Think Twice Before Applying Broadcast Potash this Fall

Research shows spring application of liquid potassium far more effective

St. John's, Mich. (December 9, 2009) --- It has been a difficult fall for many corn producers, as the harvest has been pushed later and later. And that has placed added pressure on fall and spring crop nutrition decisions. Research done at Agro-Culture Liquid Fertilizer's North Central Research Station near St. John's, Michigan, shows that spring applications of potassium planter-applied Sure-K™ has worked better than broadcast-applied potash for corn yields.

"Producers are struggling," Cory Schurman, Director of Sales Agronomy for Agro-Culture, said. "They're up against the wall with Mother Nature, still wanting to get adequate fertilization for their crops. There's a liquid-applied solution that will specifically place potassium and phosphorus and meet the crop's nutrient needs at spring planting time with planting time applications."

Sure-K liquid potassium fertilizer has proven, in Agro-Culture's research as well as independent research, to give superior results. Dr. Jerry Wilhm is Senior Research Manager at the company's North Central Research Station.

"For a number of years our replicated plot research has shown that for spring applications of potassium, planter-applied Sure-K has worked better than broadcast-applied potash for corn yields. This tells us that liquid Sure-K applied with a planter placed with or near the corn seed gives the germinating seed better access to the potassium. Broadcast dried potash has to dissolve first before it can work. The potassium is dispersed through the soil profile, and that's only if it's incorporated. A corn root will only contact, at most, three percent of the soil volume in the top six inches – so very little of the applied potash is ever reached or contacted by the growing corn roots."

Dr. Wilhm says the right decision comes down to soil needs.

"If your soil potassium levels are medium to low, Sure-K will out-yield or be more convenient to use than broadcasting potash. Under extremely, very, very low potassium soils there might be a need for a fall application of potash. But if you can't put it on until spring, research has shown that spring applications just aren't effective for that year's crop, even under very, very low conditions."

Additionally, Dr. Wilhm says the chloride in the potash can have a negative effect on living plant tissue. There is no chlorine or any other harmful chemicals in liquid Sure-K.

There's another advantage of placed liquid potassium: efficiency.

"Anytime you can place the nutrient in the uptake zone of a crop, your efficiency will go up dramatically over broadcast application," Schurman said. "Placement of fertilizer has long been touted as a good solution for increased efficiency. Using pure potassium products that don't have the high salt indexes can greatly increase usability."

According to Dr. Wilhm, "The liquid Sure-K can be blended with our other liquid nutrition to make up a complete planter-time nutrition application. So you don't have to make extra trips over the field to spread the dried fertilizer, which takes manpower and causes planting delays. You can plant right away and apply your nutrition at the same time."

Cory Schurman's advice to growers is simple: "Get your harvest out first, then get all the facts about the benefits of a program for spring application for your potassium and phosphorus needs."

About Agro-Culture Liquid Fertilizers

Agro-Culture Liquid Fertilizers produces research-driven crop nutrition formulated to serve the grower, and developed to protect the environment. Agro-Culture is based in St. John's, Michigan, with the company's main research facility, the 210-acre North Central Research Station, located near St. John's.