

New Horizons

The Newsletter of the Wisconsin Association of Professional Ag Consultants

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New Horizons Seminar - December 6 in Madison

It's been a long time since we last met in March at the WAPAC Spring Seminar! Lots of water over the dam, so to speak – rain-soaked fields and droughts, soybean aphids, days short on growing degrees, immature corn, forage storage challenges – all the speed bumps that are common to agriculture. Now, as the harvest closes, it's time to get together to re-cap the season, to share the successes and failures of the year's strategies, to plan for the coming year – and to re-tool ourselves.

Please plan to attend the 18th Annual WAPAC New Horizons Seminar on Monday, December 6, 2004 at the Comfort Inn in Madison. This will be a day filled with educational presentations, exhibits by our sustaining members, and plenty of time to renew friendships with fellow ag professionals.

You can look forward to the following presentations:

- Robotic Milking** – Dr. Doug Reinemann, UW Biological Systems Engineering, Madison.
- Technical Service Provider Opportunities and Update** – Patrick Murphy, State Resource Conservationist, USDA/NRCS, Madison.
- Update on Transgenic Crops: Where are we headed?** Dr. Joe Lauer, UW Agronomy, Madison.
- The Glyphosate Stewardship White Paper: A Panel Presentation** – Dr. Chris Boerboom, Moderator. Panelists: Paul Knutzen, Paul Sturgis and Eric Birschbach.
- Financial Comparisons of Forage Storage Systems** – Dr. Brian Holmes, UW Biological Systems Engineering, Madison.
- An Ag Consultant's Role in Rotational Grazing** – Brian Pillsbury, Grazing Land Specialist, USDA, Baraboo.
- Forage Preservation** – Dr. Richard Muck, US Dairy Forage Research Center, Madison.

CCA credits have been requested for applicable portions of the seminar.

Pre-registration is preferred and appreciated. If you need further information, please contact WAPAC Executive Secretary Judy Brannstrom by phone at 608-833-7989, or by e-mail at wapac@itis.com.

Upcoming Events

November 30 - December 9, 2004 - Soil & Water Management and Fertilizer Dealer Meetings

December 6, 2004 - WAPAC New Horizons Seminar, Comfort Inn, Madison, WI.

December 16-17, 2004 - CCA Pre-Test Training Session, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Madison. Contact: Bryan Jensen at (608) 263-4073.

January 18-20, 2005 - Wisconsin Fertilizer, Aglime and Pest Management Conference, Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI.

January 20, 2005 - WAPAC Consultants' Breakfast, 7:00 a.m., Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI.

March 3, 2005 - WAPAC Spring Seminar and Annual Meeting - Best Western Hotel and Convention Center, Portage, WI.

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Ruminations on Sustainable Ag

•Commentary by Daniel R. Peterson, CCA
Hilltop Agronomics, West Bend

Remember the “sustainable ag movement”? Perhaps those of us in “mainstream agriculture” don’t hear much about it anymore, or have much reason to pay attention to it. I personally had more than a cursory interest in it at one time. I was influenced in my teen years by Louis Bromfield’s book “Malabar Farm” (1948). It could be fairly argued that Malabar Farm (Bromfield’s Ohio farm) was the first “sustainable” farm. Many of the concepts espoused by Bromfield connected with me, especially his understanding of fertility and soil conservation. He was a pioneer in understanding and demonstrating how soil conservation led to increased productivity, and the importance of good fertility to achieving a healthy, sustainable soil.

In today’s world I’m something of a dichotomy – on one hand I fully support the use of ag chemicals and commercial fertilizer, and yet I find myself something of a “prairie populist” who is greatly troubled by the loss of single unit family farming. One of the primary tenets of the sustainable ag movement historically has been the preservation of single unit family farming. This movement correctly identified a tragedy for American society – that the loss of family farms meant dying rural communities, loss of rural jobs and businesses, declining churches, and struggling schools. Further, I believe, the loss of family farms means a diminishing of the values and work ethic that built this country, values that arose largely out of the agrarian lifestyle. Here in Wisconsin the rural economic effects have been largely mitigated by the growth in rural population overall, but in many other states these negative effects on rural communities are real, profound, and have been well documented. Therefore, I think many of the original goals of the sustainable ag movement were worthy of examination by us as individuals and also by land grant universities. In fact many university Cooperative Extension Services have done substantial research. UW’s site (uwex.edu/ces/susag/) has a wealth of background information regarding the social and historical contexts of the sustainable ag philosophy.

