

Letters From Iraq—

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doing. Some of the people respond better to the Iraqi army, but sometimes they get less respect than U.S. troops. They are trying, and eventually the people will accept them. Anyway, that is enough ranting and raving for today. I am fine... same stuff, different day. It is even cooling off here. It is in the 60s and 70s at night. Someone even said it rained last night. I hope all is well at home. Well enough already. Everyone take care. Rob

November 3, 2005

Hello all. I am still here. Sorry I haven't written in a while, been busy with things around here. We made it through the month of October. It was a bad month for troops throughout Iraq. The Brigade I am with had some casualties as well. November isn't starting out that great either. A Cobra helicopter was shot down in the area, killing the pilots, and a soldier was killed trying to get to the crash site. So things haven't been that great. Anyway, enough depressing news. Halloween was pretty good; we had a little costume party. Not much else going on around here. It doesn't seem like November though. It gets cold at night but there aren't any leaves changing color and there aren't the cold days I am used to. Things are still green in the spots that have water so there is

no difference in the seasons. I like the transition time in the fall at home where you have the warm days and all the colors of the trees. One good thing is I don't have to rake leaves. Well enough talking about leaves. I hope everything is well at home. Everyone take care. Rob

November 13, 2005

Hello all. Still here. Not much going on. There have been a few changes as suspected in the Ramadi area. There are some "special units" acting on "intel" from other "special agencies" and they are rounding up bad guys and breaking apart insurgent cells. They are doing a pretty good job from what we hear so that will help. They are able to take the gloves off a little more than we as conventional soldiers are, so they are more effective at getting the job done. We just have to deal with the aftermath. We did hear some interesting things the other day from an unknown source. Well, we do know who it is, but I can't say. Most people will be able to figure it out. They get information from locals and pay them for this information. Anyway, the majority of the fighters here are Sunni Iraqis from the area. The amount of foreign fighters is down from the start of this thing. The Sunnis are now conducting a true insurgency. They were in power and now they are not and they do not want to lose their existing power. The elections in December will give them some representation in the new government. They will have

a voice although it doesn't always seem like it. The insurgent activity gets less and less as the months go by. They suspect things will die down even more after the elections but the infighting will continue as it has for thousands of years. Some Muslims here still do not like the west and will continue to fight against us even after we are gone.

Another thing we learned was that much of the fighting here and bomb building is about money. The average monthly income for an unmarried male in the area is \$25 dollars. The insurgent cells will pay \$25 dollars per IED they emplace and you get a bonus if it hits the Coalition Forces. So why not take out the moneymen, you ask. Because the amount of money coming in to fund the insurgency is endless. As it was described to us, it is every Muslim's duty to protect his brothers. Certain countries, that will remain nameless, continue to give money to their fellow Muslims but still maintain that they are our close allies. So it doesn't look like anything will change on that end for a while. Anyway, you all probably were aware of this anyway but I thought you might think it was interesting. They shared some other pretty cool stuff with us but sorry can't say.

Anyway, things are going. Still not my favorite place and I don't think I will be vacationing here when it is all over. Nights are cool and the days are pretty nice. It rained once otherwise it is always a beautiful blue sky. The nights are clear and if you like

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Letters From Iraq—

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to look at the stars this is the place to be. It's pretty quiet at night except for the occasional explosion or two or three but for the most part the bad guys like to sleep at night so sometime I go out on the roof and look up at the stars. Then the mortars start falling so I go back inside. Kidding... well not really but sort of. We are pretty safe here and they tell us it is getting better. We are doing some good and that is probably hard to see at home but good things are happening. The Ramadi area will probably be the last to be cleaned up but it will happen and then the Iraqis will be able to fight for themselves. I think everyone understands that this will happen. The only reason it has been peaceful for so long is that Saddam ruled by terror.

The last thing I will leave you with is from the @\$ guys who have lived all over the world. That is that we live in the best place in the world hands down. No matter how bad things are we don't have anything like the people in these other countries deal with. We may not like who the president is or how much we pay in taxes or how much gas is but even among the developed countries we are in far better shape than they are.

