



GROWING SMARTER

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NEWS & INFORMATION TO HELP YOU GROW

Lemons: One of the World's Favorite Fruits

Fertizona helps citrus growers achieve maximum crop quality

It's often said that Arizona is famous for "Five Cs" – Cotton, Cattle, Copper, Climate, and Citrus – and within that fifth category, lemons are by far the state's largest citrus crop. In fact, Arizona and California produce about 95% of America's lemons. The main reason for that is another one of those "C" factors, because the climate in Arizona is ideal for growing lemons.

Ancient Egyptians and Asians produced lemons more than 1,000 years ago, and it's believed that early Spanish settlers first brought the fruit to America. By the 1880s, lemons were becoming one of Arizona's most valuable crops, and in 1900, the state had over 1,500 acres of lemon trees.

Today, Americans buy close to a billion pounds of lemons every year for a tasty assortment of foods, beverages, flavorings, and preservatives. In 2019, lemons were the 15th most-purchased food item in the United States. Consumption is also increasing around the world, especially in the Far East, making lemons a valuable export crop as well.

Growing lemons takes another "C" factor: Commitment. You can't rotate other crops with lemons or expect a quick profit when they're planted. A lemon orchard is a long-term investment requiring a lot of patience.

"Most lemon trees take three to four years before producing any fruit," said PCA Gordon Goodwin, Fertizona – Yuma, "and six or seven before they're really profitable."

Our ideal environment

Gordon serves about a dozen lemon growers representing some 2,300 acres. In total, Arizona has roughly 7,300 lemon-bearing acres, with most of them in the Yuma area.

"Our sandy desert soils here are perfect for lemons," Gordon added, "and our hot summers help to hold down the populations of some pests, like Asian Citrus Psyllids."

The Asian Citrus Psyllid (or ACP) damages citrus plants and carries the bacterium that causes Huanglongbing (HLB) disease, also called citrus greening disease. HLB, one of the worst citrus threats in the world, has seriously impacted crops in Florida and Texas.

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A New Face In A Familiar Place

Those of you who have read previous editions of our Growing Smarter newsletter should be well aware that this particular space has always been reserved for our company founder – and my father – Jimmy Compton. Ever since we published our first issue way back in 2003, Jimmy has used this platform to be an advocate for Fertizona customers, Arizona agribusiness, our employees, and the way of life we all value so much. His thoughts and words have served to encourage us during the lean times and build on our mutual successes when things are going well.

Now that responsibility has been handed off to me. It's an opportunity I welcome with pride and enthusiasm. My sincere goal with this page is to maintain the high editorial standards Jimmy has set over the years,

and to keep sharing appropriate "words of wisdom" with you at every opportunity.

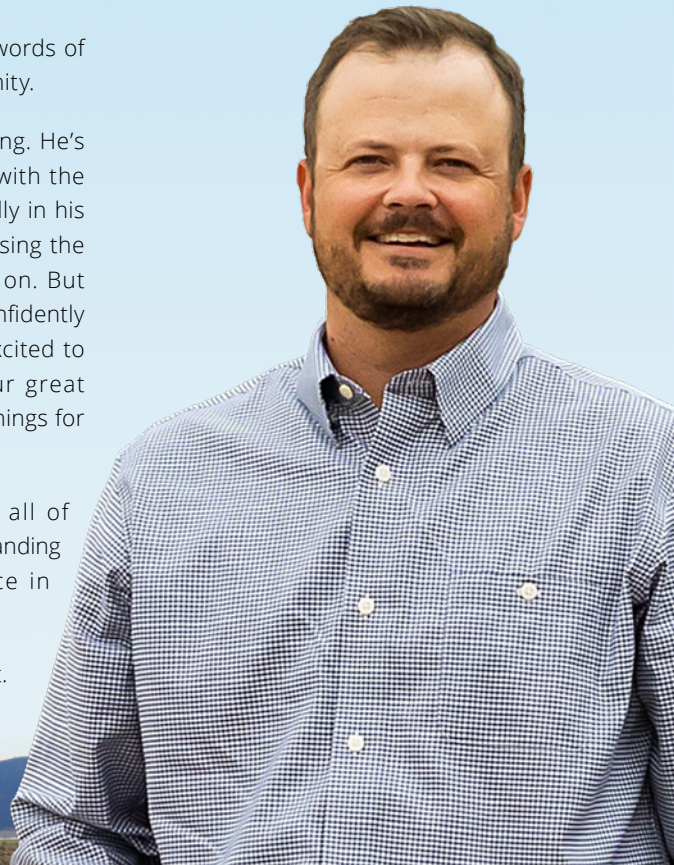
None of this means Jimmy is retiring. He's still going to be actively involved with the management of Fertizona, especially in his key role of negotiating and purchasing the major nutrients our growers rely on. But as the company moves forward confidently through various transitions, I'm excited to have the privilege of leading our great organization to bigger and better things for many more years to come.

