



# GROWING SMARTER

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News & Information To Help You Grow

## Reduce corn yield loss from spider mites

**Effective surfactant economically improves control**

Some people say the only sure things in life are death and taxes. But if you grow corn silage in the Southwest, you can probably add spider mites to that list.

"Spider mites are inevitable. Everybody gets them," said Dennis Osborn, Crop Protection Sales Manager, Fertizona. "For most guys it's just a question of when, and how often to treat."

Mites can quickly cause serious damage to a corn crop and significantly reduce yields. They affect young corn plants by piercing their leaves and sucking out juices, which causes premature drying of tissue, stalk breakage and kernel shrinking. In Arizona, the biggest threats are two-spotted spider mites and Pacific spider mites, both of which thrive in hot, dry weather.

"I've seen cases where growers have lost five tons an acre to spider mites," Osborn added,

"and with silage prices so good right now, it doesn't take much to justify an investment in miticides. It's just smart insurance."

"Mite control starts with good scouting," said Tom Montoya, PCA, Fertizona – Casa Grande. "The mites are there, but you have to see where you are in the life cycles of the plants and the mites."

Montoya recommends scouting your corn for mites at least every 5 – 7 days, starting with the edges of the fields, especially near roads and ditches. Spider mites like to travel by air, and clouds of dust from passing vehicles can kick up a lot of bugs and drive them into nearby fields.

"It's a numbers game," continued Montoya. "Mites reproduce very rapidly, so you need to keep any population manageable."

*Story continued on page 2*

Frank Peairs, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

**IN THIS ISSUE:**



**3**

**Operations Overview**

Rick Napolitano goes from fire house to farm house



**5**

**Meet Your Rep**

PCA Lin Evans: a lifetime of learning



**7**

**Tech Update**

Corn silage field trials compare seed brands





**Jim Compton**  
President, Fertizona and  
Compton Ag Services

## Changing the rules for the common good

Everybody in agribusiness is painfully aware of the amount of rules and regulations we deal with on a daily basis. Perhaps more than any other industry, we're constantly being watched by an alphabet soup of government agencies like the EPA, AzDA, DOT and more, and it's even

more complicated since the Department of Homeland Security got involved.

Naturally some monitoring is important to protect the quality of our crops and livestock and keep workers and the public safe, but sometimes the restrictions just get oppressive and unnecessarily harsh. When that happens, good people need to get involved and make change.

For several years recently, state governments interpreting narrow and not well-defined rules have made it harder for qualified individuals to earn a PCA license. Sharp, experienced men and women with college degrees were the primary victims. In addition to frustrating those candidates, the rest of us were faced with a looming shortage of good pest-control advisors. Two-thirds of our PCAs are over the age of 50, and by attrition alone, there weren't enough young people coming to fill the ranks.

But thanks to a great cooperative effort between Fertizona, the Arizona Crop Protection Association, the University of Arizona, Central Arizona College as well as the Arizona Department of Agriculture and others, we successfully modified the rules for AZ PCA certification. That's not to say it's easy to get licensed, but we persuaded the governing offices to make the process a clearer path by specifying guidelines and making the academic requirements more flexible. As a result, more young professionals in Arizona now have a better chance of pursuing a PCA career and providing valuable services for the rest of us. This is a real win for everybody.

They say you can't change the system, but every now and then, it really pays off when you do.

*Story continued from cover*

## Excellent treatment options

Fortunately, Fertizona offers many top-quality insecticides that provide outstanding control on local spider mite species. Two of the most popular and effective choices are Zeal® by Valent and Onager® from Arizona-based Gowan Company.

Yet as good as those and other chemicals are, they all have better performance when they're mixed with a proven wetting agent. An effective surfactant has spreading qualities that help move the insecticide into the hard-to-reach areas of the plant where mites like to hide. Spider mites prefer to attack the undersides of corn leaves, but aerial applications and higher ground-spray rigs naturally can't hit those pests underneath.

"Coverage is key," said Montoya. "You really need the treatment to get to the mites on both sides of the leaves if you want the best control."

"It definitely helps when you include an adjuvant to promote more spreadability on the plant," agreed Osborn. "We like to recommend WETCIT®. It's a great product."

WETCIT surfactant from Oro Agri, Inc., is a unique adjuvant developed with patented technology to enhance and accelerate the performance of pesticides it's mixed with. Although WETCIT is relatively new to the U.S. market, it's been



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– Dennis Osborn,  
Crop Protection Sales  
Manager, Fertizona

used successfully on millions of acres around the world.

