



# GROWING SMARTER

News & Information To Help You Grow

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October 2014  
Issue No. 39

## Good prevention leads to great lettuce

**Fertizona helps you get a head start on a better lettuce crop**

As growers prepare their seed beds to plant fall or winter lettuce, it helps to be reminded of some production guidelines for promoting high crop quality and yields. For example, it's smart to invest in fungicides that guard against dangerous disease threats.

"Most growers tend to have a wait-and-see approach before they use a fungicide, but sometimes that's not good enough," explained Dr. Mike Matheron, a plant pathologist with the University of Arizona Extension Service. "It's important to have a preventive treatment before you see any disease damage."

"One of our big disease problems for lettuce early in the season is Fusarium," said Scott McKenna, PCA, Fertizona – Yuma. "Then later we have to deal with sclerotinia drop and downy mildew, so you need to use fungicides prophylactically."

Fusarium wilt is a relatively new threat, first seen in Yuma County in 2001. In extreme cases the disease causes lettuce seedlings to wilt or die, but more common damage is the yellowing of leaves and appearance of brown or red streaks in the lettuce crowns.

"For some reason, Fusarium is worse when the soil is hot," McKenna added, and university research confirms that. In a series of trials in California, iceberg lettuce planted later in the season had much less incidence of Fusarium. Apparently the pathogen thrives at higher temperatures, and the tests showed most disease growth occurring in the soil around 25°C, or about 78°F – typical for Yuma in September.

*Story continued on page 2*



**Rebecca Goodwin,**  
daughter of Wendy & Gordon Goodwin, PCA, Fertizona – Yuma





## Investing in Tomorrow

The more things change, the more they stay the same. It's an old adage, but when it comes to growing in the Southwest it's exactly true.

Just look at this year.

So far, around the region fall produce has started to be planted, and the produce market appears to have a strong potential for a good year. So too is the alfalfa market, and the wheat market is rebounding as a high-margin crop compared to just a year ago. Pima cotton is up, short staple is down, but as a grower, you already know all of this.

Thankfully, so does our team at Fertizona.

We've spent the last 35 years building a team full of trusted advisors and PCAs who help us stay ahead of the trends Southwest growers face every year. Being proactive is far better for business than simply reacting, and our team helps you be prepared for whatever Mother Nature – and the market – has in store for you.

Part of it comes down to the Fertizona team's efforts to stay abreast of growing trends, investing in the right product mix for our growers, so we are ready with the right products at the right time to best meet your needs. This awareness is earned through a larger relationship between our growers and PCAs.

By investing in our team – some of them being part of the Fertizona family for 20, 25 or even 30+ years – means that we have earned our position as your trusted growing advisors, offering you the right advice and the most appropriate products to make you as successful as possible.

We've even begun to increase our physical infrastructure with new facility capabilities and higher capacities at our various locations across the region. Combine that with our various local and national relationships, which offers Fertizona greater access to a variety of products to support your needs, and you'll see that we're working harder than ever to find the emerging technologies and products to help support growers just like you.

Why? It's simple.

Our goal isn't to just make Fertizona successful. Our goal is to make you the best grower you can be. That's been our strategy for the first 35 years, and it'll be our strategy for the next 35 years.

– **Jim Compton**

President, Fertizona and Compton Ag Services

*Story continued from cover*

## Good prevention leads to great lettuce

Unfortunately, no current fungicide products are effective on Fusarium, but it's been shown that certain lettuce cultivars are naturally resistant to it. If you intend to plant your crop early, consider choosing lettuce varieties that are less susceptible to the disease.

### Insect control

Early prevention of insect damage is also critical to a successful lettuce crop, and Fertizona supports you there as well.

"The good news is that we don't seem to have any real new problems this year," McKenna continued, "but we still have the usual key pests. Whiteflies and armyworms are the main problems, with secondary threats from leafminers and striped flea beetles."

