



# ALBION®

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## The Plant-Nutrition Puzzle

*by Jeremy O'Brien*

Have you ever tried to put together a puzzle? Of course you have. Puzzles are among the first things played with as children. They stimulate learning and challenge the mind. They can be very simple to extremely complex.

Plant nutrition can be compared to a very complex puzzle which to date has not been completed. Some of the reasons for this are that the puzzle pieces are ever changing. They change based on research results from all over the world performed by Universities, independent researchers, government sponsored research agencies, and private companies to name a few.

Another reason is that nutrition for apples is not the same as nutrition for pineapples. One could say that the picture being created by the puzzle is different for each crop.

Then to compound the complexity of the plant-nutrition puzzle, one can throw in the weather as an additional variable. No season is ever exactly the same as the one before or after. And even if there were one that was the same, we would not know it was the same at the time we were experiencing it, so we would not be inclined to treat it the same way as we did the first time. It would only be after the season that we would be able to figure out that it was the same as one previously experienced. I would say in this example that the shape of the nutrition puzzle has changed from say a square to a circle.

The next variable that can be added to the puzzle is the soil. According to the website <http://www.soil-net.com/>, "There are several thousand different types of soil throughout the world, a fact that is not surprising when bearing in mind the differences there are worldwide in the agents responsible for the building and forming of soil (landscape, climate, geology, vegetation, time and man)." When one considers this variable, the puzzle becomes even trickier to complete. I would say that now the puzzle is two sided, having a picture on both sides of the pieces.



*Pieces of the Plant-Nutrition Puzzle*

So the plant-nutrition puzzle shapes up like this; it is a very large complex puzzle. Its pieces are in an almost constant state of change. Not only do its pieces change shape but the overall shape of the puzzle changes as well.

Add to this the fact that the picture created by the puzzle never stays constant. One last thing to consider is that the puzzle is actually two sided so one doesn't really know which side of the piece is supposed to go on the side one is working on.

Imagine trying to put together a puzzle like this. It would be nearly impossible. Fortunately, such a puzzle does not really exist. I have used this imagery to help create a picture to help understand the complex nature of plant nutrition.

There are many tools available to help make putting together the nutrition puzzle, less daunting than the example given here. There are experts in many areas of plant nutrition—from soil scientists, to agronomists, to university researchers, and crop specific experts. Obtaining information from many different sources is often helpful to your specific nutrition puzzle.

At Albion Advanced Nutrition we can be an asset to you as you try to put together your own *nutrition puzzle*. We have many combined years of plant-nutrition expertise in our Agronomy team. If your Albion representative does not have experience with the crop you grow or on which you consult, it is likely that another member of the Albion team does.

We want you to be successful and to assist you in that effort. Please let us know what we can do to help you put together your own *nutrition puzzle*. ☺

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