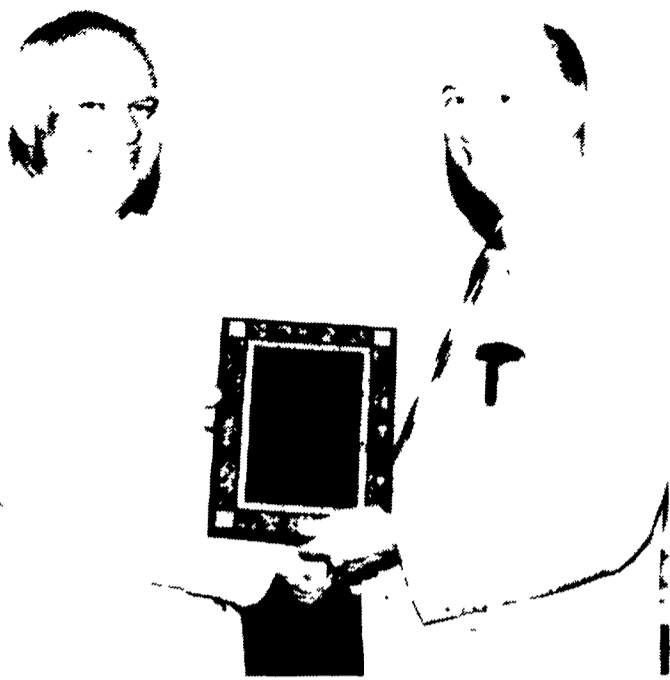


Soil-mapping helps crop mgt.



DeKalb sales conference

At a sales conference held recently in San Diego, Cal., by the Poultry Division of DeKalb AgResearch, Inc., Frank Baber, of Lancaster, won the coveted John R. Nelson Award for the highest total volume sales during the 1983-84 fiscal year.

Bob Gohn, manager of DeKalb's York Hatchery received a special award for outstanding accomplishment during the AI outbreak in Pennsylvania.

The conference was attended by some 50 DeKalb production, sales, service and staff employees and their families.

In photo, Baber, left, accepts Nelson Award from man for whom it was named - John R. (Jack) Nelson, vice president, Animal Sciences Div., DeKalb AgResearch, Inc.

DEKALB, IL. — Soil mapping should assist in making sound management decisions concerning soil fertility, weed control, tillage practices, cropping sequences, and variety selection. Detailed maps custom made to individual farm operations can prove extremely valuable to both the grower and crop service personnel.

Areas of soil fertility need to be mapped to scale. Soil sampling and testing should be done according to these maps. Fields are generally farmed as uniform units. Soil types and past management practices are not uniform.

Personalized maps constantly reinforce these differences. For example, a grower wanting to use a new herbicide on a field needs to check every soil in that field to see if application rate guidelines can be met. If crop service personnel are asked to assist in the decision, the map can quickly familiarize them with the field. This will usually result in a better recommendation.

To start the mapping project, a trip to the local Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) office is helpful. The ASCS can provide aerial photographs of the entire farm operation. This map shows the perimeters of the field, the acreages, and other details such as creeks, ditches, shelter belts, and other location details.

While these maps are very good, an expanded scale is helpful. For example, an ASCS mapped quarter section may be 4 inches by 4 in-

ches. Expanding this perimeter to 6 inches will allow for more details.

Tools needed to get started are white unlined paper, a #2 pencil, a straight edge ruler, and probably an eraser. A quarter section per map makes a good size unit, but almost any size can be used depending on the detail desired. The perimeter of the farm should be outlined with a dark solid line.

Next the building sites and all other permanent details should be drawn to scale with lighter solid lines. Now permanent fences should be drawn. Broken lines with dots work well for this.

This is a good general map. Make photocopies for use in recording variety locations, cropping history, weed infestations, and many other useful details.

Some help from the local SCS office and some knowledge of the farm history comes next. Most areas of the nation have been mapped by soil types. County maps are available through the SCS and the land grant colleges. This information needs to be transferred to the general, expanded scale map. Dashed lines work well for this.