Growers should be especially aware of whitefly populations and control them early if you suspect an infestation. When adult whiteflies are allowed to feed on seedling lettuce plants they can cause stunted growth.

To minimize insect trouble, McKenna recommends the first plantings be treated with a product like Admire Pro Systemic Protectant®, Alias® or a similar insecticide labeled for whitefly, followed with a chemigation pesticide at germination.

***Talk to your PCA or Fertizona representative for help in scouting young lettuce for potential insect damage.***

Problem	Product	Rate/Acre
Downy mildew	Presidio®	4 oz.
	Curzate®	5 oz.
	Forum®	6 oz.
Sclerotinia drop	Rovral® Omega® Merivon™	2 pints 1.5 pints 11 oz.*
Whitefly	Venom®	3 oz.
	Assail® 30SG	4 oz.
Armyworms	Vetica®	12 – 17 oz.
	Radiant®	3 – 9 oz.
	Proclaim®	4.8 oz.
Striped flea beetles	Mustang® Lannate®	4 oz. .8 lbs.
Leafminers	Radiant® Agri-Mek®	8 oz. – 12 oz.
* New product, rate based on University of Arizona recommendations		

## Maintain proper N

Adequate fertilizer is naturally essential for any crop, and in Arizona lettuce the key nutrient is often nitrogen. Continued N deficiencies during the season can affect yields, delay maturity or reduce the size of heads.

Based on populations of 20,000 – 26,000 plants per acre, the University of Arizona suggests applying a total of 175 – 200 pounds of nitrogen per acre, in split applications, to promote optimum yields. The actual rates and totals will vary depending upon residual soil N, soil texture and irrigation practices.

For many typical Arizona soils, it's often better to avoid large pre-plant applications of nitrogen because of the risk of leaching and nutrient loss. Also, nitrogen uptake by lettuce plants is slow until heading begins. The U of A recommends applying about 50 pounds of nitrogen (as a soluble or a side-dressing) between stand establishment and thinning.

With so many variables and unpredictable risks to lettuce crops, it's good to have a partner like Fertizona who can provide the advice and products you need for top yields and quality.

## MK Farms

**Mike Brooks and his family  
have grown through history**

The city of Phoenix was officially incorporated in 1881, and by the time of the U.S. Census in 1900, it had a population of about 5,000. That number probably didn't include the local ancestors of Mike Brooks, but they were already here in the valley back then, putting down roots.

"My great-grandfather came out here from Kentucky as a homesteader in 1896," Brooks said. "They called him 'Peg Leg' because he lost a leg in a hunting accident as a child. My son still lives in the house my family built in 1912."

Today Brooks is the owner and manager of MK Farms, which includes the family's original property near Tolleson, Arizona. Obviously, metropolitan Phoenix has grown dramatically over the years since the Brooks family arrived, both in population and area.

"There was a time when we were ten miles from town," he said, "but now we're technically within the city limits of Phoenix."

At the height of their operations a number of years ago, the Brooks family

farmed 15,000 acres. In 2014, that number is about 5,000 acres – still a very impressive size – and much of the land is rented. Their main crops are cotton and alfalfa, with many other acres planted in wheat, barley and sorghum. MK Farms currently has about 30 employees, and Brooks added that his son also farms 1,000 acres on his own separate operation.

### Strong family ties

Mike and his wife, Margie, have a "yours, mine and ours" family of six children and 13 grandchildren, so it's probably safe to assume the Brooks ancestral heritage will continue on their land. Yet despite the long and unbroken family lineage, there was a time when Brooks moved away to try something different. As a young man, he went to Idaho to be the manager of Sliman Irrigation and also farmed there for several years.

"But I came back here to Arizona in 1985," he said. "I realized this is where I'm meant to be. It's in my blood."

Brooks admitted that running a big farming operation is a lot of hard work,



**"This is where I'm  
meant to be. It's in  
my blood."**

– Mike Brooks, MK Farms  
Tolleson, Arizona

and added, "There are many times I wonder why the heck I keep doing this, but at the end of the day, you just can't beat the life."

