It was an absolute privilege to be invited to speak at the Alerce 3000 Foundation Conference in Temuco Chile in early December. This came about from a visit in October 2013 by Douglas Tompkins and Francisco Calabi Floodo to Milagroda Young. Francisco liked our approach and saw how it may assist farmers in Chile. Having just returned from Nepal it allowed me the ability to observe what is happening in Agriculture outside of Australia.

After the Conference in Temuco all guest speakers (six in total) were escorted on a five day visit to farms owned by Nicholas and Parque Pumalin, a conservation park of 288,000 hectares that was gifted back to the Chilean Government by the late Douglas Tompkins. The first farm we visited at Trasun was mainly cropping with heavy compacted soils (see J Rooting in Canola). The crops were fed primarily with soluble NPK and any disease treated by fungicides. Francisco, who oversees the running and management of six farms would like to see the introduction of more sustainable management to improve soil structure, and microbial populations.

We then drove on to Trasunor Farm, an 1100 hectare working dairy, milking 2500 cows twice a day using a massive rotary system. Once again the pastures lacked legumes hence the need for the use of Urea to boost production.

The other organic properties we visited were only accessible by plane and ferry, all very exciting with Pisco Sour being the drink of choice at night. (I found it a bit bitter!!)

It was not all work with Horse back riding, digging mussels and clams, hugging 3000 year old Alerce trees in Parque Pumalin and cooking lamb on a spit to eat at 10 pm at night. Their eating hours also didn’t suit my body clock!!!

Chile, like most countries has been bitten by the NPK bug with farmers believing that they do not need any microbiology and everything can be applied from a bag, this theory has started to see the increase use of ‘cides’ to alleviate all the weed, disease and pest problems.

Chile is certainly a hidden gem and one to put on your bucket list!!

From Rhonda’s Desk—2017

As 2017 draws to a close I would like to thank all of our wonderful customers who understand the power of a healthy living soil in growing healthy food and mitigating climate change; our future is in the hands of farmers.

Wishing you all a safe and happy Christmas and a New Year where all your dreams come true.

While stock prices and wool prices have been buoyant it was another stressful year for cropping. The very dry winter and then substantial early summer rain did little to enhance yield and quality. I have made a rule never to complain about rain, no matter what it falls!!

The only way to build resilience into our farming systems, and alleviate the uncertainty of changing weather patterns is by building organic matter (humus) and microbiology into our soils. A 1% lift in organic matter equates to the soil holding 160,000 more litres of water. Something that comes to mind as I analyse over 2000 soil tests per year is that your soils did not get to where they are in just one year, so to build them to where you would like them, is not going to happen in just one year.

The Early Bird Catches the Worm!

Balanced soil fertility outperforms mere fertility adequacy programs in terms of yield, quality and crop resiliency.

Don’t leave your planning for 2018 until the last minute. Every year I see that our customers getting earlier and earlier with their paddock planning. So first thing in the New Year take some time to make your plan. Being a small family owned business we do our best to be prompt at dispatching orders on time however if we get backlogged we can’t always guarantee that. All I can say ORDER EARLY TO AVOID ANY DELAYS.

Soil testing has become a fundamental best management practice. At YLAD Living Soils we go beyond the standard NPK and pH soil tests and are one of the few businesses that offer to test the Total, Exchangeable and Soluble Pools because we know the importance of microbiology and recycling minerals.

The first activity is to take a COMPREHENSIVE SOIL TEST to identify the three nutrient pools in your soil, the Total, Exchangeable and Soluble. The information provided in the soil test allows us to identify how nutrients are cycling in your soil that then allows us to pinpoint the area or areas that need most attention, be it in the Chemical (Mineral), Physical (Structure and Microbiology aspects of your soil.

Call the office on 02 6382 2165 to have a free Soil Test Kit mailed to you.

Secondly after the results are back I spend time with you personally to thoroughly analyse your results. To me it is very important that you understand your soil, you own it and possibly it is your largest asset!!! Spending money on unnecessary nutrients or missing a vital link can be avoided.

