



GROWING SMARTER

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FALL 2020 • Issue No. 60

NEWS & INFORMATION TO HELP YOU GROW

Improve Your Cotton Harvest with Smart Choices

Defoliation products and timing make a big difference

Every day, farming is vulnerable to forces beyond our control, from weather to insects to market trends, and more. But in other cases, the success of any crop also depends on things we do have the power to change, such as the products we choose and the strategies we follow. A perfect example is cotton defoliation.

Maximizing cotton yield and quality – and generating the best bottom line for a healthy crop – can come down to the decisions you make now, including your water, defoliants, boll openers, and other spray adjuvants.

For example, if the cotton plants are too dry when your defoliant is applied, the leaves can be leathery, and they won't readily accept the spray. If that's a possibility, it really helps to add a surfactant and Fertizona's unique Ful-Proof uptake enhancer. Derived from fulvic acid (a naturally occurring compound), Ful-Proof is exclusively formulated to bond with crop spray products to improve their uptake and their mobility through plant cells.

"The Ful-Proof absorbs and penetrates plant surfaces so the spray products work better," explained Shawn Wright, Branch Manager, Fertizona – Thatcher. "That gives you cleaner defoliation and less trash in your cotton at harvest."

"Ful-Proof really enhances the defoliant and gets it into the leaf," agreed PCA Tom Montoya, Fertizona – Casa Grande. "It gives you a better leaf drop than you get with the defoliant by itself."

To demonstrate how Ful-Proof increases spray performance, Shawn conducted a test on two side-by-side cotton fields in the Gila Valley in October of 2018. Both fields were sprayed with harvest aids Redi-Pik® defoliant at 10 oz./acre and Super Boll® plant regulator at 1 qt./a. But one field also had 8 ounces of Ful-Proof added to the same spray mix.

"I'd estimate that the field with Ful-Proof had about 90 – 98 percent open bolls, while the other field was more like 85 – 90," he said.

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Let's Put Things in Perspective: Getting Back to Normal

The Covid situation has hurt the vegetable, dairy, and other food industries, causing increased dollar value that has hurt the commodities. Beyond that, the economy has suffered tremendously and wiped out a vast swath of small businesses and jobs in the service industry. The powers that be and the media are terrifying people, upending our lives, and keeping our kids from schools.

This is all terrible for our economy and our lives, and what are we doing it for? A disease that is decimating the population? Well, if we look at California's numbers, we may have reason to hope. The California Department of Health has published death tolls due to Covid-19, and the numbers are underwhelming. There

are 39 million people in California, and 9,326 people died over roughly six months of this outbreak. That's 0.0239% of the population. To put that in perspective, the CDC lists the total deaths from heart disease to be 647,000 people per year in the U.S., or 0.197% of the population. That means you are 8 times more likely to die from heart disease. Another good mention is that among the population under the age of 17, only one person in California was killed by Covid-19 during the entire length of the outbreak so far!

How about we all go back to normal and go to work?



Jim Compton

President, Fertizona & Compton Ag Services

Story continued from cover

Ful-Proof increases the performance of your defoliant and boll opener. For some growers, that improved efficacy can also mean getting by with only one application. If you can eliminate a second defoliation spray trip, that's obviously a big cost-savings. In any case, adding Ful-Proof is a smart investment.

"It gives you a marked difference for just a minimal cost," added Tom.

Know when to go

Just like your product choices, decisions about correctly timing your defoliation have a huge impact on the success of your cotton harvest. That timing depends on a lot of things, though, and every crop has its own unique circumstances.

"The timing is critical," said Rudy Palma, Arizona PCA – Compton Ag Services. "It varies, but in general we start defoliating around October 1, or when bolls are 60 – 70% set. But you always have to consider factors like the weather, the soil, and when your water and Nitrogen were cut off."

Experienced growers and PCAs are accustomed to looking at the cotton for specific clues – signs like color, plant growth, dry down, and boll maturity. You want to make sure the crop is set up right with the fertilizer planned out.

Because there's a wide window of timing and rates for all defoliants, and each cotton variety behaves differently, it's really important to work with your PCA about what fits your particular crop best. It's also essential that you clean out the spray tank thoroughly after applying defoliants to prevent any lingering cross-contamination.