My perception recently was that the sustainable ag movement had become irrelevant to those of us in mainstream agriculture. One of the reasons may be its drift into leftist environmental and social philosophies, abetted

by a large influx of members with no direct connection to agriculture. Rather than continue to ignore this movement, however, I would like to explore a danger associated with it that I am beginning to perceive. The melding of a significant segment of the sustainable agriculture movement with leftist environmental and social groups is resulting in a broad network that is actively seeking to influence regulatory policies, legislation, and the legal system. Therein lies the danger – these regulatory policies, legislation, and legal opinions are aimed directly at conventional farmers. At its heart this now melded “sustainable” philosophy is becoming openly hostile to mainstream agriculture.

While admitting the previous statement is an over-generalization, I think there is abundant evidence to support its main tenet. I have been looking at some policy statements on the websites of various sustainable ag groups and find much to be concerned about. Among the many, many examples I could quote as reason for my concern, here is one from the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture that epitomizes many of the statements from these various groups:

The rapid spread of genetic engineering in agriculture poses grave threats to family farmers and sustainable agriculture. Transgenic manipulation has emerged as a strong component of industrial agriculture, boasting unsubstantiated

promises of increasing food production and solving disease and insect problems. However, GE crops and other products clearly threaten the diversity of our seed base and the status of our nation’s seed banks, have resulted in a tremendous increase in pesticide use, have not increased yields, have helped further consolidate corporate control, and pose potential health threats for consumers as well as serious environmental impacts.

Moreover, GE products have had a negative economic impact on many sustainable and organic family farmers, in part due to lost export markets in Europe and Asia. Moreover, GE crops

threaten family farms with uncontrollable patented pollen contamination. Impacts from the development and use of biotechnology practices have not been well monitored or researched; the bulk of research that has been conducted has been neither unbiased nor independently peer reviewed.

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.....Dan Peterson

Note the falsehoods embedded in the statement. It is of great concern to me that these falsehoods are being actively promulgated and are accepted as truth by many people.

Here is another statement from the website of NCSA:

The Committee on Genetic Engineering will strive to reform current federal legislation, research programs, and regulations that fail to protect family farmers and our food system from the serious problems this technology can create.

This statement supports my assertion that these groups are actively seeking to influence legislation and regulations.

While browsing through various sustainable ag websites something else began to stand out for me – **the frequent use of “rights” language** in some sites. Examples include statements that organic and sustainable farmers have the right to be free from transgenic pollen contamination, they have the right to save and distribute seed, the right to have a food supply free of transgenic contamination, and other “rights” statements. These groups are heavily involved in lobbying for “right to know” food labeling. This “rights” language should be a big red flag for us in mainstream agriculture. I would argue that a favorite method for environmental and leftist organizations to impose their agenda on society is through the judiciary process. I believe we should fully expect that there will soon be a raft of studies showing transgenic pollen contamination, some legitimate, many not, that will be the precursors to lawsuits against seed companies and large (i.e. bad) farmers. I suspect these lawsuits will be filed by designated “small, struggling, organic/sustainable family farmers” (i.e. good) and will be accompanied by much sympathetic publicity in the general press.

There are many groups with these types of philosophies that are well organized and well funded, and that wield influence with local, state, and federal regulators, senators, and legislators. These groups have active committees, writers, lobbyists, and members who attend board meetings and public hearings, and continuously monitor bills and work behind the scenes to influence regulations. Many of these groups integrate with, network, and cooperate with the large environmental organizations (e.g. the Sierra Club). How do these groups get their funding to support all these activities? A partial list of contributors to these groups includes organizations such as: Union of Concerned Scientists, The Turner Foundation, The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Center for Food Safety, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Rural Hunger, Humane Society, Farm Aid, and many, many more.

