



Welcome to Ground Work

Dear J.P.,

Researchers in the wine grape industry state that "Soil analysis is not a reliable means of determining nutritional problems and fertilizer requirements. Field research has repeatedly shown inconsistent relationships between soil nutrient levels and grapevine needs." This is just as true in other crops, even those grown on well mineralized soils.

Not quite grapes, but corn too is a high value crop this year. It may be time to start thinking of our grain crops as high value and treat them accordingly. Perhaps get out of the mindset that these are breakeven commodity crops whose inputs should be the agronomic minimum. Grape growers routinely use foliar fertilizers. They leave a lot of money on the table when they don't. Nor should we.

The big questions, once we give humble corn the respect it is due, are: How do we know if we should apply a foliar fertilizer? When do we apply it? What do we apply?

How do we know?

A simple brix test can tell us when we need to take action. But let's first be clear about what a brix reading means. It is literally a measure of the plant's current energy status. Many of us have heard that plants grow on energy. But for years the whole energy thing sounded like some mystical or magical process. It is not. It is, quite simply, the conversion of solar energy to chemical energy (in the form of sugar) for the plant to use putting the 17+ essential nutrients into various combinations that we eat or sell. So if a plant has a low brix it has a low energy supply and by definition it cannot do as much work (grow) as a plant with a larger energy supply.

When do we apply?

A good simple guideline is to use foliar (1) soon after a stress event, (2) just prior to a normal stress event like reproduction, and (3) anytime brix is unacceptably low. Your AgriEnergy Resources representative can help you determine the best timing of applications for practically any cropping situation.

What do we apply?

Tissue testing gives the best information as to what we should do when we encounter low brix. There are many, many different things that lead to low brix and they are all interconnected. Tissue testing, combined with knowledge of the soil and of the grower's operation, provides solid information that we can use to reduce trial and error.

It allows us to make consistently good foliar fertilizer recommendations for the sake of the grower. (And our own sake).

AgriEnergy has put tremendous effort into formulating our biologicals and our fertilizer blends so that collectively they address low brix situations in virtually all crops about ninety per cent of the time. Biologicals: SP-1 and Bio Aid. Fertilizers: Pillar, Catalyst,

Forage Boost, the AgriBoost products, etc. The other ten per cent can also be effectively dealt with by adding an additional component, iron for example, to an existing product.

Also be on the lookout for the new non-toxic (contains no formaldehyde) slow release corn foliar AgriEnergy is developing.