

IPNI Supports New Professorship to Explore Link between Fertilizer and Food Nutrition

IPNI has committed funding in support of the new “Nutrients for Life Foundation Professor of Soil and Food Crop Nutrition” position at Oklahoma State University (OSU). The professorship endowment is being supported in cooperation with the Nutrients for Life Foundation (NLF) and The Fertilizer Institute (TFI). “It is our hope that this professorship will encourage the expansion of an untapped and important area in academic research,” said NLF Executive Director Harriet Wegmeyer. “If, as predicted, a correlation between fertilizer and healthier foods is established, imagine the impact. An increasingly health-conscious public will finally regard fertilizers for what they truly are...nutritious for both plants and, in turn, people.” A gift totaling \$250,000 from the three organizations to the university was announced in July 2008.

Through a rare matching program made available from oil and gas executive and OSU alumnus T. Boone Pickens and the state of Oklahoma, the fertilizer industry’s \$250,000 will translate to \$1 million to fund a professorship in perpetuity. This position brings the strengths of three organizations together to address fertilizer’s affect on food nutritional quality.

“The quality of the food we eat is directly related to the fertility of the soil where the crop was grown. The nutrients in food crops originate from the soil, but soils do not have an un-

limited supply of nutrients and may not supply plant nutrients in proper balance ... hence the need for fertilizer nutrients,” said IPNI President Dr. Terry L. Roberts. “It would be difficult, if not impossible, to manage food crop nutrition without understanding how to manage the fertility of agricultural soils.”

The gift will create the “Nutrients for Life Foundation Professor of Soil and Food Crop Nutrition”, within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. The cross-disciplinary position will work closely with the college’s plant and soil sciences department and the Robert M. Kerr Food and Agricultural Products Center. The university expects to fill the position in 2009. OSU President Burns Hargis expressed appreciation to the fertilizer industry for this support of academics and research.

“Presently, the global food crisis is top of people’s minds and appropriate application of fertilizer is key to the solution. Not only is fertilizer responsible for 40 to 60% of food production, but we hope to show through research at OSU its importance on food nutrition as well,” said TFI President Ford B. West.

Endowed professorships and chairs are academic designations which provide support for faculty salary, graduate assistantships, equipment, and research needs, as well as other support. [BC](#)

Conversion Factors for U.S. System and Metric Units

Because of the diverse readership of *Better Crops with Plant Food*, units of measure are given in U.S. system standards in some articles and in metric units in others...depending on the method commonly used in the region where the information originates. For example, an article reporting on corn yields in Illinois would use units of pounds per acre (lb/A) for fertilizer rates and bushels (bu) for yields; an article on rice production in Southeast Asia would use kilograms (kg), hectares (ha), and other metric units.

Several factors are available to quickly convert units from either system to units more familiar to individual readers. Following are some examples which will be useful in relation to various articles in this issue of *Better Crops with Plant Food*.

To convert Col. 1

into Col. 2, multiply by:

Column 1

Column 2

To convert Col. 2 into

Col. 1, multiply by:

	Column 1	Column 2	
	Length		
0.621	kilometer, km	mile, mi	1.609
1.094	meter, m	yard, yd	0.914
0.394	centimeter, cm	inch, in.	2.54
	Area		
2.471	hectare, ha	acre, A	0.405
	Volume		
1.057	liter, L	quart (liquid), qt	0.946
	Mass		
1.102	tonne ¹ (metric, 1,000 kg)	short ton (U.S. 2,000 lb)	0.9072
0.035	gram, g	ounce	28.35
	Yield or Rate		
0.446	tonne/ha	ton/A	2.242
0.891	kg/ha	lb/A	1.12
0.159	kg/ha	bu/A, corn (grain)	62.7
0.149	kg/ha	bu/A, wheat or soybeans	67.2

¹The spelling as “tonne” indicates metric ton (1,000 kg). Spelling as “ton” indicates the U.S. short ton (2,000 lb). When used as a unit of measure, tonne or ton may be abbreviated, as in 9 t/ha. A metric expression assumes t=tonne; a U.S. expression assumes t=ton.