

# GAPS

Gratiot Agricultural  
Professional Services

# NEWS

January 2018

The 2018 year arrived with both a celebratory and an arctic blast!

We hope you and your families all had a wonderful Christmas season with time spent together.

There is something rejuvenating about the New Year – a time for setting new goals, a time for new direction. We love the excitement of imagining where our personal and professional paths are going to take us in 2018.

As the phrase goes – it's not the destination as much as the journey that counts. Working with our employees and our customers has been inspirational and we are incredibly proud that it is because of you that our journey has been such an enriching learning experience.

It is our heartfelt prayer that 2018 will bring each of you continued health, safety, happiness and the rewards of your hard work and long hours!

Sincerely,  
Rob and IV Blackwell



## Visit Us at the Great Lakes Crop Summit

Be sure to stop by our booth at the 2018 Great Lakes Crop Summit at the Soaring Eagle in Mount Pleasant this Jan. 31-Feb. 1.

We are excited to be a select sponsor of the event and GAPS will be one of more than 60 exhibitors showcasing our products and services.

For additional information, including registration forms, visit [www.greatlakescropsummit.com](http://www.greatlakescropsummit.com).



January 31 - February 1  
Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort  
Mount Pleasant

## GAPS Staffer Earns CCA License



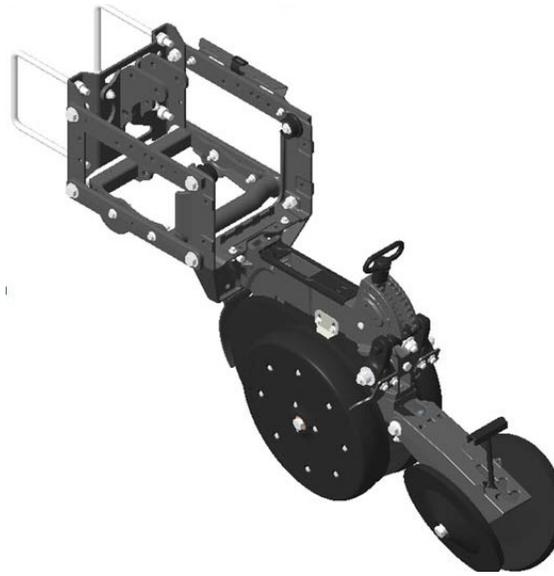
Congratulations to GAPS sales support associate Ashley Jackson on achieving her Certified Crop Adviser (CCA) license.

The Michigan Certified Crop Adviser license is a certification program of the American Society of Agronomy (ASA) offered by the state. This license sets standards for knowledge, skills, and conduct in field and crop management, spring and fall soil bed management and seeding and fertility management, as well as post harvest and storage management.

# Precision Planting's Ready Row Units Available

We all know about the necessity for a well-maintained planter with excellent performance, even in today's farm economy with low commodity prices.

There comes a point when some of us look to trade our planter in with plans to retrofit a new planter, but are often stuck with some new OEM planter products that we don't want. Do we really need to buy a new planter? Could we keep using the same bar and simply upgrade the worn out row units and retrofit the planter? Could we do that not only much cheaper



than trading in for a new planter, but also end up with a planter that performs better?

GAPS now has the "Precision Planting Ready Row Unit" to offer our customers through Precision

Planting, which is essentially the White 9000 row unit painted grey.

Customers can order this row unit ala carte, how they want, and ready for retrofit equipment from Precision Planting. It boasts a durable cast iron (a must-have for our soil conditions, especially high-speed planting), maintenance free in-season, a simple depth calibration system, and customization in gauge wheels, closing system, and other features.

If you're looking to trade in your planter, please contact us first and let us put together a quote to see how much money you could save by keeping the bar you already have, and how your profitability could increase with better planter performance from adding Precision Planting products.



Gratiot Agricultural Professional Services

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Alyssa Chaffin, Agronomy Specialist  
Kurt Dufendach, Sales  
Steve Heimburger, Applicator  
Russ Huyck, Custom Application Manager  
Ashley Jackson, Sales Support Associate  
Roman Klein, Applicator & Sales  
John Leach, Sales  
Ed Nickels, Crop Protection Manager & Sales  
Jon Schmidt, General Laborer  
Bob Pung, Warehouse Supervisor  
Phil Schneider, Seed Manager & Sales  
Robert Townsend, Applicator  
Kirk Walker, Applicator  
Kyle Westveld, Applicator/General Labor  
Randy Westveld, Sales

## AGRONOMY CORNER: Potassium

Potassium is a vital nutrient for plant growth, accelerating meristematic tissue growth. It is taken up in large quantities by the crop being second only to nitrogen in importance to plant growth.

Potassium plays important roles regulating the uptake of CO<sub>2</sub> and water in the plant, by the regulation of the stomatal opening. As such it is vitally important during times of stress, be it moisture stress or other stresses on the plant that may inhibit photosynthesis.

Potassium is also important for the activation of enzymes during the production of proteins and starches, which directly relates to grain and forage yield and quality.

The chart to the right shows the amount of uptake and removal by various crops grown in central Michigan.

Crop	Yield	Uptake	Removal
Corn	175 bu	236#	44#
Corn silage	22 ton	236#	210#
Soybeans	50 bu	110#	60#
Wheat	90 bu	134#	26#
Wheat straw	90 bu	134#	110#
Alfalfa silage	10 ton	175#	171#

As you can see on the chart, the total uptake throughout the growing season for grain crops is much higher than the removal rates. For forages the removal rates are virtually the same as the uptake rates since most of the plant is removed as forage.

These numbers speak to the need to maintain soil test levels to ensure a ready supply of potassium so plants are able to uptake the large amounts they need during the growing season to remain healthy and produce optimal yields.