How does all this contrast with us in WAPAC? We as consultants, farmers, Extension educators, and ag industry personnel tend to be people who are interested in real facts, genuine research, and regulatory and legislative decisions that are based on sound evidence rather than a political agenda/philosophy. We also tend to be people who recognize that a multitude of reasons exist for the consolidation of family farms, and that a large farm is not inherently evil. Even when we do have interests and viewpoints regarding rural sociology, the interaction of farming with the environment, and “sustainable ag”, as a whole we in WAPAC tend not to want our personal philosophies imposed on farmers through regulations, legislation and judicial fiat.

What can we do? Well, we’re at a pretty distinct disadvantage compared to these groups. We’re busy making a living. Any time we spend in public education efforts, serving on boards and committees, attending public hearings, and monitoring draft regulations and legislation cuts into our family time, earning time, or both. I can only encourage WAPAC members to become aware of these issues, volunteer when they can, and express appreciation for those members who have and are serving on DNR and DATCP committees and other working groups, those who have been willing to talk to the media, and who are involved in public education opportunities.

I believe there is still a place at the table for many of the historical sustainable ag concepts and ideas. Those of us in mainstream ag have little reason to oppose discussions and research into sustainable agriculture when in fact it can be a workable farming practice for some growers. Several groups/organizations within the broad sustainable ag movement have indeed remained more true to the original tenets. This article is not intended to be a screed against them. I believe the overall movement has made a strategic error, however, by allowing a large segment of itself to be hijacked by environmental and social philosophies that are in almost knee-jerk opposition to any science based progress in agriculture. By doing so, the movement has put itself into the position of being an “enemy camp”. It sets up conflict with us and with/within universities and Cooperative Extension programs, and with most farmers who increasingly feel that they, their families, their farming methods, and their livelihood are under attack. Many of us fear that no matter how much we reduce erosion, implement nutrient management, install storage structures, and so forth, it will never be enough, and the screws will just keep getting tighter and tighter. After reading through these websites, dealing with the ever-changing 590 standards, and seeing some large dairies singled out for attack by a certain Madison environmental lawyer, it is not an irrational fear.

Dan Peterson, CCA can be reached at Hilltop Agronomics in West Bend. (262) 629-5564.

What Happened to the Manure That Was Applied to Crops?

•Dave Sievert, Marketing Specialist

AgSource Soil and Forage Laboratory, Bonduel

Wisconsin agriculture was challenged by weather extremes from early May through August in 2004. In much of East Central Wisconsin and beyond, as much as 40-45% of the intended corn or soybean acreage could not be planted until the last days of June or early July. After planting, the lack of heat and timely rains compounded the challenge of growing many crops.

What happened to all the manure that was applied to crops? To answer this, we need to understand the nutrient values of manure and how they are made available to the growing crop. Because nitrogen (N) is very mobile and because it is the more needed but most elusive nutrient for corn this year, we will talk mostly about N values.

Due to timing problems, “book values” are often used for the application of manure. The approximate book values for dairy manure are as follows:

Solid first year after application = N 3# / ton, P 3 # / ton, K 7# / ton.

Liquid first year after application = N 7# / 1000 gal, P 5# / 1000 gal, K 16# / 1000 gal.

If incorporated within a couple of days, the N value will increase to 4# / ton for solid and 10# / 1000 gal for liquid.

The second year values for solids are: N 1# / ton, P 1# / ton and K 1# / ton. Liquid manure values are: N 3# / 1000 gal, P 1# / 1000 gal and K 2# / 1000 gal.

Organic nitrogen must be converted into ammonium by soil microbes so that the plants can begin to use it. The clay mineral particles are negatively charged and the soil organic matter holds the positively charged ammonium. This will greatly restrict nitrogen movement by percolating water, thus fall applications are thought to be available for the following year.

Next the conversion of the ammonium nitrogen to nitrate nitrogen (nitrification) by the soil bacteria

must take place. The nitrate ions are then readily available to the plants. The nitrate ions are negatively charged, so they can remain in solution in the soil and can be leached below the root zone by percolating water. As the weather warms up, nitrification takes place quickly in soils with an adequate pH (6.5 – 7.0). The manure nitrification is slower than the commercial fertilizers that have the ammonium form of nitrogen which nitrifies 1 – 2 weeks after application.

