

## Lime your soils for better crops

The science of soil has done much for our better understanding of how the soil and plant roots interact to make the crops grow. From better understanding, some principles have resulted for better guidance of our farm practices.

Liming the soil is one of those practices improved through science. We formerly encouraged liming as a struggle against soil acidity. It is now practiced to put calcium into the soil for nutritional service to the crops. It helps them in their synthesis of proteins and other complex compounds of higher food values to man and beast.

Calcium plays its role as a small part of the material of construction. It is recognised more readily than ash. In animals and man, calcium is recognised easily as bone. In all life it is more important than merely a part of the final structure. It serves as the tool in many life processes. It is a necessary tool for fashioning the different proteins that only plants can fabricate from the elements. It seems to be associated with the processes by which livestock assemble these plant proteins into choice animal products of great nutritional value. We have long been liming for legumes and we have connected livestock with legumes. But we have been late in recognising this basic principle of the interaction between the calcium in the soil and the roots of the crops. As a matter of fact, it is the working principle of this food creation assembly line.

Calcium serves, in the growth of plants to mobilise other essential chemical elements into the plant more speedily. It puts a higher content of the ash elements into the forage. It is always associated with crops that we say are better for feed for young animals. It is associated more with feed for growth and reproduction than with those for fattening only. It is associated with the soil's microbial processes that build up soil nitrogen. It is also effective in making green manure and other organic matter decay more rapidly and release their fertility for crop production. All life, from the lowly microbe to man himself, is dependent on a good supply of available calcium in the soil.

Liming the soil is one of the contributions to the better nourishment of all that grows on our farms. The soil treatment must, however, be judiciously connected with other treatments. It must not, therefore, be used excessively. If wisely used, this farm practice – as it is now undergirded by the science of the soil – will bring about better understanding and use of other necessary soil treatments. This better knowledge should conserve not only the body of the soil, but also its fertility or internal strength by which all life must be fed.

*With Compliments:*  
**Victorian Limestone Producers Association Inc.**  
[www.vlpa.asn.au](http://www.vlpa.asn.au)