
  - Comparing poor and good results in the field and using analysis to identify the factors and putting numbers to what you see

### **Using different techniques in a different way**

- Will the reduction of inputs change the quantity or quality of your product?
- Can you replace some fertility inputs with biological inoculants or stimulants?
- Can you sharpen your focus and add inputs in intervals versus all up front?

### **Combining changes to the structure of your system along with different tools and techniques**

- Changes or disruptions in natural systems have cascading and multiple effects. Planned disruption in your approach can lead to cascading decision making along the “Plan, Do, Evaluate, Redo” cycle

### **Review your compass**

- Have you reviewed your vision, and goals? Have you considered all members of your team?
- What are the assumptions behind your decisions?
- What relationships and connections are you paying attention to: with your land, your team, your community, and your end user?
- How do you serve the needs of your end user?

Take the first step. Contact me and other advisors to help you on your journey.

Happy Spring

~Ruth Knight PAg, CCA-ON



# Upcoming Product Specials

See calendar for details

## April



## May

**Custom Forage Product:  
PCAI Bio-Lac/Seaweed/Sugar**

Use Bio-Ag's premium custom forage product to enhance the fermentation process, reduce nutrient losses.

## June



**Please check your Bio-Ag calendar for the promo code of the month to take advantage of these discounts!**

## Dates To Remember

- April 02– Bio-Ag CLOSED for Good Friday
- April 05– Bio-Ag OPEN on Easter Monday
- May 25– Bio-Ag CLOSED for Victoria Day
- May 31– Bio-Ag CLOSED for Year-End Inventory
- July 1– Bio-Ag CLOSED for Canada Day
- July 14– our annual Customer Appreciation Day onsite tent event is cancelled. Stay tuned for alternative function

## 2022 is Bio-Ag's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

In preparation for our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary Bio-Ag is looking for your stories! If you'd like to share any fond memories you have with the company or the Bast family, please send them to:  
[nicole.kuyten@bio-ag.com](mailto:nicole.kuyten@bio-ag.com)

Please include:

Your name or farm name.  
One product you were most impressed by.

A short story of you experience with the company and why you continue to support us.

We want you to know how much we appreciate your patronage and continued support, especially through this unprecedented time.

**Thank You!**



To our valued Retail clients:

We trust this finds you and your family well and adapting to on-going changes.

Bio-Ag feels very privileged to have so many long-standing, positive relationships with our clients.

As a tangible way to show our gratitude, we are very happy to announce the **Bio-Ag Loyalty Program**.

**NOTE: The 3% discount is discontinued as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.**

Our goal is to offer a simplified and improved opportunity for thanking our clients for their continued patronage.

**As of January 01, 2021, the following program will be available to Retail clients meeting the following criteria:**

- \*Credits are based on the Annual gross dollar value of paid Invoices [each calendar year Jan 01- Dec 31]
- \*Client account must be current [no aged balance owing]
- \*All forms of payment will qualify for our Loyalty program
- \*Qualifying threshold is \$1000.00

Payment value tier	Annual credit earned
\$1000-\$4999	\$35.00
\$5000-\$9999	\$75.00
\$10,000-\$19,999	\$125.00
\$20,000-\$39,999	\$225.00
\$40,000-\$59,999	\$400.00
\$60,000-\$79,999	\$600.00
\$80,000 +	\$800.00

- \*Credits will be calculated and applied by the 15<sup>th</sup> of January following each program's fiscal year-end
- \*Credits on account will automatically be applied to future invoices as the invoices are generated
- \*Credits will be redeemed for purchases of Bio-Ag products ~No cash value
- \*Credits expire 12 months from date of activation

Every purchase you make will accumulate towards your credit. Keeping your account current ensures you qualify.

Keep earning dollars towards your future purchases.

Thank you for your continued commitment to *Working with Nature~Naturally*.

Best Regards,  
Fazal Ali  
Controller

\*Currently this program is solely available to our **Retail-pricing customer group**

# Product Updates

## New Look, New Name, Same Amazing Products

Our partners at Black Earth have recently rebranded their products.

