



GROWING SMARTER

February 2015 • Issue No. 40

News & Information To Help You Grow



Feed your durum wheat for maximum profits

Top durum wheat yields depend on fertilizer, opportunities for growers are better than ever

It's a great time to be a durum wheat grower.

Among many millers and other grain industry experts, desert durum has a reputation for being some of the best in the world. The climate and growing conditions of the Southwest are ideal for producing high-quality durum, especially at harvest time when our weather is typically dry.

"Rain at harvest really affects the quality of durum, and that's what happened in North Dakota this year," explained Steve Rosburg, Feed Ingredient Merchandiser at Arizona Grain, Inc. "There's a lot of poor quality wheat on the market right now, which means the good crops will be in greater demand."

"The whole world is looking for better durum stock," agreed Eric Wilkey, president of Arizona Grain. "Not only did the U.S. and Canada produce some poor crops, Europe has had two lower-quality years back-to-back. We need additional acres here."

Top dollar for top quality

Because there's such a shortage of good durum this year, millers are willing to pay a premium price to get it. That's good news for Southwest growers.

"We're seeing the best prices we've had in years," said Wilkey. "With corn and cotton prices where they are, durum stands alone as a grower's best profit alternative."

But the challenge isn't just about volume. Durum wheat is held to strict standards of quality for protein content (13%), semolina yield, test weight, moisture, color and other milling criteria, including maximum residual levels (MRLs) of chemicals (see sidebar article.) Growers whose wheat doesn't measure up to those levels will have to sell it for less.

"Quality is everything right now," Wilkey added emphatically. "If you want to avoid discounts for your wheat and make the most of these profit opportunities, top quality should be the target."

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Jim Compton
President, Fertizona and
Compton Ag Services

“Platform selling” comes to agriculture

I recently talked to an old friend of mine, Jim Budzynski, who's also a genius about agricultural technology. Jim told me about new trends in our business. The short version is that many traditional Ag suppliers no longer focus on individual products and brand names,

but on “integrated platform selling.” He compared long standing crop chemical manufacturers to modern high-tech giants like Apple and Google.

Those big digital companies “platform sell” by offering multiple communications systems and technologies that work hand-in-hand, like smart phones, music, data exchange, cloud computing and so on. The idea is to provide everything that somebody needs under one company umbrella. Now our industry is experiencing that same trend.

Several big agricultural manufacturers built a name for themselves with well-known pesticide brands or seeds, but now they're expanding into biotechnology, information systems, water treatment and more, hoping to be the one exclusive supplier a grower can turn to.

Jim called it “Productivity Convergence Technology Integration,” which may be a fancy way of saying you make all the tools work together. In the world of precision agriculture, that could mean using GPS and other systems to make smarter crop decisions based on satellite field mapping, genetic engineering, real-time weather data, soil nutrient levels, and other types of statistical analysis.

It's all exciting and a little scary at the same time. But what does it mean to you and me? At Fertizona – long before we had access to cell phones or computers – our goal has been to keep growers better informed of ways to help them succeed and prosper.

That role hasn't changed, and never will. As bio science and high-tech tools become bigger parts of our everyday lives, remember that you can keep trusting Fertizona for guidance and partnership to help you work through the changes and stay ahead of the curve.

Story continued from cover

Fertilizer makes the difference

A key factor in the quality of durum wheat is its high protein content. If a crop doesn't meet the 13% protein level, the grower gets a reduced price. To achieve and maintain such high protein, it's crucial that you give your wheat the right amounts of nitrogen at the right times.

“To get the best protein and yield, you need to put nitrogen down throughout the season,” said Ben Hoyler, an independent Pest Control Advisor who serves Pima and Pinal counties. “I recommend that growers give durum a shot of nitrogen with every irrigation. Timely applications of water and nitrogen are really important.”

Specifically, Hoyler says a good durum crop needs a total of 300-320 pounds of available nitrogen throughout the year.

“If you don't put out at least 300 units of nitrogen, you're not going to get your high yields,” said Hoyler. “It's that simple.”

In addition, growers who apply 320 pounds of nitrogen to their wheat will generally get a substantially higher yield than growers who don't. And then when they go to sell their wheat, they don't lose a lot of money because of low protein levels.”

It's especially important to fertilize at maturing and heading when protein levels are being set. Too much fertilizer in the early growth stages can contribute to lodging, which is another good reason to spread applications throughout the season.

“If a grower is ever going to consider cutting back on fertilizer, this isn't the year to do it,” said Rosburg. “There's such a demand for high-quality durum right now, good management is critical, and that includes applying enough fertilizer.”

