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A & L Great Lakes Laboratories, Inc.

News Report

Quality Analyses for Informed Decisions®

Goodbye, Old Friend

How many times in our lives have we faced a situation that generated both happy and sad emotions at the same time? We're facing that right now at A&L Great Lakes Laboratories. Lois Parker has officially retired, effective at the end of September and for those of us who have worked with her for so many years, this is indeed a sad time. She will be greatly missed.

Lois' retirement culminates a long career filled with challenges and, to use one of her favorite phrases, "training opportunities". She was hired as a lab technician in January of 1979 and, at that time was performing most of the feed analysis procedures. It wasn't long before her leadership abilities got her promoted to Supervisor, and then to Agricultural Laboratory Manager in 1992. The business grew; the building grew; ownership changed; and Lois led the lab staff through all those growing pains. She put in long hours and survived some very stressful situations. One of the worst was trying to get the lab up and running again after a fire devastated the lab in 1996. Not only did she have to figure out what was salvageable and get replacement equipment and supplies ordered and delivered, but she had to do it without her office, since that was in the damaged part of the building. But she did it and we were running soils again 3 days later, even though a large part of the lab was shut off for reconstruction.

In 1999, Lois took on another major challenge when she, along with Randall Warden, purchased A&L Great Lakes. She admitted that it was the scariest thing she'd ever done. However, it was obviously the right thing to do, because the business continued to flourish. She's been forced to make some very tough decisions over the years in order to main-

Inside this Issue:

Meet the New Leadership Team

Quite a few changes have been occurring here at A&L Great Lakes Labs. Lois Parker, longtime President and CEO of A&L Great Lakes Laboratories, has decided to retire after 34 years with A&L Great Lakes Labs. We wish Lois a happy and relaxing retirement.

Taking the reigns from Lois will not be an easy task, but our new team of executives is up to the challenge. Each of them brings unique talents and abilities to the job, and will continue to be instrumental to maintaining the quality and excellence that has made A&L Great Lakes successful.

Randall Warden, *President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)*

Randall has been with A&L Great Lakes for more than 20 years, and during that time he has held numerous positions within the company. Most recently, Randall served as the Vice President and Director of Client Services. Randall grew up on a small family farm in Tennessee, where his interest in agriculture began. He received a B.S. in Agricultural Science from Tennessee Tech, and a M.S. in Soil Chemistry from Virginia Tech. Randall is also a Certified Professional Agronomist (CPAg) and Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS), and supports customers in agronomic matters. It is his goal to continue to build upon the success and vision of A&L Great Lakes.

"Our company motto (Quality Analyses for Informed Decisions) has successfully guided A&L Great Lakes Laboratories to its current market position, and will continue to do so when future opportunities and challenges arise. All of our employees recognize that the analysis data and information we provide to customers has an impact on the success of their business and, in many cases, our customers' customers. We are determined to maintain this significant responsibility with efficient, professional and friendly service and to evolve our company to meet and exceed our customers' expectations."

Greg Neyman, *Vice President and Chief Operating Officer (COO)*

Greg has been an integral part of A&L Great Lakes for 25 years. He began his tenure as a laboratory technician, so he has an intimate understanding of the laboratory and its function. He received a dual major B.S. in

Meet our new leadership team! *from left to right*: Linda Singer, CFO; Randall Warden, CEO; and Greg Neyman, COO

Chemistry and Business from Anderson University in 1987, and earned a M.S. in Quality Assurance from California State University in 2002. Prior to his advancement to COO, Greg served as manager of Quality & Information Systems here at A&L Great Lakes. In this position, he managed and coordinated all aspects of the laboratory relating to quality, regulatory compliance and information systems, and provided support to customers with data delivery and SoilTrak matters.

"I am excited about helping lead such a dedicated group of professionals that we have here at A&L Great Lakes Laboratories, Inc. We are committed to provide the highest quality and customer service in the industry. Our continued investment in innovation and automation delivers consistent results, and also helps increase capacity. I believe if we take care of our customers, we will experience manageable, sustained growth as a company."

Linda Singer, *Chief Financial Officer (CFO)*

Linda comes to A&L Great Lakes from The Bair CPA Group, where she served as an accountant for 25 years. Although she may be the newest employee of A&L Great Lakes, she is far from a stranger to the lab because she has served as A&L Great Lakes external accountant for over 18 years! This has given Linda a strong knowledge of A&L Great Lakes and many of our customers.

She received her B.S. in Business from Indiana University, and is a Certified Public Accountant. She has worked with small and medium sized companies and organizations, and has provided them with a number of services to help make them more efficient and productive.

Linda grew up on a dairy farm, and she and her family continue to raise dairy feeders and grain crops on their farm in northeast Indiana. These experiences give her a strong understanding and respect for the challenges associated with production agriculture. Linda looks forward to the challenge of transitioning into the business.

"I am excited to have joined the A & L Great Lakes Laboratories, Inc. team where quality analysis, customer service and the employees are highly valued. In addition, I look forward to the continued growth and development of A & L Great Lakes Laboratories, while striving to exceed the expectation of our customers as the new ownership group begins this journey."

Goodbye, Old Friend (continued from page 1)

tain the level of quality and service she expected out of all of us for our clients. But she has also taken care of her employees along the way.

She's been supervisor, manager, owner, teacher, mentor and friend. Yes, she will be missed. But we wish her good luck and great fun in her future, and we thank her for all she's given us.

Congratulations Lois!

Lois hard at work, *circa 1982*

Nutrient Removal in Grain

A good understanding of the amount of plant nutrients removed from the soil in the harvested portion of a crop is an important aspect of nutrient management. While a number of sources provide estimates of the amount of plant nutrients removed with a harvested crop, more precise nutrient removal values can be obtained by analyzing the concentration of nutrients in the crop. This can be done by submitting grain samples for a Crop Nutrient Removal Analysis.

There are several factors that can cause the actual concentration of nutrients in a given crop to vary from the average, including weather conditions, plant genetics, management practices, and soil properties.

Nutrient removal analysis is similar to other plant tissue analyses in which the material is dried, ground and digested so that the concentration of various nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulfur, calcium, magnesium, and various micronutrients can be determined for the sample. For grain samples, the results are then calculated and expressed as pounds per bushel based on a standard test weight and moisture content for a given crop.

As with any other analysis, proper sample collection is crucial. For grain crops, collect a sample of grain that best represents the entire area, and submit 1 to 2 cups to the lab for analysis. Results will be presented on a pound per bushel and pounds per acre basis. The crop removal data can be reported based on the actual crop yield for the sampled area if the yield is provided for the submitted sample.

The utility of this type of analysis is not limited to grain samples. This data can be very useful for determining nutrient removal for other commodities such as fruits, vegetables, hay, straw, and silage. Since harvesting these crops often removes greater amounts of vegetative material and the concentration of nutrients in vegetative parts of a plant can be quite variable, nutrient removal values can differ considerably. To analyze for nutrient removal in these crops, submit 1 to 2 pounds of material for analysis.

Although considerable differences may exist between the results of a specific analysis and the reference values, this data is not intended to assess the fertility status of a crop or diagnose nutrient deficiencies. While nutrient removal data can be a valuable tool for managing soil fertility, it is only one piece of the puzzle. A good routine soil sampling plan remains the basis for a sound soil fertility program.

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