



MANAGING FERTILIZER APPLICATION FOR PROFIT

In a recent poll published by Successful Farming magazine farmers were asked how they plan to reduce production costs. Thirty percent said they would cut back on fertilizer purchases. However, nearly an equal amount, 27%, said they would use the same amount of fertilizer and manage for better yields. This brings up the question of which fertilizer practices to continue and what needs to be done differently to increase yields and profits.

It's important to use a PureGrade® starter fertilizer program, especially under the following conditions:

- Early planting with cooler soil temperatures.
- No-till or any minimum-till system where substantial amounts of crop residue are left on the surface creating a lower soil temperature.
- Low phosphorous soil tests.
- Late planting. Starter helps push crops to mature before frost.
- Wet soils.
- For more uniform maturity and lower grain moisture levels at harvest.

At The Andersons, we ask producers to use our liquid fertilizer products as efficiently as possible by banding PureGrade products in the seed furrow or, at least, very close to the seed row. This guarantees maximum availability to the crop.

For those fields that need additional phosphorous and/ or potassium there are ways to save big money without reducing yield.

SOIL TEST

We can't emphasize this enough. To reduce costs and increase profit, it is perhaps more important to know which nutrients aren't needed. Don't waste money broadcasting phosphorus on fields that test high, for example.

USE BANDING TECHNOLOGY

Broadcast phosphorus rates can be reduced by a third to one-half if the phosphorus is banded. Potassium rates can also be reduced. Broadcasting phosphorus is the least efficient method of application for this non-mobile nutrient. Banding, on the other hand, puts nutrients into the root zone and reduces nutrient fixation. Individual growers can save thousands of dollars just by simply changing from broadcasting to banding.

UNDERSTAND "SUFFICIENCY" GUIDELINES

It's important to understand "sufficiency" guidelines that universities use to make phosphorus recommendations. These are based on soil tests and take into account the amount of nutrients the soil will supply. If the soil can supply the nutrients, or most of them, that is fertilizer that doesn't have to be purchased.

Keep these other points in mind:

- Avoid using the "nutrient replacement" method of computing the amount of phosphorus & potassium to apply. This method ignores soil test results.
- If soil phosphorus & potassium levels are already high, cut back on the broadcasting program.
- Nitrogen applications should be split and applied as close as possible to the time of maximum crop need. Rates can be reduced 10-20% compared to fall nitrogen application where it won't be used for many months.



A PUREGRADE STARTER FERTILIZER PROGRAM SHOULD BE APPLIED TO HELP CROPS OVERCOME THE STRESSES OF EARLY PLANTING AND COLD SOIL TEMPERATURES.

THE REST OF THE FERTILITY PROGRAM SHOULD BE ADAPTED ACCORDING TO SOIL TESTS AND THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF THE CROP.

WHERE EXTRA PHOSPHORUS & POTASSIUM IS NEEDED ON LOW TESTING SOILS, THEY SHOULD BE BANDED INTO THE SOIL RATHER THAN BROADCAST TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT NEEDED AND INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY TO THE CROP.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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