# SmartFirmer Offers Unprecedented Sensing Capability

Precision Planting is launching SmartFirmer™, a seed firmer with unprecedented sensing capability that will allow farmers to not only map row by row organic matter, soil moisture, and furrow residue, but also to perform on-the-go control of planting population or hybrid based on organic matter measurement. Compatibility with Climate FieldView™ makes SmartFirmer data viewable on the industry-leading digital agriculture platform.

In any field, there are multiple yield environments that are determined by soil type, organic matter, topography, drainage, and dozens of other attributes. To better manage these yield environments, the SmartFirmer high definition organic matter



map will be a key input for developing precise prescriptions for planting population, seed hybrid, and fertility applications. Alternatively, farmers could allow SmartFirmer to simply control seeding based on the real-time organic matter measurement and the corresponding population or hybrid selected by the farmer or their trusted advisor.

Soil moisture is a critical component for seed germination and uniform plant emergence, and ultimately crop yield. SmartFirmer will give farmers row-by-row visibility to soil moisture in the seed furrow, allowing farmers to choose the right planting depth as soil conditions change.

In-furrow crop residue has well-known negative impacts on seed germination and growth. SmartFirmer will allow farmers to measure the quantity of in-furrow residue and adjust row cleaners accordingly, thus ensuring residue won't limit seed moisture uptake or transmit disease.

SmartFirmer will be compatible with 20/20 SeedSense™ SRM systems with quick-attach Keeton firmer brackets.

## Get to Know ...

### BRUCE BOUWMAN

Conklin  
Office  
Warehouse  
Supervisor

**Residence:** Conklin

**Years at GAPS:** First

**Responsibilities:** Manages inventory and sets up deliveries out of GAPS' new Conklin office.

**The Best Part of Working at GAPS:** "It doesn't have that big business feel. There's a lot of one-on-one interaction with our customers and it allows us to get to know one another. With our office in Conklin

being small, we are always busy and we know what each other is doing. There is a lot of teamwork as we get great support from the other GAPS offices to get the job done."

**Get Your Motor Running:** Bruce's escape is getting on one of his two Harley Davidson motorcycles (his wife also has one). A highlight for him was attending the 75th anniversary of the Sturgis Motor Cycle rally. "I've never seen so many motorcycles in my life. I didn't even know that there were that many bikes in the United States. They were everywhere." Recently through the help of co-worker Kurt Dufendach, Bruce was able to acquire a Harley Screaming Eagle Street Glide. "It can go pretty fast."

**The Best Part of Riding:** "The bike gives you a lot of freedom and there's an added sense. When you pass a fresh cut hay field you smell it, you just don't see it."

**Hobbies:** Hunting, fishing, boating and spending time at the cottage near Lake City

**Family:** Wife, Shari; a beagle named Elmer and a cat named CC (Cool Cat).

## CALENDAR COVER FEATURES GAPS

Congratulations to our staff member Holly Walker for having her photo chosen for the A&L Great Lakes Calendar cover photo this year!



## METER CALIBRATION

You should be getting 98% or better accuracy from your meters, but typical meters run at only 92%-97%. When each additional percentage point is worth another bushel or two for every acre, there's plenty of room for improvement. GAPS is offering meter calibration at a rate of \$35 per meter. To schedule the service, or for additional information, please contact your GAPS sales representative.

# GAPS Offers Dairy Visits

Our goal is to visit all participating dairy farms every 4-8 weeks in order to collect/record data. This will allow GAPS sales support staff to evaluate the quality of silage within a bunker, track that quality throughout the year and help make recommendations as needed to increase milk production and decrease spoilage. Our aim is to economically benefit each farm by providing data and making recommendations.

Our testing includes:

- NIR machine
- Particle Separator/Shaker Box
- Core density samples
- Thermal Imagery
- Dairyland labs sampling

**NIR:** Near-infrared spectroscopy is widely applied in agriculture for determining the quality of forages, grains, and grain products, oilseeds, fats, and oils, dairy products, eggs, meat, and other agricultural products. It is widely used to quantify the composition of agricultural products because it meets the criteria of being accurate, reliable, rapid, and non-destructive. We measure moisture, starch, crude protein, acid detergent fiber, neutral detergent fiber, ash, and crude fat.



	%Asis	%DM
Moisture:	70.5 %	29.5 %
Starch:	10.4 %	35.4 %
Protein:	2.5 %	8.9 %
ADF:	6.0 %	20.4 %
NDF:	9.4 %	31.8 %
Ash:	1.9 %	6.3 %
Crude Fat:	0.9 %	2.9 %

**Particle Separator:** The Penn State Particle Separator provides a tool to quantitatively determine the particle size of forages and total mixed rations. Having the proper particle size distribution of feeds is an important part of

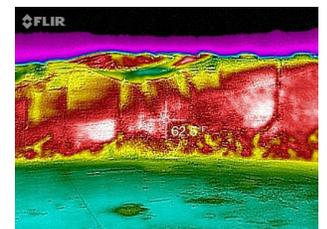
ration formulation and we can provide data to show what a grower is currently feeding and if changes could be beneficial.



**Core Density Samples:** An important factor influencing silage quality is the density of the silage mass. Optimum silage fermentation occurs in an oxygen free environment. More dense silage provides ideal conditions for rapid oxygen depletion at the start of fermentation and minimizes the introduction of oxygen back into the silage pack during storage and feed out.



**Thermal Imagery:** FLIR ONE can measure temperatures on any spot in a scene between -4°F and 248°F.



*For additional information regarding our dairy services, please contact Roman Klein ([rklein@gaps-seed.com](mailto:rklein@gaps-seed.com)) or Ashley Jackson ([ajackson@gaps-seed.com](mailto:ajackson@gaps-seed.com)).*