Fertizona offers a comprehensive range of excellent fertilizers which can be customized to the needs of your soil, cultural practices and selected wheat varieties, along with the herbicides, surfactants and adjuvants you need to help grow the highest quality durum.

For more information, please contact your local Fertizona or Compton Ag Services location.

Quality includes chemical management

In addition to protein, moisture and many other quality traits, grain buyers and millers evaluate a durum crop for its maximum residual levels (MRLs) of chemicals and pesticides. The MRL standards are particularly sensitive in Italy and other European countries.

Recently updated guidelines specifically request that durum growers avoid all of these pesticides in their wheat. Find out more by visiting www.arizonagrains.com/index.cfm?show=10&mid=38.

Additionally, you can use the following chart to find the SmartBlend™ program best for your crops. Fertizona recommends adding ½ gallon of Furst®-Class Concentrate per ton of UN-32 to help improve your nutrient uptake.

Product Name	Time of Use	Application Rates
46-0-0 Urea	During Season 300 lbs. N for crop	600 lbs. per acre for growing season
32-0-0 UN-32	During Season 300 lbs. N for crop	60-70 gal. per acre
28-26-0 SmartBlend™	pre-plant	200-300 lbs. per acre
16-20-0	pre-plant	200-300 lbs. per acre
11-52-0 MAP	pre-plant	125-200 lbs. per acre

M&M Farms

Steve Melton helps to feed the world's livestock.

M&M Farms in the Harquahala Valley west of Phoenix earned a reputation in previous years for producing some of the best cotton yields in the state, but for the time being, that's history.

"We've grown other crops here, but we decided to go with all hay, starting this year," explained Steve Melton, one of the farm's partners.

Steve is the second generation of Meltons to be working that land. His father moved to Arizona in 1958 from Chino, California, where he had been a dairy producer, and then became a homesteader in Harquahala.

The original farm in its early years was about 1600 acres planted mostly in wheat, barley and sorghum. In the 1960s, the operation added some cotton acreage, which was an important crop for them for a long time. But now Melton's focus is all on hay.

"We're currently working about 3,500 acres, and we aim for ten cuttings a year," Melton added, "and we'll probably export about 90 percent of that."

As worldwide dairy consumption has increased in recent years, overseas markets are generating higher demand for U.S. hay,

especially in countries with water restrictions for their local growers, like the Middle East. Growers like the Meltons are benefitting from those export trends.

A family farm, a great life

Steve started working full-time on the family farm in 1995, and his father gradually transitioned control of the operation to him over the years. Steve stepped into the lead management role of M&M in 2005. Today Melton's business partners are his wife, Stacey, and his son, Hayden. Although he's still a full-time student, Hayden has many responsibilities around the farm and works when he can. The operation also employs a full-time staff of about 15 other workers.

"We have a great life here, and this is all I ever wanted to do," Melton said. "It's a lot of work, but

you'll never hear me complain about it. I've also been really lucky to be surrounded by so many great people who've made everything more enjoyable for me."

Help from Fertizona

Some of those people around Melton are Doyle Stewart, PCA, Fertizona – Buckeye, and the rest of the Fertizona team at that location. M&M consistently relies on Fertizona for seed, fertilizer, pesticide and other products.

"I've never really worked with anybody else but Fertizona ever since I got here," Melton said. "They have great people, great service and competitive prices. I trust Fertizona for just about everything."

Steve Melton and his son, Hayden at their farm in Harquahala Valley.



"This is all I ever wanted to do."

– Steve Melton, M&M Farms

New nitrogen stabilizers offer options and improvements

Make your fertilizer more efficient



When Do I Use N-Yield™ & N-Bound™?

	Fertilizer	Winter	Summer		Rate
N-YIELD Broadcast/ Banded	Urea 46-0-0	X	X	N-YIELD NITROGEN STABILIZER	3 qts/ton N-YIELD
	UAN 32-0-0	X			1.5 qts/ton N-YIELD
All Application Methods	UAN-32 or Urea Solutions		X	N-YIELD NITROGEN STABILIZER N-BOUND NITROGEN STABILIZER	1.5 qts/ton N-YIELD + 2 qts/ton N-BOUND

As this chart shows, N-Yield is the stabilizer to use at this time of year. Summer applications may call for a mix of N-Yield and N-Bound.



For years, many successful growers have relied on nitrogen stabilizers to minimize urea and UAN fertilizer losses in their fields, even though their product choice was limited to only one source: Agrotain®. But now Southwest growers have options.