"Right now, WETCIT in Arizona is only available through Fertizona," said Jon Pasquinelli, Southwest Area Manager for Oro Agri, "but growers can get more information by visiting our website at [wetcitusa.com](http://wetcitusa.com)."

Oro Agri recommends a rate of 32 – 64 ounces of WETCIT per 100 gallons of foliar spray solution. "For some applications, that means you're only looking at about a dollar and a half per acre," Montoya said. "That's not much to pay for the big improvement you get."

"I'd say that it's a must," Osborn continued. "If you want the best results, you need both the treatment and the adjuvant, and WETCIT doesn't cost a lot of money."

"You can manage mites if you keep the population in check," concluded Montoya. "But remember, if they get out of control, there's no silver bullet to solve the problem."

*For more information about controlling spider mites and maximizing corn yields, please contact your local Fertizona or Compton Ag Services location.*

# Napolitano Farms

## Buckeye, AZ

### Rick Napolitano goes from firehouse to farmhouse

A lot of successful growers have unique and colorful stories about how their agricultural careers were shaped. Rick Napolitano's personal history includes several noteworthy twists.

"It all started sometime back in the 1930s, when my grandfather moved to Arizona to work with his cousin who had a gold mine out here," Rick explained. "His cousin also ran a cotton gin, but then when one of his grower customers left the farm, he needed somebody to take care of that cotton crop. My grandpa volunteered."

That began the multi-generational legacy of Napolitano Farms in Buckeye, which Rick now manages. His father, Dick Napolitano, ran the operation until his recent retirement.

Coincidentally, one of the family descendants is David Gehrts, Yard Manager, Fertizona – Buckeye. He's Dick's grandson and Rick's nephew.

"When I was a kid, they had a lot of cotton out there, but now it's mostly alfalfa," David said, "and they even had a feedlot for awhile. I still go and help them at the farm sometimes, but my main job is here."

Apparently, working two jobs is something that runs in the family, because Rick is also a firefighter in Goodyear, Arizona.

#### Interesting career moves

After going to college and earning an MBA, Rick worked in banking and professional farm management, specializing in land sales. But about twelve years ago, he decided he wanted to do something different, and he left his office job to become a firefighter.



"The Napolitanos have been well-respected in the community for generations."

– Ken Narramore, Independent PCA  
Verde Agriculture Consulting, LLC

"I guess it's in our blood," he said. "My grandpa was the first fire chief in Buckeye, and my father and I both served as volunteer firefighters."

About that same time, Rick's dad was approaching retirement, and he asked his son to consider helping him with responsibilities around the farm. Rick agreed, and he's been actively involved on the land ever since. But when asked which is his full-time job, farming or fire-fighting, Rick said without hesitating, "They both are."

In addition to his demanding work schedule, Rick has time to be a good family man. He and his wife Sheree have been married 27 years, and they have three sons and a daughter.

"I've known Ken for thirty years," said Rick. "There's nobody better. Fertizona has always been real responsive for us."

"The Napolitanos have been good customers of Fertizona for a long time," added Ken. "They're great people, and they've been well-respected in the community for generations."

#### Help from Fertizona

At Napolitano Farms, Rick now oversees almost 800 acres of wheat and alfalfa, producing a lot of high-quality forage with the help of three full-time employees. He also counts on support from the team at Fertizona – Buckeye, especially Ken Narramore, PCA.





# The downside of Big Data

Growers need a local advisor like Fertizona to have options

21<sup>st</sup>-century agriculture puts unprecedented emphasis on data collection and analysis in conjunction with high-tech innovations, and that should be a good thing. But it has major drawbacks for many growers.

Dr. Jim Budzynski, Managing Principal of MacroGain Partners, is a long-time agribusiness consultant and strategist who studies industry issues. Now he's seeing problems with farms getting too data-dependent.

"Data has real value, and it's great to be bullish on technology," he said, "but what's happening is that growers are getting locked in to one supplier's platform, and that limits their alternatives."

Budzynski compares the current evolution of ag to trends with technology giants such as Apple and Microsoft. Specifically, those companies want you to be tied to their exclusive platforms so it's painful or impossible to integrate another vendor's system with theirs. ("The patient rejects the organ," he said.) Now the same thing is occurring with seed genetics, crop protection, cultural practices and more.

