

AVOID TRIPPING—GET COORDINATED



“**Have a nice trip?** See ya’ next fall!” quipped my junior high classmates after seeing me stumble in the school hall. I remember those days with my peers. We were teenagers going through rapid changes and growth spurts that left us all a little uncoordinated at times. We used humor to get through it, if you want to classify puns as humor.

A lot of what agriculture has been going through could be classified as a growth spurt: globalization of markets, ethanol production, biodiesel, nutraceuticals, genetic engineering, nutrient management plans, and site-specific management generating tsunamis of data. It’s easy to trip. In these times, we need to be better coordinated. Here are a few suggestions.

Coordinate nutrients. Better communication between farmer and adviser will help allocate funds to the right overall combination of nutrients and/or lime. Proper nutrient management can also reduce environmental risks.

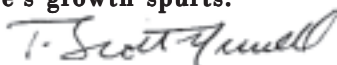
Coordinate sources. A sound strategy, when possible, is to combine occasional applications of organic sources with commercial fertilizer applications to keep levels of all nutrients at desired levels while taking advantage of more carbon.

Coordinate management. The way crops respond to nutrients depends heavily on other management practices. Nutrients also impact other parts of the crop production system. And not every field needs the same nutrient management strategy.

Coordinate information. Great value exists in looking at how things change over time. To make full use of data collected, store information in a systematic way for easy access and analyze with an eye to the questions you really want answered.

Coordinate risks. Examine how various risks are interconnected. For instance, keeping crops properly fed, which reduces agronomic risk, can also ensure that revenue won’t be shorted – economic risk.

To avoid tripping, we need to understand how these different parts of the farming operation are related. **Staying coordinated, we will avoid tripping and can walk with greater confidence during agriculture’s growth spurts.**



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