Using an exclusive formulation technology known as PENXCEL™, Eco Agro Resources has developed two new patent-pending stabilizer products:

1. N-Yield™ with the same active ingredient as Agrotain Ultra for controlling volatility and

2. N-Bound™ containing the active ingredient found in Agrotain Plus for controlling denitrification and leaching

Depending on crop residue, heat, moisture and soil type, nitrogen fertilizer can quickly break down and escape either into the atmosphere or through leaching.

As much as 40% of surface-applied urea-based fertilizer can be lost to the environment, which means the grower is paying for fertilizer his plants never get. Nitrogen stabilizers can slow natural conversion processes, keeping more nutrients in the root zone. That's a good investment.

"At Fertilzona, one of our goals is to give growers smart choices," said Tyrell Currie, Safety and Marketing Manager, Fertilzona. "Agrotain works, but we feel this new PENXCEL technology is a superior option."

Both N-Yield and N-Bound utilize PENXCEL technology which improves performance. PENXCEL drives the stabilizer ingredients deeper into the fertilizer granules. Penetrating the granules results in a more consistent, free-flowing finished blend that is less sticky and minimizes application risks like clogging spreaders.

Yield is another benefit. Because N-Yield coats fertilizer more thoroughly and consistently, the stabilizer works more evenly in the field. Early university research – in tough conditions similar to Arizona – indicates a potential performance advantage with N-Yield.

"We don't believe in pushing certain brands," Currie added. "We believe in making the best technologies available for customers, so they can make product choices that best fit their operations. That's what trusted advisors do."

For specific details about the right nitrogen stabilizers for your crops, contact your Fertilzona or Compton Ag representative at a nearby location.

Still going strong

In our 40th issue, a second spotlight on PCA Gordon Goodwin

“I’ve been blessed to have such great growers to work with.”

– Gordon Goodwin, PCA,
Fertizona – Yuma



Fertizona PCA Gordon Goodwin, his wife Wendy and their children Rebecca and Carter.

Gordon Goodwin, PCA, Fertizona – Yuma is a man of many unique talents and characteristics. Now, he can add another distinction to his achievements: he’s been the subject of Fertizona’s “Meet Your Rep” two times.

In fact, Goodwin was featured in the very first edition of the Growing Smarter newsletter way back in 2003. Now as we celebrate our 40th issue, it seems appropriate to check back in with him.

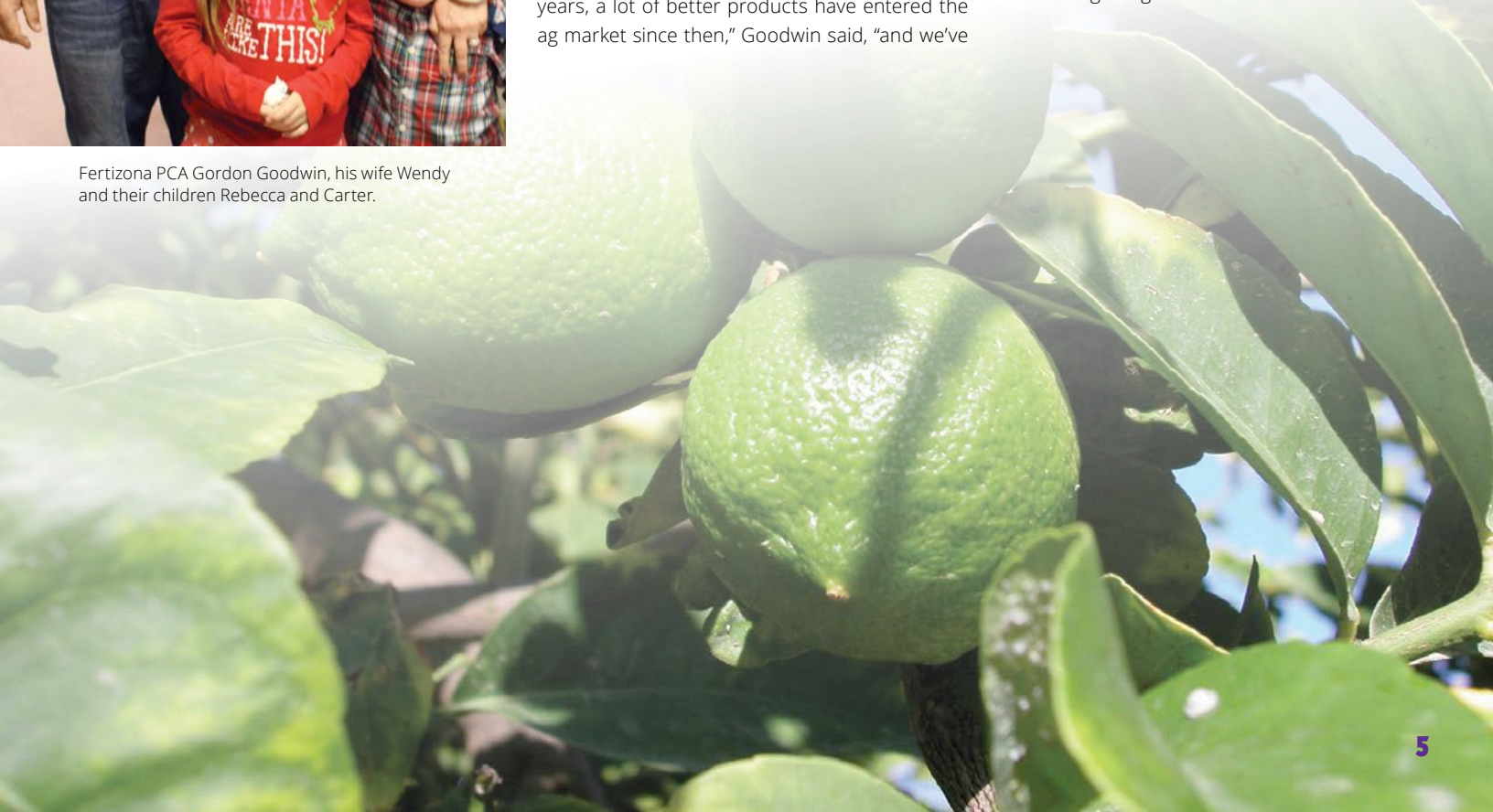
“Well, for one thing, I’m still married,” Goodwin said with a chuckle, when asked to compare his life now to 12 years ago. When he was interviewed the first time, Goodwin was still a single guy, but he was busy making wedding plans. Now he and his wife Wendy have an eight year-old daughter, Rebecca, and a son, Carter, who’s four.

