

BETTER CROPS WITH PLANT FOOD IN A NEW ERA



In the classic story by Washington Irving, a character named Rip Van Winkle takes a 20-year nap under a tree and wakes up to find that he has missed the American Revolution, plus numerous other unexpected changes in his village and surrounding countryside. When he returns, his environment is not the same as he remembered and he encounters a new generation of people busily going about their work. It is a different world.

Some might see a parallel to this story in agricultural production and information. While many basic concepts and scientific principles remain unchanged through time, most technology, market conditions, and management practices continue to evolve from what would have been considered state of the art just a few years earlier.

Just over one year ago, the International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI) became the owner and publisher of *Better Crops with Plant Food*. However, this magazine has a long and proud history of publishing sound, dependable, accurate, and useful information on crops, soils, plant nutrition, conservation, and related subjects. Many readers may not realize that *Better Crops* first began publication in 1923. *Plant Food* was the name of a second magazine that first came into print in January 1926. Because the mission of the two publications was so similar and for other reasons, the two magazines were combined and the first issue of *Better Crops with Plant Food* was published in July 1927. That was over 80 years ago. At that time, the main audience was in the United States...now we communicate to readers around the globe in print and through the worldwide web (check our website at www.ipni.net). IPNI now also publishes *Better Crops-China* and *Better Crops-India*.

Looking back through past issues of *Better Crops with Plant Food*, it is fascinating to revisit the introduction and evolution of concepts and ideas as reported through articles based on agronomic research. Some today might ask: "Don't we already know all there is to know about fertilizers...nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, secondary nutrients, and micronutrients?" The answer is clearly "No". As part of the mission of IPNI, *Better Crops with Plant Food* seeks to report new information based on scientific discovery and evaluation. IPNI programs apply this knowledge in ways that are protective of the environment, preservative of natural resources, economically sustainable, and socially acceptable.

Tremendous progress in agriculture, the fertilizer industry...and the world...has occurred in recent decades. If you are just waking up from a 20-year nap, you may have a lot of reading to do. Welcome to the world of *Better Crops with Plant Food* in 2008.

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