### Help from Fertilzona

One way that Brooks eases his constant workload is by relying on Fertilzona and Manager Craig Allen's staff at the Fennemore location.

"I use Fertilzona for my seed, fertilizer and other things," Brooks said, "and I don't really need to do business with anybody else. My field people count on Fertilzona a lot, too. If I had to point to one thing that makes Fertilzona better, it's their excellent service."

The Brooks family and MK Farms have shown they know how to keep a good thing going, and Mike says they look forward to continuing their long-lasting relationship with Fertilzona into the next generation with his son, Brandon.

"The Comptons are a stand-up family," Brooks said, "and I really care about them."



# Coated alfalfa seed offers many benefits

## Faster germination and stronger stands increase hay yields

Alfalfa growers can now establish a new stand with greater potential for success and profitability, thanks to unique coated seed offered through Fertizona and CYC Seed Company. Coated alfalfa seeds give seedlings the best chance of survival and allow stand establishment to occur more rapidly.

The process is based on the simple concept of taking raw alfalfa seed and treating it with a special coating – such as a fungicide or fertilizer – to provide important growth advantages, especially at germination. By using raw seed from local Arizona growers, Fertizona starts with a proven variety made for the Southwest. The coating just makes it even better.

For example, Fertizona sells a popular coated alfalfa seed that uses an exclusive balanced nutrient package. Treated seeds using this technology have proven to emerge 2-3 days sooner than uncoated seed, and to produce vigorous young plants that are 10-20 percent larger than similar untreated varieties. The treated seeds also produce longer, more developed root systems.

Another reason why coated seed delivers faster germination and better establishment is that the coating itself helps to keep moisture around the seedling after it's planted.

Grower Steve Melton of Harquahala Valley, AZ, has seen the difference. Last October he planted 140 acres of alfalfa using coated seeds, alongside a stand planted with an uncoated variety.

"It came up fine, and it's yielding the best in that section," Melton said. "I really like it. I'd definitely use it again."

Fertizona offers a wide selection of coated alfalfa seeds to support your particular growing conditions and yield goals. Choices include:

- Fertilac 10
- Fertilac 11
- Supersonic
- NC Cibola
- All Roundup Ready® alfalfa seed



"Coated seeds provide many benefits and help growers get the most value out of every seed," said

Tyke Bennett, Seeds Product Manager, Fertizona.

"With coated alfalfa seeds, a significantly greater percent of seeds in a bag produce an established seedling, and that results in greater yields and higher profits for growers."

***For more information about coated alfalfa seed, please contact your Fertizona or Compton Ag Services representative.***

"I'd definitely use it again."

– Alfalfa grower Steve Melton  
Harquahala Valley, AZ







**“We need to focus on what’s in place now, but it could all change tomorrow.”**

– Jeff Benge, Financial Controller  
Fertizona

## New Insurance Laws May Affect Large Farms

**Number of employees determine requirements and costs**

The government’s Affordable Care Act, or ACA, – often called “Obamacare” – was created to make it easier for more Americans to obtain health insurance at reasonable costs. One of the largest target audiences for the ACA is the rural agricultural population, which historically has very high insurance rates and low participation.

Part of the implementation of nationwide Affordable Care is a mandate known as the Employer Shared Responsibility Provision. The ESRP requires that any business with 50 or more full-time employees in a calendar year must offer minimum levels of healthcare coverage to those employees and their families. Qualifying employers who are non-compliant will be subject to large penalties.

Those rules affect a number of Fertizona customers and other large Southwestern growers.

However, there’s a lot of gray area in the definitions. For example, “full-time” employment is based on averages of hours worked, which means a lot of part-time employees can add up to “full-time equivalents.” Also, seasonal workers fall under separate categories. The U.S. Treasury Department defines seasonal employees as “positions for which the customary annual employment is six months or less.”

