

Rice and Summer Crop Time

We are already busy with straight products and blends in preparation for this year's crop. Following on from our Maize information sessions, some farmers are also trying one of our newer products, Entec Urea. This is a coated form of Urea, where after the Urea converts to ammonium, the coating slows the conversion of ammonium to nitrate, keeping the nitrogen in the ammonium form for longer. This is a more efficient form for the plant to take up, and is also less prone to leaching. Corn growers are applying blends of Urea/Entec, which enables all the Urea to be applied up front, saving on post sowing application costs.

Urea

Most of you would know or have heard that Urea has been in short supply over the last couple of months. Customers of ours who prepaid for Urea were able to get their product from our sheds. We encourage people to order product in advance because it helps us in our forward ordering from our suppliers, but, as we discovered, an order with the suppliers does not guarantee supply. This is the second year in a row the industry had shortages. Again, we say, if you want to guarantee supply, buy early and store it in your shed, or for a small fee, our shed. The situation has eased now, and we have plenty in our sheds for the rice and summer crops and pastures.

Zinc

There is a large amount of interest in zinc products for summer crops again this year. Zinc is an important nutrient for rice, especially during establishment. You may have a zinc deficiency if in previous rice crops you have noticed some of these symptoms:

- leaves becoming light green near the stem but remaining dark green at the tips
- leaves lose turgidity and float on water surface
- bronze/brown spotting on the leaf surface

Seedlings can lack vigour and potentially die due to oxygen starvation if leaves lose turgidity and lay on the water. These symptoms will show up soon after permanent water is applied to drill sown rice, or in early establishment of aerial sown rice.

For recently lasered bays and cut areas it is advisable to apply at least 5kg/ha of Zinc.

We recommend applying at least 2kg/ha of Zinc if you have 2 or more of the following:

- $\text{pH} > 7_{(\text{water})}$
- Low organic carbon level
- High soil phosphorus level or high phosphorus application rate
- $<0.5\text{-}0.8$ mg/kg zinc DTPA soil test in alkaline soil & $<0.3\text{-}0.5$ mg/kg zinc DTPA soil test in acidic soil

The DTPA soil test value is indicative only. When determining whether the crop will be responsive to zinc, we tend to look at the pH, organic carbon, fertiliser history, and use the DTPA value as a guide.

REMEMBER: Our Kerang Office is Open Saturday Mornings from 8.30am to 10.30am for your convenience.

Trials Field Day: The fertiliser trials at Cannie & Beauchamp got off to a good start and have been progressing well. They incorporate some product demonstrations, featuring phosphorus, nitrogen and zinc, but also development work with polymer coated Urea. The Beauchamp site has some great visual differences, especially between the phosphorus rate treatments. It will be interesting to compare the outcomes at harvest.

Craig Farlow from Incitec Pivot and Dr Rob Norton will be present on 25th September. Rob will be giving his insights into zinc, sulphur and cropping nutrition in the Mallee.

Merchandise: Terry Treacy and his team have been extremely busy building up stock levels. With hay, silage and shearing upon us, call in for all your pasture, chemical and stock requirements. We also have Lucerne and summer crop seeds on hand. No matter what you need, call one of our branches in Kerang, Wakool, Moulamein or Swan Hill, where our helpful staff will source it for you plus deliver direct on farm if you require.

Easy N and liquids: We have been selling Easy N to horticulturalists, pasture, and cropping farmers lately. We regularly receive queries about Easy N, also known as UAN. There are plenty of liquids on the market which make all sorts of claims as to how little you need to apply. As with everything, understand what it

is you firstly need to buy, and what the label says you are getting. You don't just want a colour change, you want to grow more and better quality feed, crop or produce. Easy N is 42.5% N w/v, compared with 46% Urea. Remember we have bulk and can fill your containers too.

A term you will hear more often now is "Evidence Based Agriculture". When suppliers are making claims of their products, it's always worth asking for proof of the claims, not just "puffpieces" from a newspaper.

Long Life Urea

Lipps can coat Urea with Agrotain, a product that slows down the rate of loss of nitrogen to the air (volatilisation) if it hasn't been rained on, watered in or covered with soil. The product is commonly called Green Urea or 'Nexan'.

Ours and other trials show the losses are not nearly as great as some fear, especially during the cooler months. Groundcover helps reduce N loss as well. Our product is called 'Longlife Urea', and can be coated in our blenders, a similar process to applying fungicide to MAP/DAP.

New Staff

Lipps continue to expand their staff and services. We welcome Rob Fox to our agronomy team. Rob will be servicing customers in the Swan Hill and NSW Riverina areas, and assisting Simon and Doug in chemicals and nutrition.

Phosphorus Responses

Everyone becomes very focussed on nitrogen for crops and pastures once they are in the ground, but we have seen a very interesting response to phosphorus in the Mallee this year. The pictures below demonstrate how

early growth was dramatically retarded by not sowing MAP in a strip. The whole area had received Urea, the only difference being no MAP. The soil Colwell P level was 20 ppm at planting. Many dryland croppers start to back off P applications once P levels are above 20 ppm. If nothing else, this highlights the value of test strips across your farm. With precision harvesting capabilities, it will be easy to assess the final impact on yield. We will keep you updated after harvest. We have also seen some interesting deficiencies of sulphur in some lighter country, where it was so severe it didn't even respond to the nitrogen that was topdressed (see bottom picture).

Terry has also captured some great responses to improved annual pasture seed varieties this year. The picture below shows the dramatic response by spending just \$75/ha on a new seed mix. The amount and quality of hay grown will more than justify the cost of the seed.



Lipp's Enduro (foreground) vs no extra seed



**Effect of No Phosphorus @ Sowing
Soil Test Colwell 20ppm**



**Sulphur deficient Wheat on a sandy rise.
Urea had been applied to the whole paddock**



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Kerang 5452 1333 Swan Hill 5032 3800