Now think about the cropping history. Where have the alfalfa and pastures been? Were any fences removed in the past 20 years? Differences in fertilizer, lime or manure applications, and irrigation water need consideration. Differences in soil color and elevation indicate different soil types. These need to be

mapped if missed on the SCS map. Finally, those locations on the farm that for some unknown reason just never produce as well should be mapped.

A workable labeling system will complete the project. Most any numbering system will work as long as each soil type gets a different number and farms can be added in future years. Labeling each farm with numbers and each soil types with letters work well. For example, the home quarter could be Farm 1, with the old hog pasture Soil A. This could be simply labeled 1A. The next farm could be numbered 2 with soils A through H.

Maps should be stored in a three hole binder. Soil tests should be taken and numbered following your map. Using this system will result in a useful, organized system of fertility management. What surprises most people is how they farmed so long without it!



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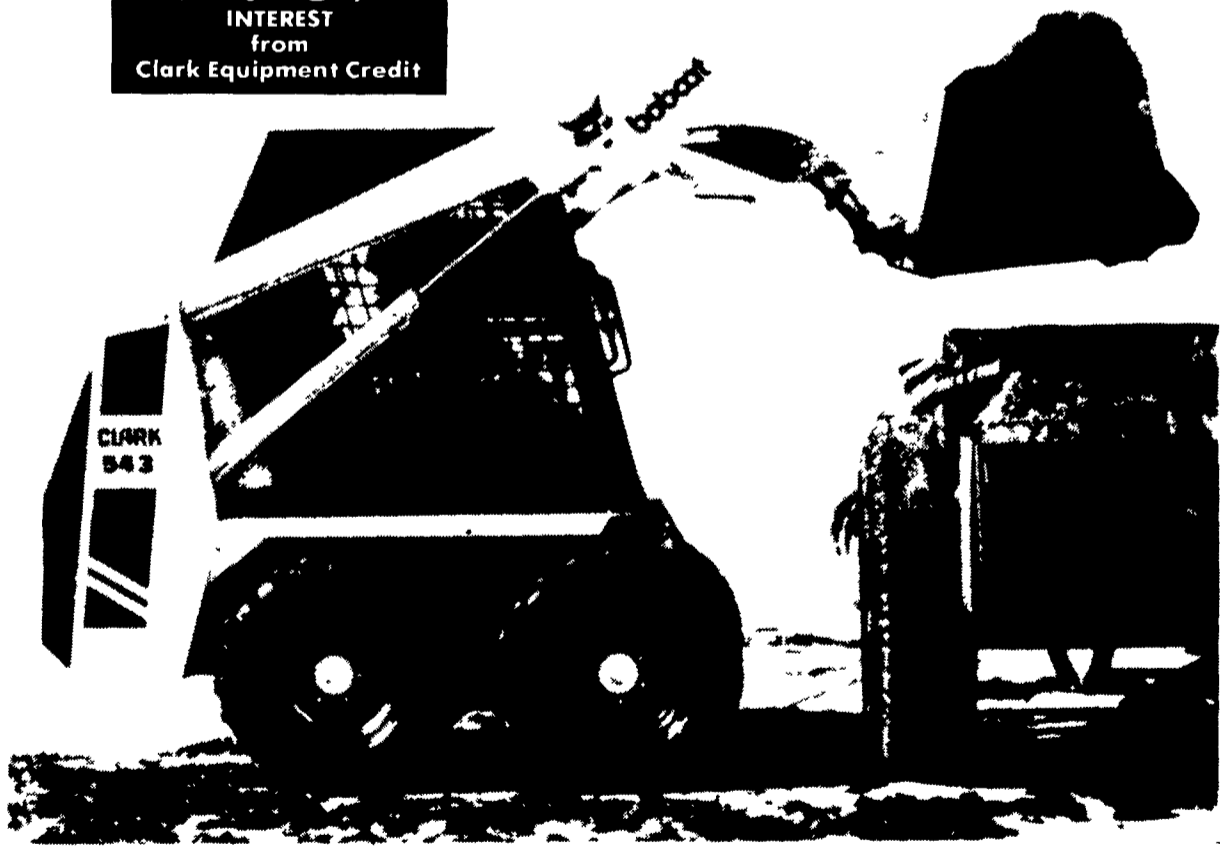
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