



# NEWS REPORT

A & L GREAT LAKES LABORATORIES, INC. FALL 2000

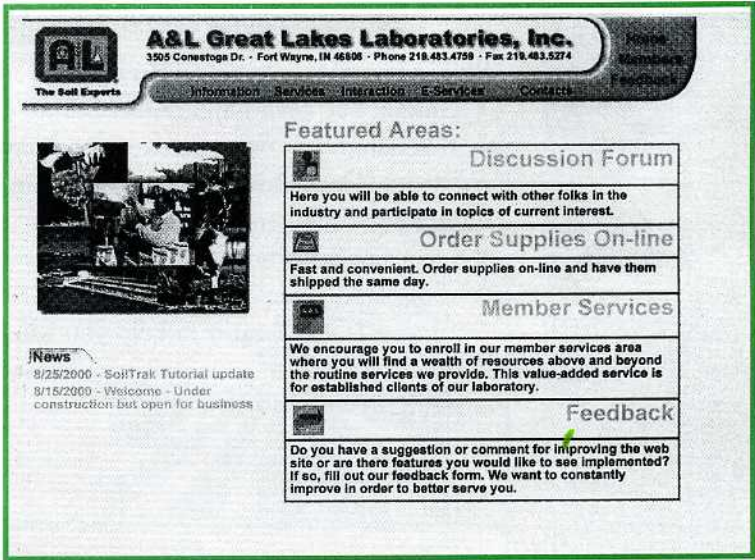
## List of Contacts at A&L Great Lakes

## Great Lakes On the Web!! Visit us at [www.algreatlakes.com](http://www.algreatlakes.com)

A few years ago the need for a web site was considered at A&L Great Lakes. At that time, we made the decision to postpone development. We wanted to make sure that a site could be designed that was a useful tool for our clients instead of a dead ended advertising page. Since that time we have been collecting and organizing ideas. Now those ideas have come together! Our new web site is open for business. We think that you will find the wait has been worthwhile.

Here are a few things you can do at our new site:

- Order supplies, equipment or software
- Download fact sheets and other technical information
- Track UPS packages
- Sign up for electronic data transfer
- Download submittal forms
- Participate in discussion forums



The site content will continue to evolve.  
We welcome your comments and suggestions. Visit us soon!

## THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF SOIL TESTING

As you speed along the highway you don't think about all the nuts and bolts beneath you holding your vehicle together. You assume they were all assembled correctly and are doing their job. The same is true with soil testing. You assume the samples were taken correctly and the recommendations based on their results are doing their job. But how much value does an accurate soil test have?

It certainly doesn't have any life or death consequences as your vehicle's hardware, but it does have a major impact on your profit margin.

continued on page 2

- Agronomy:**  
Randall Warden,  
Jerry Hohla, Dan Kite,  
Gary Elliott  
& Myron Warner
- Billing & Accounting:**  
Sharon Topp  
& Shawn Tinnel
- Land Application:**  
Keith Henley
- Quality Assurance:**  
Greg Neyman
- GPS Mapping:**  
Dan Kite
- Telecommunications:**  
Randall Warden  
& Greg Neyman
- Soil Trak:**  
Randall Warden,  
Greg Neyman  
& Dan Kite
- Feed Testing:**  
Lois Parker  
& Randall Warden
- Water Analysis:**  
Keith Henley
- Pesticide Residues:**  
Keith Henley  
& Dan Kite
- Fertilizer Analysis:**  
Jo Ann Nichols
- Compost Analysis:**  
Lois Parker
- Area Agronomists:**  
Gary Elliott  
& Myron Warner



## Meet Sharon Topp

If you have ever called the laboratory with a question about an account, invoice or statement, you have probably talked with Sharon Topp, A & L Great Lakes' Bookkeeper.



Sharon has been with A & L since January 1984, when she started as seasonal office help. She joined our full-time staff in 1985 as a Data Entry Clerk, became our Receptionist in

1987, and was promoted to Bookkeeper in 1995.

Sharon has been happily married for 23 years, and has two daughters, one grandson, and another grandchild expected in December. In her spare time Sharon is an Ambulance Emergency Medical Technician with a local volunteer fire department. Sharon enjoys reading and attending auto races.

Sharon is very happy to help you when you have questions concerning your invoices. Please feel free to contact her if you need assistance.



## THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF SOIL TESTING

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An application of the correct amount of phosphate can allow a crop to utilize an abundant source of potash in the soil. Adding more phosphate than needed eats away at profits. The same is true with applying additional nitrogen when there is already sufficient nitrate nitrogen in the soil solution to provide a high yielding crop. A pre-sidedress nitrate test would reveal this. Identifying a low soil pH has even more hidden benefits by encouraging limestone applications to correct the soil chemistry and releasing nutrients back into a readily available state.

When it comes right down to it, soil tests are the nuts and bolts of the ag business, providing the facts that we base part of our management practices on.

## New Technology For Oil And Grease Analysis

EPA method 413.1 has been the standard procedure for oil and grease analysis for years. In 1996, however, the EPA banned the manufacture of Freon, a critical component of this method. With Freon no longer available, the expense of performing the method has become prohibitive.

As a result, A & L has recently adopted EPA method 1664 as our in-house standard. This method uses the Freon alternative, n-hexane. We have installed two automated extraction systems specifically for the new method. The equipment is designed for the highest accuracy, ease of operation and requires no supervision. This helps to free lab personnel for other important tasks. The use of this technology will greatly improve the speed and quality of A & L's oil and grease analysis.

For more information on this technology, or for a tour of the facility, contact Keith Henley.




# YOUR SAMPLE INVESTMENT



Each sample we receive represents a significant investment by our customer. There is often considerable time and effort involved in the sampling process. Unless packaged carefully, samples can become damaged or lost in shipment. Collection or replacement of samples is an inconvenience in the least, and may not even be possible. The following are some tips that will help assure your samples are received in good shape.

- Sample containers should be **appropriate** for the sample type. For example, do not send liquid samples in a zip-lock bag! We have the right bags and bottles available for your samples. Just contact us.
- Make sure all sample containers are **securely fastened**. Liquid samples are of particular concern when they leak as they may contaminate other samples. Spend a few moments confirming that sample containers are closed.
- Use boxes and containers that are rated for the weight you are shipping. Large and **overweight packages** are at greater risk of damage on automated handling systems of shipping companies. Soil samples are relatively heavy for their size. We have received remnants of lightweight and poorly packed boxes of soil samples that had split open in shipping with most or all soil samples lost.
- Minimize **empty space** in packages. This reduces possible opening or breaking of sample containers. Use packing peanuts, newspaper, etc. to completely fill boxes.
- Include a **submittal form** or other paperwork in the package that lists each sample. It should also include your return address in case the package should be opened.
- Include your **return address** on the package label. This gives a shipping company two contacts should there be a problem.

Please protect your sample investment! 

## UPDATED!! 2000-2001



### Soil Fertility Workshops

During the past year we have been reviewing and updating the content of our Soil Fertility Workshops. These workshops are offered on a regular basis to provide continuing education on basic soil fertility concepts. CCA credits are also available. Highlights of our updated workshops include:

- New research information
- Revised and expanded support materials
- Updated visuals
- Additional practical exercises

Below are the dates and locations. Registration forms will be mailed later this year.

#### 2000

November 28 ----- Gas City, IN  
November 30 ----- Richmond, IN  
December 5 ----- Janesville, WI  
December 7 ----- Normal, IL

#### 2001

January 30 ----- Terre Haute, IN  
February 1 ----- Plymouth, IN  
February 6 ----- Chesaning, MI  
February 8 ----- Toledo, OH

# 2000-2001 Tradeshows

Following are several tradeshows and meetings where we will be exhibiting. We always enjoy visiting with you and sharing information. Hope to see you there!

## 2000

- October 25-26 Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association Potato & Vegetable Industry Show, Stevens Point, WI
- November 13-15 Indiana Water Pollution Control Association Annual Meeting, Indianapolis, IN

## 2001

- January 8-10 Indiana-Ohio Agribusiness Exposition & Annual Convention, Indianapolis, IN
- January 16-18 Michigan Agri-Business Association Winter Conference, Lansing, MI
- January 16-18 Fort Wayne Farm Show, Fort Wayne, IN
- January 16-18 Wisconsin Fertilizer and Chemical Association Annual Meeting, Madison, WI
- January 22-24 Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association Annual Conference, Peoria, IL

## Nutrient Availability In Manure

We are receiving frequent requests for detailed information related to manure nutrient availability. Following are two good resources:

*Livestock Waste Facilities Handbook*, MWPS-18, Midwest Plan Service.

(515) 294-4337: This handbook covers the complete manure management process including facility design and nutrient utilization.

*Manure Management Planner (MMP)*, Purdue University, [www.agry.purdue.edu/mmp/](http://www.agry.purdue.edu/mmp/): This is a Windows-based computer program developed at Purdue University. Among other functions, the program allows the user to compute nutrient availability in different types of manure.



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