Well I should get back to work. I am covering for part of night shift so my day started at 0530 and I will work until 9:30 at night. It will be a long day. Well everyone take care I hope all is well for you. Can't wait to get home. Rob

November 29, 2005

Still here. Sorry it took so long to get the new update out. I know you all are on the edge of your seats. I hope everyone had a nice Thanksgiving. We had a very traditional Thanksgiving meal of crab legs and lobster tails with prime rib. I think there was some stuffing and other stuff to. We didn't call a time out for the war or anything so for the most part it was just another day. The food was good and everyone was in a pretty good mood. It is kind of funny; we all miss our families and would much rather be home, but the people you are here with really do become like family. You hear about all the strong bonds between people from WWII and Vietnam but you really don't understand until you experience it yourself. There are a lot of really good people over here.

Well things are changing over here. Things have quieted down a great deal. A new unit has been moving through the bad areas and things seem to be getting better. It is kind of weird because this new unit reports directly to the Division so we don't hear how they are doing or what they are finding and if anyone has been hurt. I guess no news is good news. They are doing a great job. Well things have also been changing for me.

Apparently I have whined and complained enough about my desk job because I have become a Company Commander. I am now in charge of 95 soldiers, their equipment, planning and executing missions. No more desk job. I actually was asked if I want-

ed to do it. The previous commander was removed and they needed someone to take his place. I had met many of the soldiers in the company and knew they were very good guys and they do an excellent job. I took the job so wish me luck. I should have some good stories to share with everyone. Don't worry. I will be careful. I can also kiss my cushy 12-hours-a-day schedule goodbye. I carry a radio around everywhere I go and am always on call. The perks are that I am in charge and I get to do the planning. I don't have to deal with the meatheads above me too much. I also moved to a different building. I have my own room and Internet access all to myself. I won't have as much time to read and write emails but I have it.

December 16, 2005

Well my weekly update hasn't really been weekly lately but I am still here and doing well. It has been a tough month so far. We lost our first soldier from the Battalion the other day. We took it pretty hard but we have been very lucky so far. Knock on wood! I also had two soldiers from my company get burned when an explosive hit them. You might have seen the truck burning on Fox News. Oliver North has been covering things in Ramadi. As a matter of fact I saw him tonight in the chow hall. Little guy. Anyway my guys that got hurt are doing pretty well. They got out before the whole thing went up. They are back in the states and will probably sit the rest of this one out

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Write Your Review

By NATE USELDING
Assistant Superintendent
Dellwood Hills Country Club



Why are performance reviews important? When was the last time you gave a review? What went into the review and how effective was it? These are all good questions we must ask ourselves in order to successfully evaluate our employees on a consistent basis. Reviews are an effective way to develop employees and evaluate a set of expectations or standards which hold them accountable for their performance. A well thought-out review requires a lot of time and effort in order for it to be a valuable tool.

A review is a performance-based evaluation of an employee given once annually by a superior. How effective it is depends upon what its contents are and how it is tailored around the job description. No two evaluations are alike and there is no right or wrong way to write one which is what makes a review personal. A good idea is to have separate reviews for each position offered and, if needed, translate it to Spanish.

A standard review may be one where you answer a question or task by circling the number that best fits their accomplishments. When complete, you add up the total numbers and match it up to a set standard score and this score is your review. What is wrong with this picture? If I just scored an 80 out of 100 total points, that means I have 20 percent more to work on. What is that 20 percent? Tip #1, if you are telling someone they are not meeting expectations in a certain area, be prepared to give them specific feedback on how to meet the standard. Go in depth and have a comment section because constructive criticism and feedback is crucial to developing a great team. A standard review may not even scratch the surface on evaluating the team member properly so use it as a guideline to help you form a more effective review. Having different reviews based upon job descriptions can benefit you by tailoring your expectations for each job title. For example, a spray

technician needs different feedback than a ground technician, but they are still held accountable for the same basic morals of the club.

