



a'Round The Traps'

T2-Z14 – Cropping Stages

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FERTI-TECH

BRIX BUSTER

Is Low Brix Holding Your Pasture Back?

Have you checked your pasture for Red Legged Earth Mite or Lucerne Flea damage?

What if the issue isn't the insects, but low Brix levels in the plant?

Low Brix levels can be caused by:

- Plant stress
- Excess nitrogen
- Insufficient sunlight
- Overgrazing
- Nutritional imbalances



Pastures with low Brix are more susceptible to insect attack, reduced growth rates and lower feed quality.

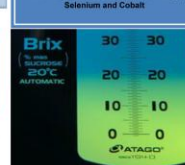
Contact Andrew (WA) to arrange a pasture assessment and Brix measurement, or to receive hands-on training in the correct methods and equipment required to accurately measure Brix levels yourself.

Understanding your pasture's Brix levels can provide valuable insight into plant health, insect pressure and production potential.

Brix Buster™

Brix Buster™ What does Brix measure?
Brix is a measure of the sugar the plant can make using chlorophyll to convert sunlight, water, and carbon dioxide into glucose.
Brix is the metric named after the German scientist Adolf Brix to measure plant sugar. Measurement is taken with a refractometer which measures Brix on a numbered scale where one brix represents a one percent solution of sugar.
The Brix scale is taken by squeezing crushed leaf sap over the measuring prism and looking through the eyepiece to the scale. The opaque line will rise to a level and the number recorded.
The Brix level will give an insight into how well the plant is photosynthesising as the higher the brix number the healthier the plant and the more robust it is to defend itself from insect attack.

Typical Analysis % w/v	
Nitrogen	1.6
Phosphorous	0.6
Potassium	0.4
Sulphur	0.8
Calcium	0.3
Magnesium	1.0
Iron	0.74
Manganese	0.52
Copper	0.33
Zinc	0.76
Boron	0.22
With Carbohydrates and Traces of Moly, Selenium and Cobalt	



Why is Brix Low? Brix will be low in a plant for the following reasons.

- Poor growth due to mineral imbalance.
- Too Wet or Too Dry (water imbalance) also if its Too Hot or Cold.
- Excess Nitrogen, through fertiliser or legume rhizobia production.

Can we Enhance Brix?

- Yes, Brix levels can be raised and thus the levels of protection from insects can be increased.

How can we use Brix?

Dr Tom Dykstra a respected entomologist has been able through his research to determine the Brix levels of plants that certain insects are able to assess as vulnerable to attack.
Dr Dykstra has grouped these into four categories. Grasshoppers and Crickets attack plants between brix levels 12 to 10. Beetles and Moths (chewing insects) attack between Brix 5 to 9.
Sucking Insects (Hemiptera) Leaf hoppers, Harlequin bugs, Red Legged Earth mites, Lucerne Flea attack when the Brix is less than 6. Aphids (Hemiptera) attack when the Brix is less than 5.

Brix	EC	pH	Interpretation
10	1.0	5.5	Plant is healthy, due to lack of mineral stress.
12	1.2	6.0	Plant is healthy, due to lack of mineral stress.
14	1.4	6.5	Plant is healthy, due to lack of mineral stress.
16	1.6	7.0	Plant is healthy, due to lack of mineral stress.
18	1.8	7.5	Plant is healthy, due to lack of mineral stress.
20	2.0	8.0	Plant is healthy, due to lack of mineral stress.
22	2.2	8.5	Plant is healthy, due to lack of mineral stress.
24	2.4	9.0	Plant is healthy, due to lack of mineral stress.
26	2.6	9.5	Plant is healthy, due to lack of mineral stress.
28	2.8	10.0	Plant is healthy, due to lack of mineral stress.
30	3.0	10.5	Plant is healthy, due to lack of mineral stress.

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SAP DATA

Some early SAP data out in the field – pre Tissue Testing, is showing that this year Potassium and Calcium levels are slightly lower than what we are normally seeing in typical years, mainly due to the wetter than normal start to most parts of the nation. Potassium in particular is a very water-soluble element, where Boron is even more mobile in soils, especially in wet conditions, this also explains the low Calcium numbers we are seeing, as Boron plays an important role in Calcium movement and use within the plant, although it is more accurate to say it supports Calcium transport and utilisation rather than simply “moves Calcium around.”



