

# FROM THE GROUND UP

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# AGRONOMY NEWS

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### Water Quality Grant Applications Being Accepted

The Colorado Nonpoint Source Task Force is currently accepting grant proposals for funding under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. Approximately \$500,000 is expected to be available for 1997 projects. The pre-proposal screening will take place in Denver on June 18, 1996.

Nonpoint source water pollution comes from many diffuse sources. It is generally the result of precipitation or irrigation water moving natural and manmade pollutants to lakes, streams, and groundwater. It is estimated that contaminants such as fertilizer, pesticide, oil, sediment, salt, abandoned mine drainage, and livestock waste contribute to over 60 percent of our water pollution problems.

Organizations and agencies are encouraged to apply for these federal funds which have been set aside for water quality projects that deal with nonpoint source pollution issues. Emphasis is placed on projects that will help mitigate specific watershed problems or for educational programs. Several Cooperative

Extension projects have been successfully funded under this program.

Project proposal categories are: watershed, groundwater, and information/education. Most nonpoint source projects deal with issues addressing urban and construction runoff, agriculture/silviculture activities, inactive and abandoned mine drainage, and information and education efforts related to water quality. In general, proposals which are predominantly research projects do not fare well in obtaining funding through this program.

For more information on the nonpoint source grant program, contact Lorraine Peavy at the Water Quality Control Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, (303) 692-3582. Waskom

### PROPARGITE REGISTRATION CANCELLED FOR TEN CROPS

Uniroyal Chemical Company recently agreed to voluntarily withdraw registrations of the miticide, propargite

(Comite and Omite), for use on apple, apricot, cranberry, fig, green bean, lima bean, peach, pear, plum, and strawberry. This cancellation is effective immediately but will not affect the continued use of propargite on other crops, such as corn and sorghum, because EPA believes the remaining uses of propargite do not pose unacceptable risks.

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In 1992, propargite use in Colorado was 87,500 pounds, according to a pesticide use survey. Propargite (Comite II) currently is labeled for use against Banks grass mite and two-spotted spider mite in field corn and Banks mite in grain sorghum Colorado. In addition, propargite (Omite 30W or WS) had been labeled for use against two-spotted spider mite and European red mite on apple, apricot, peach and plum in Colorado. Such use on these fruit crops now has been removed from the label for this product.

Propargite has been widely used in IPM programs because this pesticide is selective in killing mites but not their natural enemies. In areas where mites are a primary pest, naturally occurring biological control generally is effective when weather conditions are unfavorable for high mite infestations. During favorable weather conditions, propargite has been used to control mites until biological control agents reach effective population densities.

The purpose of this regulatory action is to reduce dietary cancer risk to an acceptable level. Although EPA believes that the food supply already treated with propargite is safe to eat, it also believes that there is reason for concern about lifetime exposure and the fact that infants and children eat proportionately greater amounts of some foods treated with propargite than do adults.

Tolerances for propargite on all of the above ten crops will be maintained for an indefinite period of time, which means that existing stocks still can legally be used. However, EPA plans to revoke these tolerances in about three to four years. Mortvedt

## CERTIFIED CROP ADVISER EXAM

As a reminder, the deadline for applications for the next Certified Crop Adviser (CCA) exam is June 15, 1996 at the American Society of Agronomy office, 677 South Segoe Road, Madison, Wisconsin 53711. This is the last exam where government employees (including Cooperative Extension personnel) will have the National exam fee of \$100.00 waived. The fee for the Colorado exam is \$75.00. Application forms and copies of performance objectives for both exams can be obtained from Extension Soil and Crop Sciences at CSU (970-491-6201).

The CCA exam will be held in the College Center at Adams State College, Alamosa, Colorado on Monday, August 2, 1996. Mortvedt/Waskom

## USE OF ORGANIC MATTER ANALYSIS TO LOWER N FERTILIZER REQUIREMENTS

Most of the Colorado State University "Service-In-Action" sheets concerning fertilizer use incorporate organic matter as part of the nitrogen recommendations. There is usually a very narrow range of organic matter content where fertilizer suggestions are made. The categories are usually 0-1%, 1.1-2% and greater than 2%. Most agricultural soils seem to be between 0.8 to 1.2%; however, it is not unusual to see organic matter contents greater than 2%. Organic matter contents of more than two percent may be found in reduced tillage situations or where manure or sludge have been added to the soil. Higher organic matter contents of more than four percent are frequently found in garden situations. Proper sampling of soils is critical to accurately determine organic matter content. A single soil sample could be a composite of soil samples from an area ranging from a

few thousand square feet to 20 or more acres. An adequate number of soil samples should be taken from a site to be representative of the soil conditions. Numbers of soil samples to be composited may range from 5 or 6 from a small garden or front yard to 20 to 30 or more for several acres. Numbers of soil sub-samples may depend on variations of the soil conditions or time constraints.