"The big companies can analyze mountains of data about your soil, yields, insects, you name it," Budzynski explained. "Then they'll sell you their products based on your numbers, using recommendations developed by their computer programs. Many of those programming folks have never even been on a farm – it's just a numbers game. But farming isn't like a widget factory; it's unpredictable. What if conditions change and you decide to plant something else from a different seed supplier? It's difficult. That's cross-platform pain."

Budzynski is passionately concerned about growers who inadvertently get trapped with one supplier, but he offers a simple, age-old solution: Just trust your gut feeling and your local ag retailer.

"Growers know what's best for them," he said emphatically, "and they just need a friend to help them sift through the challenges. Don't expect a big company to give you options outside of their products. Keep your own data and then talk to a retailer who understands you, like Fertizona," concluded Budzynski. "Jim's right, we've heard all the questions before and we can offer you a range of different products to fit your individual situation," added Dennis Osborn, Fertizona Crop Protection Sales Manager. "Give us a call and let Fertizona tailor a solution that works for you."

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– Dr. Jim Budzynski,  
Managing Principal,  
MacroGain Partners

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PCA Lin Evans poses for a family portrait with his wife Kathy and daughter Lacy.



“There’s no substitute for experience.”

– Lin Evans,  
Independent PCA,  
Lin Evans Enterprises, LLC

# A lifetime of learning

## PCA Lin Evans thrives on knowledge

It’s often said that experience is the best teacher, and Lin Evans is a great example. Evans is an independent Pest Control Advisor who works mainly in the West Valley of Phoenix, and he’s spent his entire career accumulating information and expertise to assist his grower customers.

“You have to know as much as possible to do this job right,” he said. “That means being an entomologist, an agronomist, a botanist and more. My growers are very specialized, and I have to be familiar with every aspect of every crop.”

Evans actually grew up in the industry, because his father was a plant pathologist. After finishing college (with degrees in Zoology), Evans went to work for a large ag-chem company, but in 1986 he launched his own consulting business.

“That was good timing,” he added, “because Fertizona was getting started then, too.” It was the beginning of a great relationship.

### Earning growers’ trust

Evans takes his responsibilities very seriously, and he clearly understands the value of having a deep knowledge base.

“It dawned on me long ago that we’re dealing with people’s livelihoods,” he said. “Every decision you make for a grower is critical, so you better be darn sure you’re right.”

Having reliable support is part of that process, and Evans knows he can count on the team at Fertizona – Fennemore.

“When a grower has a crisis, time is of the essence,” he explained, “and that means getting the products you need, right away. Fertizona is always good about having inventory on hand.”

### Living the commitment

Evans serves several large growers who produce vegetables and specialty crops such as roses, giving him a demanding schedule year-round.



“With those crops, I never get an off-season,” Evans said, “so I don’t really have any hobbies.” However, he does make occasional getaways to the beach in Mexico with his wife, Kathy. They’ve been married for 43 years, and have a grown daughter who lives in Los Angeles.

“Yeah, I’ve been around a long time,” he admitted, “but that’s allowed me to learn a lot. There’s no substitute for experience.”

# Summer brings new alfalfa pest pressure

## Control leafhoppers to protect hay yields and quality

After a mild winter, 2015 threatened to be a bad year for aphids in alfalfa. Fortunately, the problems were fewer than feared.

"We seem to be past the worst, but alfalfa growers still need aphid control," warned Ken Narramore, a Pest Control Advisor with Verde Agricultural Consulting. "Alfalfa acreage is up, and there can be more outbreaks."

That's especially true of the spotted alfalfa aphid. Arizona's most common aphids – pea aphids and blue aphids – prefer cool weather and usually taper off in spring. However, spotted aphids are most active around 90 - 100°F, so they're a risk all summer.

"Spotted aphids can do as much yield damage as blue aphids," Narramore added, "but we also have greater pressures this time of year from leafhoppers and worms."

Leafhoppers are small, bright green, torpedo-shaped insects that actively feed on alfalfa, causing serious damage by altering the plants' physiology. Affected crops typically have leaf burn, overall stunting and leaf drop-off. Leafhopper infestations often lead to reduced

**"Leafhoppers can really reduce alfalfa yields."**

– Ken Narramore,  
Independent PCA,  
Verde Agricultural Consulting

yields, lower protein content and reduced stand longevity.

The three most common species in Arizona and California alfalfa are the potato leafhopper, the garden leafhopper and the Mexican leafhopper. Each can cause real trouble, but Fertizona offers several effective pesticides (see chart) to control them. If a crop is close to harvesting, early cutting helps to further limit leafhopper populations.