Fertizona offers many proven, effective chemical options to help you maximize cotton yield and quality. For more details, contact your Fertizona or Compton Ag rep or nearby location, or go to www.fertizona.com

"Ful-Proof really enhances the defoliant."

– PCA Tom Montoya, Fertizona – Casa Grande

Topflavor Farms; Yuma, AZ

The Alameda brothers know how to specialize

When you ask large, successful Arizona growers about their history, you often hear tales of ancestors farming the same family property for many generations. But Steve Alameda, president of Topflavor Farms in Yuma, had a less-definitive answer.

"That's a long story," he said with a chuckle, and then provided colorful and interesting details. "I was born in Fremont, California, where my father and grandfather worked for a farm that grew tree fruits and produce," he began. "My brothers and I started out picking cucumbers when we were kids, and we liked it."

Figuring they were destined for agricultural careers, Steve and his brothers Craig and Tony all attended California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo to study various areas of agribusiness.

"We thought we had our futures covered," Steve said. "How could we go wrong?"

But then the California land where his family had worked was sold to developers and the owner retired, so the boys needed a new plan. In the mid-1980s, Steve moved to the Yuma area and farmed in northern Mexico. Over the next five years, Craig and Tony joined him.

The Alameda family already had long-standing connections with T&A Produce (Tanimura & Antle) of Salinas, California, and in 1992, the brothers established Topflavor Farms in Yuma, with T&A as their main customer. Focusing on specialty produce crops – and emphasizing quality and food safety – Topflavor soon became a tremendous success, with an enviable reputation for excellence.

In 2006, the Alamedas expanded by partnering with another family in Salinas to create Sabor Farms, building on their proven business strategies. Today, the

operations collectively encompass several thousand acres and hundreds of employees. In recent years, Steve's son Daniel joined the company, introducing the next generation of Alamedas to the business to help guide the organization.

In addition to multiple varieties of lettuce, spinach, beets, and other "everyday" crops, Topflavor and Sabor are well-known for their less-common selections.

"We have a long list of niche crops," Steve explained, "such as cilantro, fennel, bok choy, kale, parsley, and many more. Our approach to specialty produce has worked well for us."

"Topflavor is highly respected, and they really have things figured out," said PCA Dwight Palmer, Fertizona – Yuma. "They're strict and aggressive with their crop management, and that's what sets them apart."

The Alamedas also belong to a group of partners with 6000 beehives and a subsidiary company (Priority Seeds) growing vast fields of cauliflower, onions, broccoli, artichokes, and other crops exclusively for seeds.

"We have to be awfully proactive with seed crops, especially with fungicides," Dwight added, "because diseases can take out a whole crop."

"Seed crops require a lot of intensive management, and things can change quickly," agreed Steve. "Dwight is always getting out in the fields, and he does a great job helping us."

Besides different types of crop-protection products, Topflavor also counts on Fertizona for custom fertilizers.

"Every company wants to sell you something," concluded Steve, "but we know that Dwight and Fertizona have our best interests at heart."

For more information about the Alamedas' operations, visit Topflavor.com or saborfarms.com



**"Topflavor is
highly respected."**

– PCA Dwight Palmer,
Fertizona - Yuma

A Talent for Getting Things Rolling

Yard Manager Junior Melecio does impressive things with cars and trucks

At Fertizona, we pride ourselves on having great products and exceptional customer service, and one of the key links in the process of putting them together is Junior Melecio, our Yard Manager at Casa Grande. With his crew of nine employees and a fleet of trucks, Junior has the vital responsibility of coordinating and managing a wide range of deliveries for Fertizona customers.

"When orders come into the office, it's our job to arrange trucks and drivers and make sure the right materials get to the customer," he said. "Fertilizer, seed, pesticides – we do it all."

Growing up in Stanfield, Arizona – "just 12 miles west of here" – Junior was introduced to the agriculture business at an early age through the work of his parents, who were involved with irrigation equipment and transporting cotton. After working for a while in the construction business, the young man took a job with Fertizona . . . 31 years ago.

"I actually started in the back of the warehouse, stacking bags," he recalled. "You could say I've worked my way up since then."