When a soil sample is received at the lab it is first air dried and ground through a 2mm sieve. Large pieces of organic matter are usually removed and discarded by this process. The grinding process breaks down the soil clods and helps to further homogenize the soil for analysis. From the ground sample a 0.5 gram sub-sample is weighed out for organic matter analysis. One-half gram is very small and even the smallest "chunk" of organic matter can drastically change the organic matter analysis. Quality control procedures includes analyzing a check soil and including duplicate analysis.

The analysis itself is usually by the Walkley-Black method or a modification of it. The method involves the addition of a sulfuric acid-potassium dichromate mixture to the soil. The acid mixture oxidizes the organic matter and changes color from orange to green, depending on the concentration of organic matter. The original method requires that the solution be titrated; however, modifications to the original method have been made to by-pass the titration step and allow a simple direct reading with a spectrophotometer. The Walkley-Black method is reasonably accurate up to about 8% organic matter. In most cases the percent organic matter can be converted to total organic carbon (TOC) by multiplying by 0.5. The conversion to TOC is fairly accurate up to about 4% organic matter.

Changes in management techniques, including reduced tillage and the use of manures and sludges, make organic matter

analysis an important factor in soil test fertilizer recommendations. In many cases values of organic matter over 2% can greatly reduce the amount of nitrogen fertilizer that has to be applied. Self

### A GET RICH QUICK SCHEME

Wheat growers have a great opportunity to cash in on lower supplies of seed wheat by planning now. All you have to do is find one or two of your good looking wheat fields and sell the harvested wheat as seed for a dollar or two per bushel over market price. If you can sell wheat from two hundred acres as seed instead of grain, it can mean an extra \$200 to \$400 in your pocket. Get rich quick!!

It is simple to do. Just walk through the fields once or twice to remove the rye plants and jointed goatgrass from the field. On a good field this may take only a few hours. Spend three or four hours cleaning out your combine, trucks, augers and bins so that you don't contaminate this year's variety with last year's problems. Cleaning the seed is simple and only costs forty to sixty cents a bushel (don't forget to use a length grader to remove the jointed goatgrass seeds you missed in the field). Don't worry about the ten or twenty bushels of shrink that occurs during cleaning and handling. You can afford it because selling seed will help you to "get rich quick."

An important part of getting rich is to be sure that your potential customers know that you are selling seeds, so don't forget to advertise in the local paper - only about twenty or thirty bucks out of the pocket there. Your time is free, so it doesn't cost anything when you have to stop your own planting to load out fifty bushels to make a sale. You know that your seed is good, so it doesn't have

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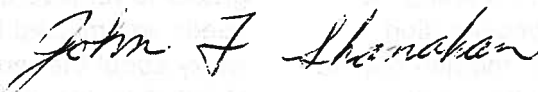
to be tested, and there is no need to make out a label for that seed load because the seed buyer "knows what he is getting." Oh, don't worry if you never get paid for those fifty bushels because selling wheat seed will help you to "get rich quick."

Just because the State Seed Law requires a seventy five dollar registration doesn't mean that you have to get it. Selling varieties that are protected under the Plant Variety Protection Act isn't a big deal unless you get caught, so why worry? It is also not necessary to be concerned about the extra liability incurred when selling seed, because I think your insurance policy might cover that anyway. It's not a big deal to take these chances because selling wheat seed is a way to "get rich quick."

I didn't add up the extra costs involved with selling your nice field of wheat for seed, but I don't think it is much. It has to be fairly simple. I'm sure that this project is a way to "get rich quick."

Or, maybe you could just buy certified seed. —Stanelle

*Sincerely,*



**John F. Shanahan**  
**Editor and Extension Agronomist**

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