“In terms of other changes I’ve seen during those years, a lot of better products have entered the ag market since then,” Goodwin said, “and we’ve

got some new disease issues. For example, downy mildew is more of a problem now than it used to be.”

Goodwin joined Fertizona in 1997, and even though his proven track record on the job is evidence of his knowledge and expertise, he admits he’s still learning. As new crop-related challenges and opportunities present themselves, Goodwin is always ready to adapt to serve his customers better. He emphasized that dealing with other PCAs is also part of the ongoing learning experience for him, as he and his fellow professionals work together to develop new solutions for Fertizona’s growers, especially in vegetable and citrus crops.

“I have to say I’ve really lucked out,” he added modestly. “I have a job that I really enjoy, working for a great company, and I’ve been blessed to have such great growers to work with.”



Pop-up fertilizers boost yields

A strong start is critical for good
lettuce and melons

“You should do everything
you can to give that crop
a strong, healthy start.”

– Mike Espil, Manager
Fertizona – Yuma



Adding the right preplant fertilizer can make a big difference in the success of your crops, and for lettuce and melons, an ideal product to use is Fertizona's liquid Rizen™ 7-28-3. Rizen is a high-quality NPK pop-up fertilizer developed specifically for Arizona's climate, soil conditions and crop nutrient requirements.

The high level of phosphorus in Rizen stimulates quick germination and root development, resulting in a more vigorous start to young seedlings and stronger plant growth. In addition, the near-neutral pH of Rizen limits the possibility of free ammonia damage to sensitive seedlings.

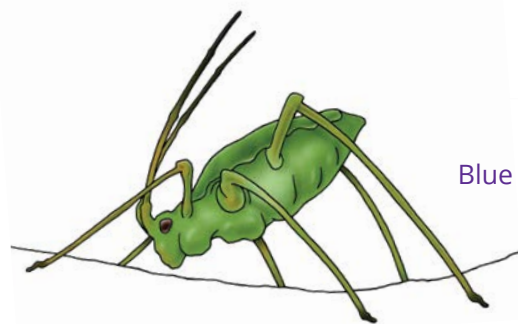
“A strong start is essential to a short-term crop like lettuce so that it will mature at the right time,” explained Mike Espil, Manager, Fertizona – Yuma. “You can't afford to have lettuce struggle early, because it won't have time to catch up.”

To maximize the effectiveness of a Rizen injection, the fertilizer can be blended with micronutrients and special soil-conditioning agents. Those blends can help to promote better moisture access in the root zone and alleviate potential stress on the young plants, depending on a grower's specific soil conditions.