Now, thanks to all of his experience and product knowledge, Junior is able to quickly

make important decisions and solve problems that come up. His capabilities and dedication help assure Fertizona customers of getting what they need, when they need it. Junior's long career also says something about the quality of our organization.

"Fertizona knows how to treat you right," he said. "It's a real good company to work for."

Junior also has a 27-year-old son, a 31-year-old daughter, and a new grandson. "It's easy for me to remember how long I've worked at Fertizona," he added, "because I started here when my daughter was born."

When he's away from the job, his time is devoted to a unique and exciting hobby: building lowriders. Sometimes called "Art on wheels," lowriders demand a special mix of mechanical skills and creativity. Junior often enters his customized machines in

various competitions and has even won a number of prizes and awards.

"It's just fun to do and we've met a lot of great people over the years," he said. "We really have a good time with it."

When you need a delivery from Fertizona, you can have confidence in knowing that your order is being managed by somebody who has vast expertise in making vehicles respond.

"Fertizona knows how to treat you right."

– Junior Melecio;
Yard Manager, Casa Grande



Junior Melecio

Bagrada Bugs Making a Comeback

Vulnerable young crops now at greater risk of damage

Southwestern growers of vegetables and many other crops should be especially alert this fall for Bagrada bugs, which can cause severe economic damage to healthy plants. Relatively new to North America, the African Bagrada stinkbugs were first detected in California in 2008, and within a few years had moved to Yuma, La Paz, Maricopa, and Pinal counties in Arizona.

"It's a truly invasive species," said Dr. John Palumbo, Extension Specialist and Professor of Entomology at the University of Arizona. "They were a huge problem at first, but then for a number of reasons they had a sustained decline."

However, now the threat appears to be increasing again, possibly due to recent rainy springs, and Dr. Palumbo urges growers and PCAs to be extra vigilant with their scouting in September and October.

Adult Bagrada bugs are typically 5-7 mm long, with black, shield-shaped bodies and distinctive white and orange markings. Young wingless nymphs are bright red or orange before turning darker. Eggs are laid singly or in small clusters on the undersides of leaves or on stems, or in the soil beneath the plants. Eggs are white at first but then turn orange. Multiple life stages may be present in the same field, and populations increase quickly.

Bagrada bugs hurt crops by sucking juices from plants. The most common damage they cause may be evidenced by "scorched" leaves, stunting, blind terminals, and forked or multiple heads on cauliflower, broccoli, and cabbage. Other crops likely to be affected include mustard, kale, radishes, and turnips, but there have also been reports of Bagrada damage in melons, peppers, and other crops.

Left unprotected, young broccoli and cabbage plants can be significantly impacted in just a few days. It was estimated that Bagrada bugs caused more than \$600 million in damage to California crops in 2013 alone. If a Bagrada bug infestation is discovered, a proven, fast-acting contact insecticide should be applied immediately.

"We've seen good results with bifenthrin, which usually works for three to five days," said Dr. Palumbo. "Also, many growers have had success with chemigating pyrethroids prophylactically at stand establishment, before the bugs become a problem."

Fertizona offers a range of popular control options known to be effective against stinkbug species such as Bagrada bugs. Talk to your Fertizona or Compton Ag representative for more details.

Unfortunately, most OMRI-approved pesticides are unable to control Bagrada bugs, which means bigger problems for growers of organic crops. However, late in 2019 researchers discovered that a Mexican wasp may help to control Bagrada bugs. Named the Idris Elba species – in honor of the movie star – the parasitic wasp lays its eggs inside the existing eggs of Bagrada bugs, thereby killing the host. In the absence of a chemical control option, the wasps could prove to be a valuable solution for organic crops.

"Growers definitely need to pay attention to this pest," concluded Dr. Palumbo. "Look for fresh feeding damage on young plants, and if you see evidence of Bagrada bugs, you have to be ready to pounce."

"You have to be ready to pounce."

– Dr. John Palumbo, Extension Specialist and Professor of Entomology, University of Arizona



Supr-Blue

Supr-Blue Enhances

Improve spray performance and simplify mixing

It's common in the business world for people to talk about "synergy" – the concept that different components produce a better effect when used together instead of separately. That description works perfectly for Fertizona's unique Supr-Blue applicators' marking dye.