Your basic morals in a review may include work performance, work habits, communication, strengths and weaknesses. Basically, we as managers want a set of core morals for our team to follow. Work performance is easy to measure by the quality of the work completed, how much gets done and the timeliness it gets

"Implementing a review system at your facility will help you get the most out of your employees. Although this seems to be a lot of time and effort, its dividends will pay out in the end."

done. Individual work habits include punctuality, reliability and drive to improve. With communication, how well does someone portray their message in writing and speaking? Communicating with other team members in Spanish may also be important depending on your crew. Finally, strengths and weaknesses; this area is important to emphasize and have at least three examples of each. Everyone needs feedback, good and bad, to develop themselves professionally. Your employees need know how to soar with their strengths and minimize their weaknesses.

Reviews are also good tools for new and problematic employees. It is important to sit down with your team at the beginning of the season and explain what they will be reviewed on. This clearly sets the standard right away. Documentation is crucial for problematic situations and reviews are a good place to start. For

example, if an employee has an attendance issue, you can show them what you went over at the beginning of the season and have proof that you talked to them. One thing we have to keep in mind is if we give a team member an unsatisfactory review, it should not come as a surprise. They should have been given feedback throughout the season and know what they had to improve on. If we do not hold our team accountable, a good employee's performance will drop to meet the slacker's performance because they know what they will get away with.

Timing is everything, so when is the best time to give a review? One would be anytime you give a pay raise, a review should go along with it. For seasonal employees, a mid-year evaluation will ensure they are following the direction set by you at the beginning of the year (spring). I believe two reviews per year, a mid-year and annual review, will set your team up for success.

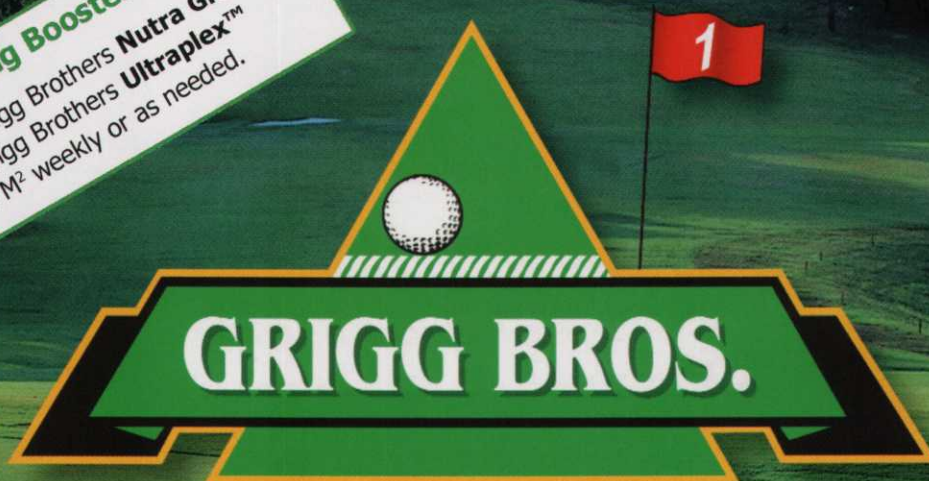
However, I don't think it is effective to have a review at the end of the year when no corrective action will take place because employees are laid off for four months.

When giving a review, it is best to do it behind closed doors. This is a confidential conversation between the employee and the supervisor and that is where it stays. When finished, both parties sign and date the review and shake hands to ensure no animosity.

Implementing a review system at your facility will help you get the most out of your employees. Although this seems to be a lot of time and effort, its dividends will pay out in the end. Over time, employees will get accustomed to your system and begin to take interest in their personal development. How does your current review system look? Take a look and see what you can do to maximize your employee's production.