See the change:

Previous Name



New Name

### Humalite AG 4

Sizes Available: 25kg Bags & 907kg Totes



### Humalite GG 16

Sizes Available: 907kg Totes  
pre-order required



### Liquid Carbon

Sizes Available: 10L Jugs & 1000L Totes  
pre-order required



### Keal

Sizes Available: 10L Jugs & 1000L Totes  
pre-order required



# Kathrine's Korner

## Spring Pasture Introduction for Livestock

It's almost my favourite time of year...Pasture Season! I just wanted to share some tips for reducing the risk of bloat, acidosis, and tetany for grazing animals. This can be applied to sheep, goats, and cattle!

### **Start pasture slowly**

Like any feed change, pasture should be introduced slowly to allow microbes in the rumen to adjust to the new feed. Bio-Ag's lactobacillus fermentation product (Bio-Lac) can also help the rumen adjust during this time.

**Management tip** – allow animals on pasture for 1-2 hours on the first day then slowly increase time allowed on pasture over 1 week.

### **Feed fiber before pasture**

This is especially important at first when grasses and legumes are low in fiber and high in soluble protein as are the early cool season grasses. Feeding fiber will also help prevent bloat.

**Management tip** – feed first cut dry hay overnight and in morning before animals are moved onto fresh pasture. To encourage intake, molasses can be sprinkled on the hay.

### **Account for the composition of pasture**

Pasture has high soluble protein and has high digestibility. This means that the rumen will require some supplemented fiber and some non-structural carbohydrates to catch the soluble protein and slow down the rate of passage out of the rumen. Failure to do so can result in acidosis. Pasture plants also have a high moisture content so you must ensure that the animal is able to eat enough dry matter content to maintain growth and/or lactation.

**Management tip** – continue to provide animals with a balanced ration by providing nutrients not present in sufficient quantities on pasture.

### **Pasture after the noon hour**

Sugars are highest in the plant after the noon hour. This will hold true throughout the entire pasture season. This is even more important in strictly grass-fed herds/flocks as these animals need to obtain maximum energy from the pasture plants because energy cannot be supplemented with grain.

**Management tip** – To obtain maximum nutrition and prevent protein overload, wait to move animals onto fresh pasture until the afternoon.

### **Don't forget Water and Supplements!**

**Water** – clean drinking water needs to ideally be provided in the pasture with the animals. Animals will not walk back from pasture often enough to drink if water is far away. Provide salt alongside water as well.

**Mineral** – Just because animals are on pasture doesn't mean that they don't require mineral anymore! If not supplementing mineral in grains, ensure free choice minerals are always readily available to the animals. Remember to check with us to help you choose the right mineral for your pasture and soils.

**Salt** – provide loose salt that is always readily accessible. Especially important to help prevent bloat.

**Other valuable products:** Magnesium, Bentonite Clay, and Apple Cider Vinegar.

We would love for you to share your pasture photos with us! Send them in to [kathrine.stoeckli@bio-ag.com](mailto:kathrine.stoeckli@bio-ag.com). And as always, don't hesitate to contact us for more details on pasturing or any other services we can provide for your farm!

~Dr. Kathrine Stoeckli, Veterinarian

# Recipe Of The Season

## Maple Roasted Parsnips

### Ingredients

Parsnips 12 oz ( 375 g )  
Carrots 6 Med.  
Olive Oil 1 tbsp  
Salt 1/2 tsp  
Pepper 1/4 tsp  
Maple Syrup 1 tbsp

### Directions

Heat oven to 450°F. Have a rimmed baking sheet ready. Place peeled parsnip and carrots (cut into similar sized pieces) on baking sheet. Sprinkle with oil, salt, and pepper. Stir till coated. Bake 25 to 30 minutes turning vegetables over after 15 minutes until tender and browned. Remove from oven, drizzle with maple syrup until coated.

Serves 4



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