Thirdly I provide a no-obligation quote to suit your budget and farm plan.

Fourthly We provide a fertility plan and costing for any sowing of crops or pastures.

Please avoid any rush or delays by planning early.

Testimonial: “What we appreciate more than just the Christmas hamper is that the grass has gone ballistic, everything you have said would happen has happened, so happy, than you again.”

Math Hartnagel
AUSTRALIAN CERTIFIED ORGANIC

On the 12 July 2017 we received our permit letter for the following products to be an allowed input for organic farming:

YLAD Humus Compost
YLAD Humus Extract
YLAD Gourmet Compost

Symposium: Carbon Smart Farming—Nepal

Potential solutions for improving soil health, food security and reducing GHG emissions – an Australian perspective

This Special Symposium was a part of the International Conference on “Mountains in the Changing World” which was held on 27-28 Oct, 2017 at Radisson Hotel, Kathmandu, Nepal

Nothing like an adventure for the awesome foursome to speak at Mountains in the Changing World Conference in Nepal. I could not resist the opportunity to take up the offer to travel to Nepal with Thakur Pasang, Louise Key and Brian Murphy to share our Australian knowledge and experience in building, measuring and trading soil carbon for meeting ambitious climate change targets.

Negotiations with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development are continuing. The negotiations involve running soil carbon piloting projects in Nepal that contributes to climate change mitigation, international C trading and food security. This will involve education, adopting the National Soil C measurement methods, base line and first soil tests and selling NCCU’s in the international market. By the end of the first phase projects should have expanded to 100,000 ha throughout Nepal, China and Africa.

BILLY’S ADVENTURE—INTO THIN AIR—Nepal

As we all know, “all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy” so we all agreed it was time for Bill to have some FUN!!! We let him out of going to the Conference and booked him into a 7 day motorbike ride up to 5000 metres into the mountains of Nepal. I think this is one of the best adventures of Bill’s life. He loves talking to anyone who will listen about this trip.

Reducing Summer Weeds:

With the recent summer rain, weeds in cropping country are going to be a challenge. There are other choices rather than just spraying out herbicides that compromise the soil. It is possible to sow a cover crop such as sorghum, millet, fodder rape or tillage radish, to either green manure or use as stock feed.

The photos taken on December 16 show 45 hectares of Tillage Radish that was sown in late October. We now have to find enough mouths to eat it all!!! These plants are opening up the soil, feeding microbes, sequestering carbon, scavenging nutrients and feeding animals. One option that is available is to plant a forage green manure cover crop after the canola harvest, in pasture paddocks or on any bare soil.

Bill’s adventure into thin air—Nepal

Bill’s adventure into thin air—Nepal

Bill’s adventure into thin air—Nepal

Bill’s adventure into thin air—Nepal

Testimonial — Peter Terry—‘Lengar’ Manildara

Peter Terry purchased 1500 acres at Manilda. In 2016 Peter visited the YLAD stand at the ANFD in and came to the YLAD Field Day on Milgadra. From those events Peter took soil tests of which we recommended a spread Compost Mineral Blend. Even though Peter took delivery of the blend in November 2016 it did not get spread until Anzac Day 2017. We received the following testimonial from Peter on December 19 saying:........

“Just a quick note to tell you that I’m over the moon with the improvements the compost blend has done to our soil here at ‘Lengar’ Manildara!!! I’ve sown millet, cowpeas and brassica (with no down the tube fertiliser) on the country that’s had the blend spread on it and the neighbours are stopping and looking. We have knee high feed here. I’m really happy, it took a while but a few storms and some humidity have really kicked things off.”

He said ‘Looking in this paddock where the Compost Mineral Blend was spread last year it was covered with saffron thistles and now this year I can only see one or two.

Peter has just purchased a semi load of first cross ewes in lamb to help eat off all the feed. Great work!!

STOP PRESS: There has been a significant rise in the price of MAP since last year. This will impact the price of Germi-nate, Germinate Plus and Legume Plus. YLAD endeavour to only pass on supplier price rises to keep prices as low as possible.