In poorly aerated, water-logged soils, soil bacteria change available nitrate nitrogen into unavailable atmospheric nitrogen (de-nitrification). De-nitrification takes place very rapidly if water stands on the soil for as little as two to three days during the growing season. This means that most of the nitrate nitrogen will be lost through de-nitrification. Yellowing of corn and other crops grown on poorly aerated soils is often due to a nitrogen deficiency.

Carbon-rich crop residues, such as straw or corn stalks, can cause temporary nitrogen deficiency because the bacteria that decompose the residues temporarily immobilize or ‘tie up’ available ammonium or nitrate nitrogen. The addition of nitrogen fertilizer sometimes is recommended to hasten decomposition of these crop residues.

Manure is a valuable commodity but it needs to be analyzed and managed.

Leaching of nitrate nitrogen can be a serious problem on light sandy soil with normal irrigation and on heavy clay soils with abnormal rainfall. The leaching will move the nitrate nitrogen below the root zone. The ammonium nitrogen tends to be held by the soil particles and is not as leachable.

Understanding the nitrification and knowing the “Book Values” of the manure may be a start – but now let’s look at what has happened this year. First of all, let me share the results of the analysis of more than 650 dairy manure samples taken from January through July 2004.

Solid dairy manure: 10.7 to 93.8 % Dry Matter, N .24 – 1.66# / ton, P .12 – 1.44# / ton, K .30 – 3.57# / ton.

Liquid dairy manure: .4 – 37.7 % Dry Matter, N .01 – .66# / 1000 gal, P .06 – 1.33# / 1000 gal, K .43 – 11.25# / 1000 gal.

As you may notice, the actual N values are greatly lower than the book value. This, coupled with the calculation of amounts applied, may have caused a lower amount of nitrogen available. This underlines the need for manure analysis before application.

There is also the question of a good representative sample (a topic for another time).

Now, if we apply the weather challenges of this season, it is easy to realize why the crops are not responding like we had expected. First of all, for the corn crop, simple cultivation helped to aerate and warm the soil. The addition of a side-dress source of nitrogen would enhance and speed up the nitrification process.

The normal rule is that 10 to 30% of the manure credits will be available for the second year. It appears that if we have a normal winter and crop season next year, those available credits will be increased to the 20 to 40% range. A fall soil test may not accurately show this, except you should see a higher level of organic matter. A pre-plant nitrate test will more accurately determine the amount of nitrogen that will be available.

While hindsight is always 20/20, there are several things we have to keep in mind when planning the nutrient needs for the coming year.

1. A manure analysis
2. Accurate calculation of manure application rates
3. Knowing the planted crop needs
4. Evaluating the normal crop year versus abnormal crop year
5. Previous crop draw-down versus nutrient availability
6. Lots of praying!

Manure is a valuable commodity, but it needs to be analyzed and managed. The analysis is easily done at our labs as a first step. The next step is up to you. “We Measure It - You Manage It!”

Key Rulemaking to Proceed This Fall and Next Spring

•David A. Crass, Attorney, Agripractice Group
Michael, Best & Friedrich, Madison

The agricultural sector is watching and participating in the development of two key rulemaking processes ongoing at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) which will proceed this fall and next spring.

DATCP is in the process of creating the proposed rule – ATCP 51 Wis. Admin. Code – implementing the Livestock Facility Siting Law enacted by the Legislature this past spring. The Livestock Facility Siting Law (Section 93.90, Stats.) requires DATCP to promulgate rules that guide the local approval process for new or expanded livestock facilities and to develop the statewide standards applicable to the development and operation of these facilities.

Producers that establish compliance with the standards in application to a local unit of government obtain a statutory presumption of local approval for the project.

Additionally, Chapter ATCP 50, Wis. Adm. Code – the code that defines the conservation practices necessary to implement state agricultural performance standards to address runoff and manure management – is undergoing revision to update the version of the Wisconsin-specific NRCS Nutrient Management Standard (Code 590). When adopted, Ch. ATCP 50, Wis. Adm. Code defined compliance with the nutrient management agricultural performance standard as compliance with the March 1999 version of NRCS 590. That version of the standard was nitrogen-based. The 2002 version of NRCS 590 moved to a phosphorus-based standard (*i.e.*, the limiting nutrient is the phosphorus needs of the crop) and the current (2004) NRCS 590 revision process is designed to incorporate the phosphorus index (“PI”) as an additional planning tool into the 2002 Standard.