The ESRP is scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2015, but there’s another twist: each business’ official number of employees will be based on staffing for this year. In other words, if you have 50 full-time employees in 2014, you’re automatically subject to ESRP rules next year.

“It all gets really confusing,” admits Jeff Benge, Fertizona’s Financial Controller. “There are so many new laws, rules and regulations; we need to focus on what’s in place now and then, try to understand what’s coming.”

Benge advises Fertizona on a range of company insurance procedures and practices, and he is willing to take questions from growers who’d like to learn more about Affordable Care.

“One thing I know for sure is that if employers choose not to comply, it will only get tougher for them,” Benge adds. “But it could all change tomorrow.”

***For more information about the ACA or employer responsibilities, please contact Jeff Benge at Fertizona or talk to your insurance provider.***

# SmartBlend™

## SmartBlend™ Fertilizers

Grower tests shows yield advantage in alfalfa

Numbers don't lie. So when a recently completed comprehensive fertilizer comparison clearly demonstrated the superior results for a SmartBlend™ product, Fertizona felt it was the right time to talk about it.

The trial was on the farm of Lee Banning, Jr., in Paloma, AZ, encompassing 158.4 acres (4.8 acres/ border) and six competitive fertilizers – five liquid, one dry.

Based on data from five cuttings during May through October, the top-yielding fertilizer was SmartBlend 7.5-26-0 8S from Fertizona, which produced an average of 526.33 small bales per border. The fertilizer was applied at a rate of 15 gallons/acre.

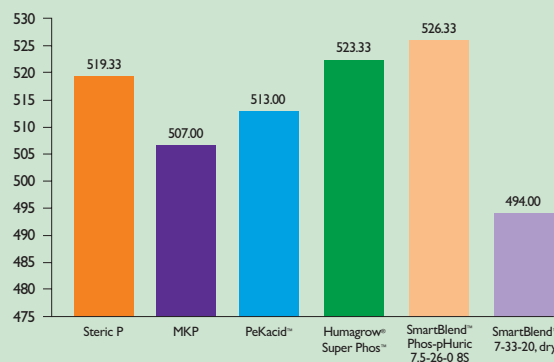
"It was a good test," said Doyle Stewart, PCA, Fertizona – Buckeye, who coordinated the trial with PCA Greg Green, Fertizona – Buckeye. "We were

impressed with how the alfalfa responded to the SmartBlend line of fertilizers."

SmartBlend fertilizers from Fertizona and Compton Ag Services allow growers to personalize their crop nutrition with a fertilizer custom-made for their unique requirements. To create a SmartBlend, Fertizona analyzes specific soil and tissue data, climate and yield targets. By identifying the sufficient and deficient ranges of nutrients in a particular field, SmartBlends adjust those fertility levels to maximize crop growth and health for that precise location.

In the case of the Paloma trial, the 7.5-26-0 8S SmartBlend formulation – also known as "Phos-pHuric"

Small Bale Average Totals



– effectively delivered the vital phosphorus and supplemental sulfur those alfalfa stands needed for high yields. Simply put, the SmartBlend product out-performed all of the competitive products in the trial.

"Every crop has different nutrient needs," said Stewart. "By using our experience and the data we collect, Fertizona can create a SmartBlend to help growers make the most of any situation."

**For more information or to see specific details of the Paloma trials, contact Doyle Stewart at 602.541.9735 or Tim Walsh at 623.764.0664, or visit [www.fertizona.com](http://www.fertizona.com).**

**"We were impressed with how the alfalfa responded to the fertilizers."**

– Doyle Stewart, PCA, Fertizona – Buckeye, Arizona



# Fast out of the gate

## PCA Greg Green quickly earns growers' trust

Greg Green, Fertizona – Buckeye, isn't a man who wastes time. Although he's only in his mid-twenties, he's already developing a reputation as a knowledgeable, go-to guy for crop production advice.