Most of Victoria is Still Extremely Wet where parts of WA is a Dry Slow Start

This photo was taken around 3 weeks ago, fortunately the crop is looking a lot better now, with the first foliar application going out as soon as the paddock is trafficable again without making a mess! It's amazing what some additional oxygen does once the soil profile dries out a bit, as this farm has had an extensive history of Soil Amendments.



Wheat Ready for First Foliar – Southern NSW

Dairy Pasture Growth – Southern VIC

It's great to have photos and videos sent to us of how the farms are traveling around Australia, as we can't be everywhere at once! The mild and wet start on the eastern side of the country has provided ideal growing conditions, especially after the pastures were being setup well with a strategic foliar application, now looking to take Tissue Tests to get through the rest of Winter and into Spring.





CUTWORM ACTIVITY - With the very mild start to Winter and additional moisture about, Cutworm has been detected in one paddock already, always something additionally to look for in each season, as they all seem to be different!

THE AGRONOMY EDGE – EQUIPMENT, DATA AND NUTRITIONAL KNOW-HOW ALUMINIUM TOXICITY

Every year, we see different problems to solve, especially when new paddocks are purchased and coming into the system, especially with leased ground. What we see here is an Aluminium toxicity. Aluminium toxicity is one of the major constraints to crop and pasture production in acidic soils. When soil pH becomes too low, less than pH 5.5, Aluminium is released into the soil solution where it damages developing root tips, restricting root growth and reducing the plant's ability to access water and nutrients. As a result, crops often exhibit poor early vigour, reduced drought tolerance, nutrient deficiencies and lower yields. Maintaining adequate soil pH through regular soil testing and strategic soil amendments are the most effective long-term solution for preventing Aluminium toxicity and protecting productivity. This issue was quickly confirmed by not only inspecting the root systems, but taking some direct on the spot pH measurements, with healthy plants measuring pH 6.4 in the rhizosphere approximately 50mm below the base of the young plants, whereas the poorly developed less advanced plants measuring pH 5.2.

Almost a Perfect Text Book year for Application Timing NSW

Seeing great weed control with quality inputs, much better than seeing generic chemistry being used out in the industry that have had their used by date, its only causing greater problems to solve later. We are even seeing where conventional chemical seed coatings on Canola that are designed to keep Aphids out of crops early on, completely fail. The shift to targeted nutrition away from constant preventative chemistry is being adopted by more each year. The chemicals have their place, but since when did we take a Panadol regularly just in case we get a headache?? Some chemistry gets added in for a pass over the paddock because it's cheap, same reasoning as people getting various constant vaccinations, because many of them are free! Crops perform best when they are grown in healthy soils with balanced nutrition. A focus on building soil fertility and supplying a full range of essential nutrients helps produce stronger, more resilient plants that are better equipped to withstand stress, pests and disease than crops relying primarily on corrective chemical inputs.

CUTWORM IN WHEAT

Cutworm in Wheat can be a significant problem, particularly during crop establishment and early tillering. The larvae, commonly the Black Cutworm and related species, feed at or just below ground level and often cut young wheat plants off at the base, leaving dead seedlings lying on the soil surface.

Typical symptoms include:

- Missing plants or bare patches developing in the paddock.
- Seedlings cut off at ground level.
- Plants wilting and dying suddenly.
- Damage often occurring in patches rather than evenly across the paddock.
- Larvae found hiding in the soil during the day and feeding at night.

Cutworm problems are more common:

- Following weedy fallows or green bridge situations.
- After heavy stubble retention.
- In paddocks with high levels of surface organic matter.
- During mild autumn conditions that favour moth activity and egg laying.

Management options include:

- Inspecting affected areas at dusk or by digging around damaged plants.
- Treating with an appropriate registered insecticide if populations exceed economic thresholds.
- Controlling weeds and green bridge hosts prior to sowing to reduce egg laying sites.
- Monitoring crops closely during emergence and early establishment.

5.20^{pH}
10.7^{°C ATC}