I look forward to working with all of you and continuing Fertizona's outstanding traditions of quality and service in everything we do.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Casey Compton

President, Fertizona &
Compton Ag Services



Story continued from cover

"Some psyllids have been trapped by the researchers of University of Arizona, but to my knowledge, that virus has not been detected here, due to our summer heat," agreed PCA Dwight Palmer, Fertizona – Yuma, "and we apply foliar insecticide sprays starting around mid-February to mid-March to help control the movement and spread of the adults."

"The citrus thrip is our main threat," said Gordon. "Thrips can scar lemons and hurt the quality of a crop, and good lemon profits depend on high quality."

"Thrip pressure can be pretty intense, depending on the area," added Dwight, "but Fertizona has many effective insecticides to choose from and alter in rotation. Mites will sometimes be an issue, but they can be easily controlled with our insecticides."

Along with excellent pesticides, Fertizona offers proven fertility programs with optimal blends of macro- and micro-nutrients to promote top yields. Tissue and soil samples can determine an orchard's specific fertilizer requirements and detect any nutrient deficiencies.

"Those samples are usually taken at the beginning of the season to give us a starting point," Dwight explained. "Depending on the results, micro-nutrients can then be applied with foliar insect sprays or to the soil with other fertilizers."

In addition to their flavorful attributes, lemons represent many health benefits. The American

Heart Association says lemons and other citrus fruits may help prevent strokes for women, and lemon juice has shown to reduce the risk of kidney stones. As a powerful antioxidant, the vitamin C in lemons can even be effective in fighting cancer-forming free radicals.

The old cliché says, "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade." In Arizona, we can change that to "When land gives you lemons, make money."

For more details about maximizing a lemon crop, contact your nearest Fertizona or Compton Ag Services location.

"Good lemon profits depend on high quality."

– PCA Gordon Goodwin, Fertizona – Yuma

Morrow Farms; Las Uvas Valley, NM

Being in the right place at the right time

As we go through our lives, all of us have chance encounters with other people along the way, some of them are naturally more memorable than others. In many cases, we might not ever see the other person again, but occasionally the meetings can be life-altering. John Morrow, of Morrow Farms in southwestern New Mexico, described two of those events which have had a big impact on his life.

"My wife and I met at a funeral," he said with a bit of a laugh. That's definitely a significant encounter and undoubtedly quite an interesting story. John's other example of a fortunate introduction explains how he came to be a customer of Fertizona.

"I met Jimmy Compton at a team roping event back in about 2006," he said. "We just got to talking and figured out what each other does for a living, and we've been good friends ever since."

Morrow Farms and its associated company Las Uvas Valley Produce encompass about 1,300 acres of crops, mostly pinto beans, watermelons, and onions, but they also grow alfalfa, corn silage, triticale, and beardless wheat. The operation is managed by John, his brother - Harvey, and his father - Joe, with the support of John's son-in-law, niece and nine full-time employees. Many more part-time workers are added during seasonal busy periods.

"We're a real hands-on operation," John added, "and our needs change a lot around harvest time."

The Morrows began farming their current property in 1990, although their family history dates to a much earlier time. John was actually born in nearby Hatch, New Mexico, and raised on a farm there.

"I don't know exactly how long we've been in this area," he said, "but it goes back to the horse and mule days before we had tractors."

The region around Hatch and the Las Uvas Valley is famous for its abundant production

of chiles, and it has even earned the nickname of The Chile Capital of the World. The town has hosted a big annual chile festival every year since 1971. The Morrows are among the many local chile growers, but their main focus is on their other crops.

"Now they're especially well-known for high-quality watermelons and beans," said Casey Compton, who serves the farm for Fertizona. "They have a really nice operation over there."

Fertizona supplies the Morrow's farm with a variety of chemicals and occasionally some seed purchases as well.

"We've had a great relationship with them for a long time, and we were friends with the Comptons before we worked together," John said. "Fertizona is easy to do business with."

Well, John, we can honestly say we're very glad to have met you.

More information about the Morrows and Las Uvas Valley Produce can be found on their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/lasuvasproduce>

"Fertizona is easy to do business with."

- John Morrow, Morrow Farms; Las Uvas Valley, New Mexico



Close To Home, Far From Ordinary

PCA Jerry Guilin is part of his territory's history

Over the course of his 30+ years in agriculture, PCA Jerry Guilin has seen a lot of changes – some better than others. For example, he explained that good PCAs can cover a lot more ground today than they could a few decades ago, thanks to the many genetic improvements in seeds and plants.