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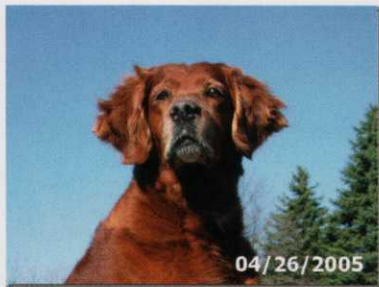
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Pet of the Month



Name: Tia (11)
Red Setter

Location: Forrest Hills Golf Club
(Forest Lake, MN)

Superintendent: Marlow Hansen



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Phosphoric Acids for the Prevention of Pythium

By DOUG DANIEL and JIM O'NEILL
Cycle Works of Minnesota

The use of Phosphoric Acids for the prevention of Pythium has become very popular in Minnesota during the past few years and is an effective alternative in preventing Pythium outbreaks to the more expensive use of fungicides. In an effort to help Superintendents understand more about how Phosphoric Acids work to prevent Pythium, Cycle Works of Minnesota has asked its manufacturer, United Agricultural Services (UAS), to provide information about how Phosphoric Acids works. The following article is a technical explanation about how and why Phosphoric Acids work to prevent Pythium and other fungus type diseases.

Potassium Phosphite

A lower cost alternative for the effective control of Pythium, Phytophthora and Fusarium

Phytophthora In Trees

Phytophthora diseases are often termed as damping-off of seedlings in the seedbed, root and crown rot in nurseries, foot rot and fibrous root rot, and brown rot of fruit trees. There are many different species of Phytophthora (*P. parasitica*, *P. citrophthora*, *P. nicotianae*, *P. palmivora*)

Pythium in Turfgrass

Pythium blight, also known as grease spot or cottony blight, is a major disease of the turf industry. Caused by several species of Pythium fungi, the two most commonly associated with Pythium blight are *Pythium aphanidermatum* and *P. graminicola*.

These fungi are in a group known as Phytophthora and are referred to as "water molds" because they function best under wet, saturated soil conditions.

The Pythium species that attack turfgrass can survive in thatch, in infected clippings, in roots and in the soil. They are known to be active from spring to fall and are more active when conditions are right.

Fusarium sp. in Ornamentals.

Control has been observed of *Fusarium sp.* in Madagascar Periwinkle (A Vinca Ornamental) by the University of Florida (IFAS)

CHEMICAL DIFFERENCES OF PHOSPHORIC ACID (Phosphate), PHOSPHOROUS ACID (Phosphite) AND PHOSPHONIC ACID (Phosphonate)

An organic derivative of phosphorous acid is a phosphonate. A breakdown product of a phosphonate is phosphonic acid.

Contrast which is phosphoric acid to which is phosphorous acid.

(For convenience, all forms of the salt are routinely referred to as "potassium phosphate" with potassium dihydrogen phosphate and dipotassium hydrogen phosphate serving as phosphate fertilizers).

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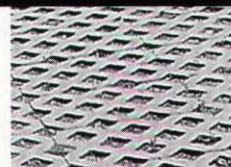
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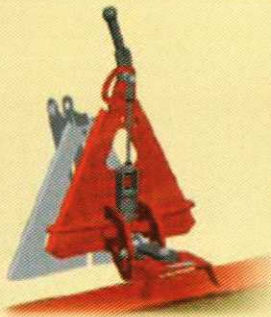
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Phosphoric Acid—

(Continued from Page 15)

When phosphorous acid (H_3PO_3) is neutralized with a base, such as potassium hydroxide (KOH) or ammonium hydroxide (NH_4OH), a salt results. The salt of phosphorous acid is a phosphite. For example: (See graph at right)

PHOSPHOROUS ACID

Potassium phosphite (H_3PO_3 Active ingredient)

Brief History: There are two main strategies whereby phosphite can be used to protect native flora against *P. cinnamomi* infestations. It may be applied either as proactive or therapeutic. The first literature cited in Australian forestry research, noted that the phosphite has been used to protect avocado, pineapple and cocoa crops against Phytophthora disease since the 1970s. In the late 1980s research staff at the Department of Conservation and Land Management's Dwelling office, led by Dr. Bryan Shearer, decided to investigate whether the fungicide provided any additional protection to Western Australian native species. These treatments, where phosphite solution was injected into jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) and several

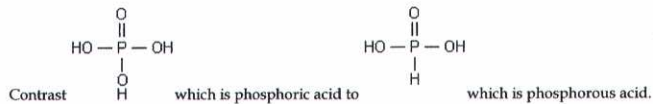
banksia species, showed considerable promise, slowing and stopping the growth of the pathogen within the plants under attack.

