

# Industry Group Formed to Advance Agriculture Nutrient Management in the United States

January 2021 - Bloomington, Illinois:

In 1981 the **Illinois Soil Testing Association (ISTA)** was founded to help address Illinois growers' needs for quality soil test information. As a result of continued growth over the last 30 years, the Illinois Soil Testing Association (ISTA) recently re-branded itself as the **Agriculture Laboratory Testing Association (ALTA)** in December 2020.

## Purpose:

ALTA's primary objective is to promote the interests of the agriculture testing industry in the United States and promote high-quality soil & plant-tissue testing data that will improve farm production, profitability, and sustainability. ALTA is committed to ensuring the quality of data to agricultural communities through encouraging the development, use, and acceptance of proven agricultural testing methods. Our goal is to become an industry leader in ensuring consistency, precision, and accuracy across agriculture laboratories nationally. ALTA plans to reach this goal through outreach, education, and certification programs.

## ALTA Laboratory Certification Programs:

- Soil Analysis: (**SAC - Soil Analysis Certification**).
- Plant-tissue Analysis: (**PAC - Plant Analysis Certification**).
- These programs were initially created by the Illinois Soil Testing Association and have earned respect in the region for creating a high standard for testing quality.
- These programs' objective is to assure soil and plant analysis provided to Ag producers nationally are within laboratory statistical norms (consistent, precise, and accurate).
- Based on this premise, certifications help ensure labs follow the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) code 590 of nutrient management guidelines for testing and recommendations.

*"The Illinois Soil Testing Association (ISTA) has changed its name to the Agricultural Laboratory Testing Association (ALTA) to reflect the scope and territories that our membership serves. Our member laboratories offer a broad range of agricultural testing and services across the United States. ALTA's mission is to support all types of agricultural testing laboratories so they may provide the best analysis and information. We will support that mission by providing education and certification programs that help ensure quality and innovation in our industry."*



Tim Smith - CropSmith, Inc. / Laboratory Owner / Farmer City, IL / ALTA President

## Meetings / Education:

ALTA holds annual winter and summer meetings to engage and educate both membership and the public. These meetings allow members to share information, collaborate, discuss on-going projects, conduct business, review field research, inform the public, and get to know fellow members. Additionally, they provide an opportunity for other industry groups and other organizations to engage with the membership. In addition to meetings, ALTA will sponsor multiple opportunities to engage with testing laboratories and the general public.

## 2021 ALTA Schedule (Tentative):

- January 19<sup>th</sup>: ALTA is sponsoring a Webinar on Laboratory Quality Management.
- February 16<sup>th</sup>: ALTA will hold (online) its annual Winter meeting to introduce new members to the organization and host speakers on a series of educational topics.
- Summer/Fall: ALTA will hold an in-person 2-day educational seminar and summer meeting.



*"ALTA is a very important organization for our company because it provides validity to our test data and demonstrates to our customers that we can produce accurate results. The meetings offer members targeted education and a collective forum for the exchange of ideas focused on the agricultural laboratory."*

Greg Neyman - A&L Great Lakes Laboratories / Director - Green Industries Division / Fort Wayne, IN / ALTA Treasurer

*"The ALTA organization provides a forum for agronomists and testing laboratories to educate and advance Agriculture nutrient management in the United States. Through workshops and laboratory certification program for soil and plant analysis, ALTA sets a standard of professional excellence."*

Robert O. Miller, Ph.D. - Former Affiliate Professor Colorado State University / Fort Collins, CO / ALP Technical Director



## Summary:

ALTA is positioned to lead the agriculture testing industry nationally, driving the discussion around how to ensure precision and accuracy of agriculture data moving into the next decade. Providing educational opportunities for members, engaging the public, and offering relevant certification programs are methods ALTA will help member companies grow while creating a sustainable future.

Please contact us with any questions. We are actively encouraging new memberships!

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