For melons, Espil said that applying the Rizen by itself – at a rate of 25–35 gal/acre, injected directly 2 to 3 inches below the seed line at planting – has worked extremely well for his growers.

“You should do everything you can, as early as you can, to give that crop a strong, healthy start,” Espil added, “and Rizen is an easy, effective way to do that.”

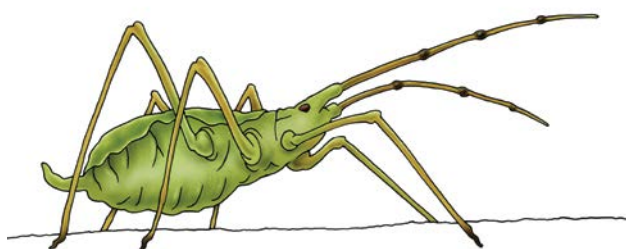
Fertizona can customize a special SmartBlend™ pop-up fertilizer for you, based on your exact needs. For details, contact your Fertizona or Compton Ag representative at a nearby location.



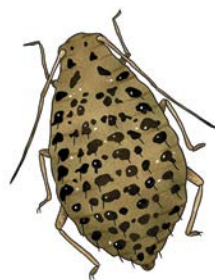
Blue Alfalfa Aphid

Alfalfa faces greater aphid pressure in 2015

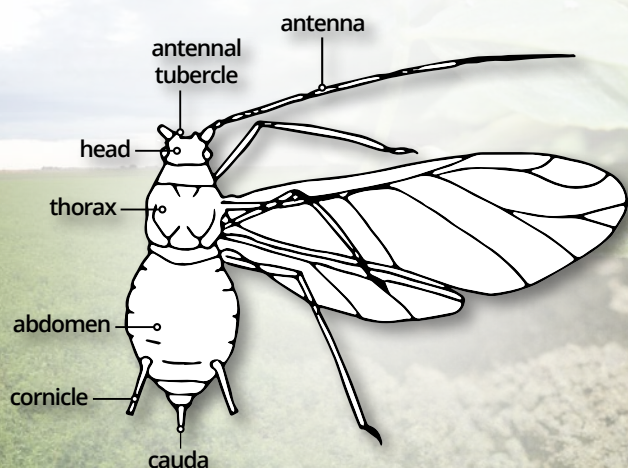
Timing and effective control help reduce threats



Pea Aphid



Spotted Alfalfa Aphid



While growers must be prepared to combat a number of pests during a typical Southwest growing season, few insects can do as much damage to a crop as aphids.

"Aphids are the big issue in alfalfa right now," said Ken Narramore, a Pest Control Advisor with Verde Agricultural Consulting, "and we're in a very challenging environment. This year, the conditions have been even more favorable for aphid growth because we didn't have a hard freeze."

Two of the most common and destructive varieties in the desert Southwest are pea aphids and blue alfalfa aphids. These tiny, green pests feed on new alfalfa growth at the tips and young leaves, where they suck fluids from the plants. At the same time, aphids inject a toxin that retards plant growth and reduces yield, and may even kill the plants. Aphid damage can also affect the hay's feed value.

Another part of the problem is that aphids reproduce extremely quickly and can infest a field almost overnight. For that reason, alfalfa growers should inspect their fields every three or four days for aphid damage. Early signs include twisted or deformed tips and some yellowing of leaves. A heavy aphid infestation can cause stunting of the stems.

The good news is that Fertizona offers several effective pesticides labeled for aphid control, and other new products awaiting registration may soon be available.

"Malathion has traditionally been a good treatment, and it's zero days-to-harvest," Narramore added. "We've also had success with Govern® 4E (chlorpyrifos), especially on pea aphids. The blue aphid is tougher to control. Mixing products with pyrethroids adds some synergy."

Pea and blue aphids thrive in cooler weather, so they grow more quickly in January and February. That means good scouting and management are extremely important right now.

For more information about controlling aphids or any pests, stop by your local branch or talk to your Fertizona representative.

"Aphids are the big issue in alfalfa right now."

– Ken Narramore, PCA,
Verde Agricultural Consulting



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Casa Grande, AZ 85193
(520) 836-7477

Dennis Osborn
Crop Protection

Tyke Bennett
Seed Products & Fertilizer Bagging

Jimmy Compton
Crop Nutrition

Lamont Lacy
Credit Manager

Jeffrey Bengé
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*

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*

FERTIZONA DE MEXICO

Blvd. Enrique Mazón Lopez esquina con
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

Send address changes to:

Tyrell Currie
2850 South Peart Road
Casa Grande, AZ 85193-9024
tcurrie@fertizona.com



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