"Leafhoppers can really reduce alfalfa yields, and we're seeing problems all across the valley right now," Narramore said. "Growers need to be aware and take action."

Visit [www.fertizona.com](http://www.fertizona.com) or your local Fertizona location for the expertise and products to protect your alfalfa.

Product Name	Application Rates
Baythroid® XL	1.6 - 2.8 oz/acre
Dimethoate 4EC	8 - 16 oz/acre
Sivanto™ 200 SL	7 - 10.5 oz/acre



## Here we "grow" again

Fertizona and Compton Ag Services are proud to present their newest employees, each committed to bringing you the technology, expertise and service you need to help you be the most successful grower you can be.

**Daniel Richardson**  
Buckeye - Delivery Driver

**Miguel Barraza-Lucio**  
Willcox - Delivery Driver

**Kreston Van De Graaff**  
Buckeye - Field Assistant/Sales

**Orlando Lara**  
Casa Grande - Yard Assistant/  
Delivery Driver

**Christina Brown**  
Compton Ag Services -  
Office Assistant

**Thomas Torres**  
Willcox - Delivery Driver

**Jose Vega**  
Yuma - Delivery Driver



## Thank You for 21 Great Years

Dan Nelson, longtime Fertizona – Buckeye Yard Manager, recently retired after more than 21 years with the company.

Starting out in delivery operations back in 1994, Dan quickly rose to yard manager a year later and kept the Buckeye location running smooth right up to his retirement this past May.

Thanks for all your hard work, Dan. We appreciate your dedication and contribution to our customers' success and ours over the years. Enjoy your retirement – you've earned it!



# Corn silage field trials compare seed brands

## Mycogen varieties show digestibility and yield advantages



As part of Fertilzona's commitment to help you maximize productivity, we believe in gathering our own local performance data on the products we sell. With that in mind, we arranged side-by-side field trials last year of five different corn silage hybrids from Mycogen®, Pioneer® and DEKALB®. The test plots were grown by Loren Pratt, manager of Pratt Farms Partnership in Maricopa, AZ, using irrigated fields with similar soils.

"Loren does an awesome job," said Tyke Bennett, Seeds Product Manager, Fertilzona, "and his farming abilities are very well respected."

"If you want to improve, you need to see results and measure them," said Pratt. "I live in the real world, and I like to learn for myself what works."

His system obviously pays off. Pratt's corn silage production averages 36 tons/acre, while the county average is closer to 32, and statewide it's 30\*.

### A range of benefits

When the test crops were harvested and evaluated last July, the results included a mix of impressive statistics, as shown in the chart. For example, the top-yielding seed was the Mycogen TMF2L825 variety, at 41.1 tons/acre. Another Mycogen variety, TMF2L874, produced a 59.5% level of NDFD (neutral detergent fiber digestibility).

"Digestibility is the name of the game for silage," said Mycogen Sales Representative Vernal Gomes. "These numbers will appeal to dairy nutritionists."

"Some people just want the tallest crop," agreed Pratt, "but there's more to it than yield. I look for things like relative feed value and stalk strength."

Although the test didn't produce a winner across the board, its comparison data will help the seed experts at Fertilzona make better product recommendations to suit your specific goals and priorities.

"The trial opened some people's eyes," added Bennett. "Many growers like to plant the same

**"You need to see results and measure them."**

– Loren Pratt,  
Pratt Farms Partnership,  
Maricopa, AZ,

thing year after year, and tests like this help them to consider the value of other options."

*Find the corn silage variety and expertise you need this season by contacting Tyke Bennett at 520.518.0196, visiting your local Fertilzona office, or online at [www.fertilzona.com](http://www.fertilzona.com).*

### Mycogen Seeds 2014 Harvest Results

City/State: Maricopa, AZ

County: Pinal

Planted: 3/24/2014

Harvested: 7/13/2014

Company	Variety	Yield T/Acre @70%	NDFD Digestibility % of DM	Milk/Ton lbs
Mycogen	TMF2L874	36.0	59.5	3283
Mycogen	TMF2L825	41.1	53.8	3248
Mycogen	TMF2H747	37.3	58.3	3276
DEKALB	DKC67-88	38.7	59.6	3478
Pioneer	P1625HR	36.1	56.9	3332
Plot Average		37.8	57.6	3323

\* USDA production data, 2012



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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 & 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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