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Key Rulemaking, *continued from page 5*

The current plan is for the proposed revisions to ATCP 50 to be taken to public hearing in March 2005 as a companion with new ATCP 51, Wis. Adm. Code.

The proposed revisions (2004) to NRCS 590 brought extensive comments from 34 commentors. To meet administrative timelines connected to rule development, the November 1, 2004 version of Draft 590 will be put out for public comment along with ATCP 50 and ATCP 51, Wis. Adm. Code. This public comment period is targeted for March 2005. The Standard has never been subject to such broad public comment and prior revisions have come exclusively pursuant to the Standards Oversight Council (“SOC”) process in Wisconsin. This development is due in part to the new “regulatory” application of the Standard which had never been used in such a fashion previously. As such, comments concerning proposed (2004) NRCS 590 will be taken at the same time as comments concerning proposed revisions to ATCP 50 and the proposed siting standards of ATCP 51.

For more information, please contact David Crass at dacrass@mbf-law.com or (608) 283-2267.

Welcome New WAPAC Members!

Greetings to three new WAPAC members, recently reviewed and approved by the WAPAC Membership Committee:

Thomas A. Green, PhD, CCA. Professional Ag Consultant. President, IPM Works LLC. 1914 Rowley Avenue, Madison, WI 53726. Office: 608-232-1528. Home: 608-232-1694. Fax: 608-232-1530. Mobile phone: 608-345-4130.

E-mail: ipmworks@ipmworks.com

Services: Independent consulting designed to maximize returns from adopting IPM and other Best Management Practices (BMPs), including BMP performance guarantees and value-added marketing of sustainably produced food and ornamental crops.

Todd Owens, PAS. Professional Ag Consultant. Midwest Dairy Regional Manager, Standard Nutrition Company. W6567 Apache Ct., Onalaska, WI 54650. Office, Home & Fax: 608-751-4458. Mobile phone: 608-780-6357. E-mail: towens@standardnutrition.com
Services: Conduct complete dairy herd evaluations including nutrition audits, production record analysis, environmental and cow comfort assessments, economic analysis, expansion analysis and business plan and cash flow evaluations in conjunction with all members of the dairy management team.

Gary Vavrosky. Associate Member. Regional Manager, Papillon Agricultural Company. 2716 Tattersall, Portage, MI 49024. Office/Home: 269-323-3622. Fax: 269-323-0895. Mobile phone: 269-744-0549. E-mail: glvavrosky@aol.com
Services: Papillon customizes, produces & markets nutritional additives for use in livestock feed. This includes custom dairy protein products and Min-Ad, an effective buffer and palatable source of magnesium and calcium.



Members of the 2004-05 WAPAC Council

Pictured left to right: Dan Peterson, CCA, President; Robert Mickelson, CCA; Joe Lauer, PhD, Adviser; Susan Bellman, Secretary; Paul Knutzen, CCA, Vice President; Steve Abrams, PhD, Treasurer; Bruce Ludolph, CCA. Not pictured: Randy Shaver, PhD; Mike Kiddy, CCA and Fred Ehle, PhD.

2004 Area Soil & Water Management and Fertilizer Dealer Meetings

The UW Department of Soil Science will offer separate Soil and Water Management and Fertilizer Dealer Meetings at eight locations across the state November 30 - December 9, 2004. Dick Wolkowski, Bill Bland and Larry Bundy will cover topics in soil and water management. Larry Bundy, Carrie Laboski, Sue Porter and John Peters will present current soil fertility information. (All speakers may not be present at all meetings.)

In all locations, the Soil and Water meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m., and the Fertilizer Dealer meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. There will be a separate \$10 registration fee for each of the two meetings. Information packets will contain new Extension publications and materials prepared especially for the meetings. Please try to attend both meetings on the day you attend. Certified Crop Adviser CEU credits (2 hours in soil and water management and 2 hours in soil fertility) have been requested.

