

Most common soil acidity questions

Re-Lime
Time to Lime

Which lime should I buy?

The best lime is the cheapest per unit of neutralising value purchased, delivered and spread on farm. Sometimes it is better value for money to transport a higher quality product further.

Simply follow these steps:

1. Soil test to determine where you need to lime. Test the 10–20 & 20–30 cm layers as well as 0–10 cm for more accurate liming recommendations.
2. Download product information sheets from Lime WA Inc. suppliers at www.limewa.com.au.
3. Gather costs for lime, cartage and spreading.
4. Use the Lime Comparison Calculator at www.soilquality.org.au to compare the total cost of effective neutralising value delivered and spread on farm.

Is limestone better than limesand?

No—The capacity to change soil pH is governed by neutralising value. How quickly lime can neutralise soil acidity is determined by particle size. Regardless of the source (limesand, limestone or dolomitic limestone), finer particles react quicker.

If I keep my topsoil pH above 5.5, why do I need to test the subsurface?

Liming to maintain the topsoil pH above 5.5 will treat on-going acidification and allow sufficient alkalinity to move down and treat subsurface acidification. If the subsurface soil is already acid, maintaining topsoil pH above 5.5 will prevent further subsurface acidification, however, more frequent applications and/or higher rates of lime will be required to recover the subsurface pH to above 4.8.

Can I spread wider with limestone?

The coarser limestone particles will spread further, but they are less reactive and effective application rates will be uneven, resulting in poor treatment of soil acidity. Spreading width should be 6–8 m (depending on wind conditions) to get good coverage of fine particles.

Can I burn stubble after liming?

The temperatures reached during stubble burning will not affect lime. After burning, there is less protection from wind erosion and the risk of losing applied lime is greater if it hasn't been incorporated.

Is it possible to put on too much lime?

High rates of lime will neutralise soil acidity quickly and once the acidity has been neutralised, the lime dissolves only very slowly. Applying high rates of lime where some of the micro-nutrients including manganese, zinc and copper are marginal, may induce deficiencies that can be overcome by application of appropriate fertiliser as solid or foliar spray.

What is the difference between a Lime WA Inc. supplier and others?

Lime WA Inc. members follow the voluntary code of practice. They regularly test their product at approved laboratories and provide a standard product information sheet (see www.limewa.com.au). The product information sheets openly display the range of test results for the lime source, indicating the consistency of the product.



#20 published
Farm Weekly
3rd Apr 2008

The Avon Catchment Council has set a target $\text{pH}_{\text{CaCl}_2}$ of 5.5 for topsoils and 4.8 for subsurface soils in the Avon River Basin by 2020.

This article is produced by the Avon Catchment Council Soil Acidity Project, a collaborative project between the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA) and Precision SoilTech. The project is funded by the Avon Catchment Council with investment from the Western Australian and Australian Governments through the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality. For more information on soil acidity or liming, please contact Chris Gazey, DAFWA, 9690 2000, or your advisor.