"When the crop has built-in protection to help control pests, it keeps the field cleaner," he said, "and herbicide-tolerant plants work to reduce weed pressure. That makes it easier to check more fields."

On the other hand, Jerry pointed out that his territory now has fewer fields in general than it used to, because a lot of local acreage has been sold to the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) of Southern California, meaning there's less land available to farm.

Jerry works out of the Compton Ag Services headquarters in Blythe, California, which is actually very close to where he grew up. ("I know everybody around here," he said.) His father was a local PCA as well, and Jerry said he used to scout fields with him.

"I was just 16 or 17," he recalled, "and we'd walk together into a field, but only about half-way. Then my Dad would send me back to get the truck, so I could drive around and pick him up on the other side. I learned a lot from him."

Almost every one of the growers Jerry calls on produces alfalfa, and he follows their cutting schedules to provide timely services. He also has the advantage of being dual-licensed as a PCA in both California and Arizona, so he can work with growers in either state as their needs require.

In his spare time, Jerry devotes his energy and enthusiasm to raising affordable show cattle, particularly Maine-Anjou and Charolais breeds.

"Cattle can be expensive," he said, "and I wanted to have affordable calves for the kids to show in 4-H and FFA."

To find good breeding stock at auctions, he usually has to travel long distances to states such as Oklahoma and Colorado.

"The cattle take up a lot of my time, and there's no money in it," he said with a chuckle, "But it's fun."

Jerry also farms his own alfalfa on the side, often using his land for test plots, and he spent 17 years as a volunteer junior-high school football coach. He's been married for 35 years to his wife, Sophia, and they have a son, two daughters, and four grandchildren.

Jerry has obviously had a lot of different and interesting experiences in his life, and that would include his career at Fertizona, now at 13 years and counting.

"It's been great to work here," he said. "Fertizona is a company that really cares about its customers and employees."

"Fertizona is a company that really cares."

– Jerry Guilin, Compton Ag Services; Blythe, California



Jerry Guilin
Compton Ag Services



The Best of Both Sides

Axis Seed gives you top-level corn genetics with a local focus

As seed technology continually evolves, it can be tricky to keep up with the products being touted by the big national breeders and manufacturers. How can you be sure that a new hybrid which works great in Iowa or Nebraska will perform in the desert Southwest?

That same question has been addressed by Axis Seed Company, and they've come up with a unique strategy for Arizona corn growers: high-level forage genetics specifically suited for the Southwest, and thoroughly proven to perform in our conditions.

"All of our product has a local focus, and it's tailor-made just for this region," explained Jason Vieira of United Ag Solutions, the Western distributor for Axis Seed. "We're able to combine the latest and best genetics of the major suppliers, but our seed comes only from growers we know in the area."

"We're a regional, family-owned company with a lot of know-how about growing in the Southwest environment," added Jim Bryant, Field Sales Representative for Barkley Seed, Inc. of Yuma. "We also offer the advantage of great service, because we have the flexibility to adapt to a grower's changing needs on a daily basis."

The comprehensive Axis product line includes maturities from short-season to full, with a selection of seed genetics ranging from non-treated varieties to others with stacked traits for insect protection and herbicide tolerance. For many Arizona growers, the top Axis product choice is 68K80, which was specifically developed to handle heat stress and produce high yields in local conditions.

Jason and Jim pointed out that Axis Seed undergoes many annual tests on plots

in the area, all with a full spectrum of performance analytics and careful evaluation processes. Those extensive data-gathering efforts enable Axis to improve their customized product offerings every season.

The company's focused strategy is clearly paying off: in just three years since introducing the seed, Axis sales have doubled every year. A great deal of that success can be attributed to the products' affordability and bottom-line value, as Axis Seed has consistently shown to deliver an exceptional return on investment.

"Our growers realize that we give them the best bang for their buck," Jim said with confidence.

To learn more about Axis Seed and how it can work for you, contact your nearest Fertizona or Compton Ag Services location.

"We give them the best bang for their buck."

– Jim Bryant, Barkley Seed, Inc.

Improve Your Winter Turfgrass with Furst-Class Fertilizer

Exclusive nutrient blend stimulates growth and dark green color

When you're looking for ways to promote healthy turfgrass with rich green color throughout the winter, Fertilzona's Furst®-Class 21-3-3+10% Fe is an ideal fertilizer to help you do it.

Granular Furst-Class 21-3-3+10% Fe is a unique specialty blend containing 10 percent iron, and it's formulated to provide optimal nutrition for exceptional turf results. The iron in Furst-Class 21-3-3+10% Fe goes a long way in promoting turf color, because iron is an important component of plant enzymes and proteins involved in nitrogen metabolism and chlorophyll synthesis. Turfgrass deficient in iron often exhibits random yellow mottling.