Phosphite, which is formulated from neutralized phosphonic acid, has shown

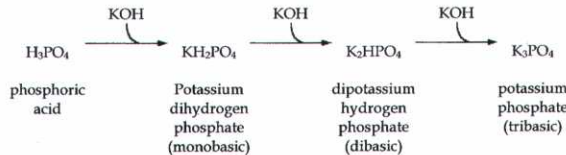
great promise in the battle to preserve rare and endangered citrus trees under threat from root-rot disease caused by the pathogen *Phytophthora* spp. Depending

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PHOSPHOROUS ACID Potassium phosphite (H_3PO_3 Active ingredient)

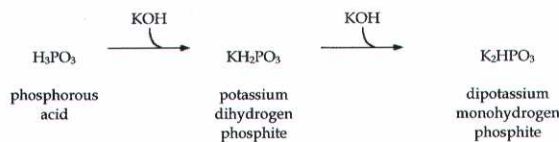


When phosphoric acid (H_3PO_4) is neutralized with a base, such as potassium hydroxide (KOH) or ammonium hydroxide (NH_4OH), a salt results. The salt of phosphoric acid is a phosphate. For example:

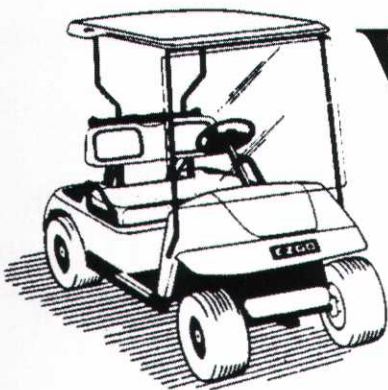


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When phosphorous acid (H_3PO_3) is neutralized with a base, such as potassium hydroxide (KOH) or ammonium hydroxide (NH_4OH), a salt results. The salt of phosphorous acid is a phosphite. For example:



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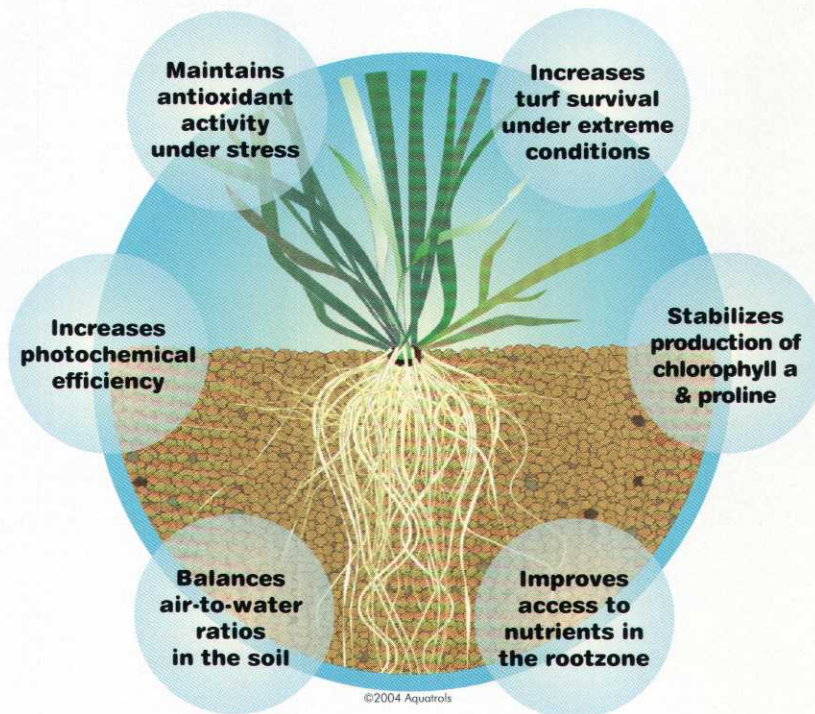
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