

category, but for the sake of the few, let me just say you still have time and there are a lot of opportunities for professional meetings towards the end of the year as well as online self-study CEUs. Check out the online educational calendar

Upcoming Webinar Schedule

www.agronomy.org/certifications/webinars

below for opportunities. Work on becoming an active learner and put a plan together to truly grow in knowledge and skills. It helps budget your time and lower your stress level, plus you'll enjoy it much more.

Calendar

ASA and SSSA have a calendar full of upcoming educational events. These are not just ASA- or SSSA-sponsored events, but include all types of events from many different organizations. You can find the calendar at: www.agronomy.org/meetings/calendar.

Online seminars

ASA and SSSA are sponsoring online, live seminars (webinars) for CEU credit, which can be accessed at www.agronomy.org/certifications/webinars. They are held the second Wednesday of the month from noon to 1:00 pm central U.S. time. Here's what's coming up over the next few months:

- **July 8: Cover Crops—Myth or Opportunity?** Are they feasible for today's large scale agriculture?
- **August 12: Climate Change—Part 1.** The potential impact on production agriculture and how to respond.
- **September 9: Climate Change—Part 2.** The potential impact on production agriculture and how to respond. ■

NAPT working for you

How does the NAPT program help labs serve you better?

| By **Janice Kotuby-Amacher**, NAPT Coordinator, Berkeley CA |



What do you look for in a soil-testing laboratory? You want a lab that delivers accurate, precise data in a timely manner so that you can make the best recommendations to your client. But how can you be sure that the laboratory is delivering that accurate, precise data that you want? That's where the NAPT program comes in. We provide soil, plant, and water samples to labs on a quarterly basis, which the labs analyze and then submit their results back to us for statistical comparison. We look at how close a lab's results are to the median of all the labs (precision) and how similar the results are for a soil repeated throughout the year (accuracy). Labs use this information to correct any deficiencies in their analyses, check how well new employees perform, and just ensure that they are doing their best.

How do you know if a lab is a participant in the NAPT program? You can ask or you can check out our website to see if they are on the list: www.napt-program.org/about/participants. Ask to see their results from a recent quarter, realizing that labs do not pass 100% of their results, but should pass 80% or better. That way, you know that a lab is performing at its best.

Other things that the NAPT offers to labs include quality control samples for them to check their analyses on a regular basis; papers on methods of analysis which are new or revised; and workshops on laboratory management, quality control, laboratory methods of analysis, etc. The NAPT program also cooperates with state and provincial programs in Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Ontario, as well as the PAP program (Performance Assessment Program) for labs doing USDA-NRCS samples in the Northwest. For further information on the state and provincial programs, you can contact me (jkotuby@mendel.usu.edu), NAPT coordinator, or the individual program coordinators:

- Iowa: Travis Knight (Travis.Knight@idals.state.ia.us)
- Minnesota: Jerry Floren (jerry.floren@state.mn.us)
- Missouri: Manjula Nathan (nathanm@missouri.edu)
- Nebraska: Charles Focht (cfocht@agr.ne.gov)
- Ontario: Keith Reid (keith.reid@ontario.ca)

The NAPT program was developed to provide an external quality assurance program for agricultural laboratories, develop a framework for long-term improvement of quality assurance of the agricultural laboratory industry, and identify variability of specific analytical methods. Thus, the NAPT program ensures that soil-testing laboratories provide the most precise and accurate data for you and your clients. So whenever you are in the market for a soil-testing lab, be sure to use one that participates in the NAPT program. ■