"It's a very effective fertilizer that gives your grass a real 'Wow!' effect," said Cory Scherting, Fertilzona's Turf and Landscape Sales Manager. "We call it our winter blend, because it's specifically made to activate quickly in the cold. The iron gets taken up by the turf even when the grass is barely growing."

Using Fertilzona's patented nutritional technology, Furst-Class 21-3-3+10% Fe relies on amino acids and proteins to activate essential biological responses in plants. On turfgrass, that means it encourages stronger root systems, improved fill-in, and increased overall plant health.

"It's a special combination of 11.87% ammoniacal nitrogen and 9.13% nitrate nitrogen to promote balanced feeding," explained Tim Gavelek, Turf Management Specialist, Fertilzona – Fennemore. "With that split blend, you get a quick release of nitrogen for fast green-up, plus extended feeding for longer-lasting color."

While the nitrogen and 10% iron are instrumental for making the product more visually effective, its potash (K) supports turf's cold hardiness and stimulates efficient nitrogen utilization. The phosphorus (P) increases stress tolerance and root strength, especially in early growth stages.

Furst-Class 21-3-3+10% Fe also provides the benefits of a small, consistent prill size to improve its spreadability and total effectiveness. Every homogenous granule contains the same balance of highly available N, P, K, and iron, ensuring uniform distribution and no nutrient segregation. Fertilizer granules impregnated in the Furst blending process are more capable of delivering nutrients efficiently.

"Everybody I know who's tried the product has kept using it," Cory added enthusiastically. "I've never seen anybody not come back to it."

To learn more about Furst-Class 21-3-3+10% Fe or other products to improve your course this winter, contact your local Fertilzona or Compton Ag office or visit www.fertilzona.com



New bagging line creates more product options

Fertilzona has recently added a second bagging line to expand our capabilities, enabling us to now offer customized fertilizer formulations in smaller bags.

"We've always had a wide range of bag sizes available from fifteen pounds to fifty, but we weren't able to put product into anything as small as a five-pound bag before," said Tyke Bennett, Fertilzona's Seed Products Sales Manager & Fertilizer Bagging Manager. "The new bagging line, which is right next to the old one, can run five- to fifty-pounders."

The addition has doubled production capacity, and it also enhances our reliability. Being able to offer private-labeled nutrient blends in five-pound bags means Fertilzona can provide a valuable new product choice for nurseries, garden centers, and landscapers whose end-user customers want the convenience of the easy-to-handle smaller sizes.

"The popular smaller bags have really come into fashion in the past few years," Tyke added, "so they definitely fit the needs of our small-market customers."



New Hires

James McAndrew
Willcox

Justin Stallings
CYC Solutions

Francisco Espinoza
Ag Express

Levi Joiner
CYC Solutions

Rodolfo Gonzalez Sanchez
Compton Ag Services

In Memoriam

Dr. Mike Matheron
1947-2020



Honoring A Game-Changer

The late Mike Matheron left his mark on all of us

The Arizona agriculture industry lost one of its longtime leading innovators last summer when Dr. Mike Matheron passed away after a long battle with cancer. He was 73. Mike was a well-known Research Scientist and Extension Plant Pathologist at the University of Arizona, which he joined after moving to Yuma in 1984. He had retired in January of 2020.

A Vietnam veteran and a native of the California Bay Area, Mike pursued his education at the University of California-Davis and the University of Oregon (where he met his future wife), eventually earning his Ph.D. in Plant Pathology from UC-Davis. At UA, he specialized in research which focused on improving management strategies for disease control in vegetables and citrus.

"He was a great scientist – a great pathologist – but he was an even better person," said Dr. John Palumbo, Research Specialist and Professor of Entomology at UA. "He was very humble, and I never heard him complain or say anything negative."

"He was perpetually upbeat and he got along with everybody," agreed Barry Tickes, Area Agriculture Agent for Yuma and La Paz counties at the Yuma Agriculture Center, who worked alongside Mike for many years. "He never said a bad word about anybody. In spite of a lot of adversity in his own life, and no matter how stressful the job was, he always seemed peaceful and relaxed."

"What people might not know is that 30 to 35 years ago, Mike defined many of the practices that we still use today,"

John continued. "He found better ways to battle fungal disease and he really made a difference in our industry."

"He was one of my favorite people," Barry added. "It's still hard for me to go past his office and realize he's gone."

Clearly, Dr. Matheron's work in agriculture improved the lives of many people, but his motivation to help others was also evident through his volunteer work as a Jehovah's Witness. Mike is survived by his beloved wife Diane, their two sons David and Daniel, and many other relatives, in-laws, friends, and professional colleagues. He will be greatly missed.

Dr. Palumbo added, "There's no way he's not in Heaven."



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