Lunch will be served at 12 Noon. Participation in the lunch is optional. Make meal reservations with the host agent at least one week before the meeting you wish to attend. Meal price information is available from the host agent.

Discussion Topics for the Soil and Water Meetings:

1. Monitoring Runoff & Sediment at the Platteville Pioneer Farm - Chris Baxter
2. What's All the Stink about Biosolids Management- Dick Wolkowski
3. Going with the Flow: How Water Rearranges Soil - Bill Bland
4. Filtering the Facts: What Monitoring on Farm Fields Tells Us about Sediment and P Losses - Dick Wolkowski

Discussion Topics for the Fertilizer Dealer Meetings:

1. Approaches to N Recommendations in the North Central Region - Carrie Laboski
2. The New 590 Standard - What It Means for Planners & Farmers - Sue Porter
3. SNAP-Plus-P-index Update - Larry Bundy
4. Trends in Feed & Manure Phosphorus - John Peters
5. Crop Response to Soil Test P & K and Starter Fertilizer - Larry Bundy

Meeting dates, locations and host agents are as follows:

Tuesday, November 30: Stoughton, VFW Club, Corner Cty. N & Hwy. 51 Host Agent: David Fischer, 1 Fen Oak Ct., Rm. 138, Madison, WI 53718. (608) 224-3716.

Wednesday, December 1: Sparta, Host Agent: Bill Halfman, 14345 County Road B, Room 1, Sparta, WI 54656. (608) 269-8722.

Thursday, December 2: Eau Claire, Eau Claire Co. Expo Ctr., Main Exhib. Bldg., 5530 Fairview Dr., S. of 93 & I-94. Host Agent: Mahlon Peterson, 227 1st St. West, Altoona, WI 54720. (715) 839-4712.

Friday, December 3: Marshfield, Ag Research Station, 8396 Yellowstone Dr., East edge of the city. Host Agent: Don Genrich, Box 489, Adams, WI 53910. (608) 339-4237.

Monday, December 6: Juneau, Dodge Co. Admin. Bldg., 127 E. Oak St. Host Agent: Matt Hanson, Dodge Co. Office, Rm. 108 Co. Admin. Bldg., Juneau, WI 53039. (920) 386-3790.

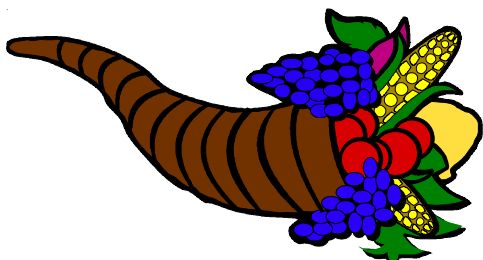
Tuesday, December 7: Kiel, Millhome Supper Club, 3 miles E. on Hwy. 57/32. Host Agent: Mike Ballweg, Sheboygan Co., 650 Forest Avenue, Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085. (920) 467-5740.

Wednesday, December 8: Shawano, The Gathering, 2600 E. Richmond St., in Shawano Industrial Park. Host Agent: Tom Anderson, Courthouse – Room 101, 311 N. Main St., Shawano, WI 54166. (715) 526-6136.

Thursday, December 9: Dodgeville, Dodger Bowl, Hwy. 18 West. Host Agent: Rhonda Gildersleeve, Iowa Co. Extension Office, 222 N. Iowa St., Dodgeville, WI 53533. (608) 935-0391.

Pesticide Applicator Training for 2005

The 2005 schedule for Pesticide Applicator Training Sessions is available online at: <http://ipcm.wisc.edu/PAT>. Pre-registration is required for all sessions. Questions can be directed to the PAT program at 608-262-7588.



Happy Holidays to All!

New Horizons

Fall (November) 2004

New Horizons is published quarterly by the Wisconsin Association of Professional Ag Consultants (WAPAC). Articles of general interest to the membership and signed editorial comments are welcome. Submit all articles to the address below. Comments and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of all WAPAC members. The editorial staff reserves the right to determine suitability for publication and to edit all articles submitted.

For further information about WAPAC or to notify WAPAC of an address change, please contact:

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