Green started his career on the fast track. He graduated from the University of Arizona with a degree in Agricultural Technology Management in the spring of 2011, and within about a month he started working for Fertizona. During his early days with the company, Green also went back to school to get his Arizona Pest Control Advisor license, which he earned in 2012.

To further enhance his skills and qualifications, Green spent time learning from fellow Fertizona PCAs Doyle Stewart and Jim Osborn, Sr. He was soon comfortable calling on growers himself and making effective recommendations about their fertilizers, pesticides and other crop management decisions.

"It's been important to me to build up a good name for myself and earn the growers' trust," Green says. "I really enjoy working with people and crops, and I can't think of a better career for me."

Green currently covers a large territory around Buckeye on the west side of Phoenix. That's appropriate, because it's where he grew up, and he still has many relatives in the area.

"My grandfather had a farm and ranch here," Green says, "and I spent a lot of time there

Greg Green  
(second from left),  
with his fiancée Katie,  
Jim Osborn Sr., and  
Jim's wife Margo.



"It's been important to me to earn the growers' trust."

– Greg Green, PCA, Fertizona  
Buckeye, Arizona

when I was little." His early exposure to agriculture and horses explains a lot about Green's life today. When not providing smart advice for Fertizona customers, he spends much of his time participating in team-roping activities. Green is a prize-winning roper who started riding competitively at the age of six.

Now Green is set to accomplish another big goal. He and his fiancée, Katie Jacobs, are planning to get married next spring. Based on his record of success, it's safe to assume he'll be a great husband, too.

## NEW HIRES

## Making a good team better

Fertizona is pleased to welcome these outstanding new employees to the company family:

**Jason Neely**  
**Stephanie Furr**  
**Patrick Hornung**  
**Tony Rodriguez**  
**Gerardo Corral, Jr.**

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## LOCATIONS

Contact Your Local Office For All Your Growing Needs

### CASA GRANDE

#### Main Office

2850 South Peart Road  
Casa Grande, AZ 85193  
(520) 836-7477

Dennis Osborn, *Crop Protection*

Tyke Bennett, *Seed Products and  
Fertilizer Bagging*

Jimmy Compton, *Crop Nutrition*

Lamont Lacy, *Credit Manager*

Jeffrey Benge, *Financial Controller*

### BUCKEYE

26705 West Baseline Road  
Buckeye, AZ 85326  
(623) 386-4491

Tim Walsh, *Manager*

### FENNEMORE

17102 West Olive Avenue  
Waddell, AZ 85355  
(623) 935-4252

Craig Allen, *Manager*

### ROLL

4212 South Avenue 39E  
Roll, AZ 85347  
(928) 785-9016

Doug Canan, *Manager*

### THATCHER

4257 US Highway 70  
Thatcher, AZ 85552  
(928) 428-3161  
Shawn Wright, *Manager*

### WILLCOX

512 East Maley Street  
Willcox, AZ 85643  
(520) 384-2264

Tim Hudson, *Manager*

### YUMA

4290 East County 10½ Street  
Yuma, AZ 85365  
(928) 344-9806

Mike Espil, *Manager*

### FERTIZONA DE MEXICO

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Calle Rogelio Villanueva Varela SN  
Colonia La Victoria  
Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico 83304

Casey Compton (U.S.)  
(520) 510-5054

Gilberto Gil (Mexico)  
011-52 (662) 280-0121

### COMPTON AG SERVICES

19751 South Defrain Boulevard  
Blythe, CA 92225  
(760) 922-3117

Tim Walsh, *Manager*

### AG EXPRESS

15472 West Jimmie Kerr Boulevard  
Casa Grande, AZ 85122  
(520) 876-9982

Dave Barrett, *Manager*

### CYC SEED COMPANY

3085 North Cessna Way  
Casa Grande, AZ 85122  
(520) 316-3738

Casey Compton, *Manager*

Send address changes to:

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Casa Grande, AZ 85193-9024  
tcurrie@fertizona.com



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