Golf course superintendents, sports facilities managers, and landscape professionals have long relied on marking dyes to help them see exactly where they've made spray applications on turfgrass or in landscapes, making it easier to avoid any skips or overlaps with their patterns. And now Fertizona has vastly improved on that traditional approach.

"Supr-Blue is a great new dye product that super-charges the performance of anything

you spray," explained Cory Scherting, Fertizona's Turf and Landscape Sales Manager. "It's a premeasured, three-in-one formulation that adds a surfactant and Ful-Proof uptake enhancer to the pesticide or fertilizer to make it work faster and more effectively."

Ful-Proof is Fertizona's fulvic acid compound that speeds distribution and uptake of chemicals or nutrients throughout a plant. Combined with an effective surfactant to increase penetration and dispersal of sprays upon application, users of Supr-Blue get the powerful synergistic results of those adjuvants working together to deliver exceptional performance.

"This product will also be very useful to landscapers in their granite and other non-turf areas," added Cory, "whether they are using a boom, backpack, or even a small pump sprayer."

Nontoxic, water-soluble Supr-Blue works as a temporary colorant for herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, grass growth regulators, wetting agents, and liquid fertilizers. It also allows you to easily and quickly adjust the intensity of the dye application depending on the light conditions. The recommended mix rate is 4 ounces per 5 gallons.

"The guys who've tried Supr-Blue are really impressed by it," said Cory. "Not only does it improve your spray performance, it's already mixed and easy to use. I've been in this business a long time, and I've never seen a product like Supr-Blue."

For more, contact Cory, talk to your local Fertizona or Compton Ag office, or visit www.fertizona.com



New Hires

Francisco Olvera
CYC Solutions

Nathanael Lee
Willcox

Trevor Miers
Casa Grande

Colton Tew
Yuma

An Easy Step to Achieving Exceptional Turf

Ferti-Iron Plus with Furst is packed with benefits

Market researchers like to talk about what factors motivate somebody to buy a certain product, such as price, performance, efficiency, and convenience. Every now and then, a product comes along that checks ALL of those boxes – like Fertizona's Ferti-Iron Plus with Furst.

Ferti-Iron Plus with Furst is an exclusively formulated 15-0-0 fertilizer blend with 6% iron and 3% sulfur, and it's proven to enhance the health and color of turfgrass and other landscape applications. Iron is an important component of plant enzymes and proteins involved in nitrogen metabolism and chlorophyll synthesis, enabling it to promote turf color. Iron deficiency in turfgrass can cause yellow mottling.

In addition, the Furst nutritional technology in Ferti-Iron Plus supports healthy, deep-rooted turf. Furst is Fertizona's patented combination of amino acids and proteins, specifically developed to activate beneficial biological and environmental responses in plants.

"Guys who use this product love it," said Nick Lubich, Turf Management Specialist, Fertizona – Fennemore, "especially since we reinvented it with a new formulation a couple of years ago. That improvement really knocked it out of the park."

In addition to its superior performance, Ferti-Iron Plus gives you the advantages of convenience and economy. Nick pointed out that customers as far away as New Orleans are buying it because their local suppliers can't compete on price. The convenience factor comes from the product's ready-to-use formulation.

"Superintendents know the importance of iron in their fertilizer, and traditionally they had to mix it separately in the tank," Nick added. "Now we can eliminate that extra step."

Greener, healthier turf from an affordably priced fertilizer that's easy to use. Maybe Ferti-Iron Plus with Furst truly is a perfect product.

To learn more, contact your local Fertizona or Compton Ag office or visit www.fertizona.com



Come Celebrate with Fertizona!

October 23, Noon – 2:00pm

Please join us at our Casa Grande location on Friday, October 23 for Fertizona's annual Customer Appreciation Day lunch! To help express our gratitude to the company's many loyal customers, Fertizona wants to treat you to a great spread of delicious Cooper's barbecue and trimmings, starting at noon. You can come relax among friends with good food and good company, or simply use our convenient drive-through option to grab a plate to go. In either case, we hope to see you then!





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