



# GROWING SMARTER

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NEWS & INFORMATION TO HELP YOU GROW

## Timely choices offer big yield advantages this season

### Fertizona has easy ways to improve cotton and alfalfa

Every now and then — thanks to situational needs and good timing — a product proves to be a real “win-win” for growers. This fall, Fertizona has a number of such products, and they offer big benefits for cotton and alfalfa operations.

### Improve the quality of your cotton harvest

Cotton growers have an excellent opportunity to produce a higher quality harvest this season and potentially save money while doing it, with Fertizona’s Ful-Proof uptake enhancer.

Ful-Proof is a derivative of fulvic acid, a naturally occurring compound that results from decomposing organic matter in soil. The rich fulvic acid micro-organisms in Ful-Proof bond with crop spray products to make them more absorbable and mobile through plant cells. In other words, Ful-Proof increases the uptake efficiency and performance of your spray products.

Ful-Proof is well known for improving the success of foliar nutrient sprays, but now cotton growers are discovering its benefits on defoliant and boll openers, too.

“The Ful-Proof transorbs 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.”

Wright demonstrated that performance with an impressive 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

*Story continued on page 2*

## IN THIS ISSUE:



**5**

**Product Spotlight**  
New restrictions added to paraquat herbicide



**6**

**Performance Profile**  
PBO 2-2-1 organic fertilizer meets a vital need



**7**

**Tech Update**  
More Fusarium wilt seen in Arizona lettuce



mix. The photos above (taken 20 days after application) show the dramatic difference. The field on the bottom where Ful-Proof was added has much greater hull drop and more open bolls.

"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," Wright said. "Afterwards, the grower who didn't use the Ful-Proof then ordered it for the next year," he added with a chuckle.

Ful-Proof enhances spray performance, and it can lower your application costs as well. Some growers rely on two sprays for defoliation, but if you can greatly improve the first treatment's efficacy and eliminate the second spray trip — well, that's a big savings. Also, when Ful-Proof naturally increases the performance of your defoliant and boll opener, it means you can often get by with lower rates of the chemicals. Ful-Proof works on all soils under all conditions.

"The timing is really good for this, because there's a shortage of available defoliant right now," said Dennis Osborn, Crop Protection Sales Manager, Fertizona. "It's important for growers to stretch their defoliant this year and make them work harder. Ful-Proof can do that."

**"It's important for growers to stretch their defoliant this year."**

– Dennis Osborn,  
Crop Protection Sales Manager  
Fertizona



**New Roundup Ready® alfalfa variety is ideal for Southwest conditions**

Alfalfa growers in Arizona and New Mexico now have another valuable seed option from Fertizona: SW9215RRS, a new Roundup Ready® variety developed by S&W Seed Company. SW9215RRS is a high-yielding, salt-tolerant, non-dormant variety that's perfectly suited for Southwestern soils and climate.

"It's a great choice if you have salty soils or your water isn't very good," said Tyke Bennett, Seed Products Sales Manager, Fertizona. "The 9215 seed line has actually been around for a while, and it's a solid performer. The new variety is even better since it's been bred with the Roundup Ready gene."

Roundup Ready technology means SW9215RRS provides more weed-control flexibility and convenience with its tolerance of over-the-top glyphosate (Roundup®) applications. Its exceptional salt tolerance is also a definite advantage for growers with challenging soils or harsh water.

Another excellent choice for growing in salty conditions is Fertizona's Super Sonic FD9 alfalfa, a popular dormancy 9 variety. Bred for high yields in a range of Southwestern soil types, it combines heat tolerance with strong persistence to support a profitable stand. Super Sonic FD9 is also highly resistant to Fusarium wilt, Phytophthora root rot (PRR), and blue aphids.

"The Super Sonic topped all of its yield trials, and it's got longer stand life than many traditional varieties," Bennett added. "We anticipate a good year for alfalfa crops."

**To learn more, contact your local Fertizona or Compton Ag office or visit [www.fertizona.com](http://www.fertizona.com).**

## Safety first... and always

As we go through life, we naturally pick up bits of helpful advice along the way, and this is one of the classics: "Better safe than sorry." That's an expression to take seriously. Being careless comes with a load of downside risk, and bad things can happen in the blink of an eye. An accident could instantly turn into a lifetime of regret.

Agribusiness demands a long list of everyday precautions because we deal with chemicals, heavy machinery, uneven surfaces, sharp tools, and other potentially dangerous equipment. It's critical to make safety a top priority in all that we do.

That includes basic precautions, such as wearing personal protective equipment and being sure all other mechanical equipment and tools are working properly. When it comes to chemicals, safety means correctly mixing and handling materials according to label directions and knowing which way the wind is blowing. If you have any doubts about working with a certain chemical, always consult the product's Safety Data Sheet. SDS copies (also known as MSDS or Material Safety Data Sheets) are available from your nearest Fertizona location. There are also SDS Spanish versions.

Wherever you're working, first take time to familiarize yourself with everything and everyone else around you. You should always be aware of your surroundings and potential risks. Are there any tripping hazards nearby? Do you have the right tools for what you're doing? Are any valves or hoses leaking? Are you close to a washing station? Perhaps most importantly, do you have someone to immediately contact if there's an accident?

The problems we anticipate rarely happen. It's the things we least expect that typically cause trouble. Stay alert and make the effort to prepare for possible dangers. Another old piece of advice is "You can't be too careful," and that sure beats being sorry.

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



# A life of versatility

## PCA Dwight Palmer does a lot of different things

The history of American agriculture is full of great stories about people growing up on the family farm and learning the business that way. In the case of PCA Dwight Palmer, Fertizona – Yuma, he started gathering his experience working on numerous farms.

Dwight was born and raised in Yuma where his parents own a local iron fabrication company, and from a young age he often worked alongside his father in the shop. At the same time, he was discovering many other opportunities.

“Growing up here, I was always around agriculture with my friends,” he recalled. “During summers and Christmas breaks, I did work for many local farmers — from shoveling ditches to driving tractors to running balers, and a lot more — ever since I turned 16 and got my driver’s license.”

During those early years, Dwight was also involved in calf roping and team roping competition, and his family traveled the state for Junior Rodeo and high school events. When the time came for him to go to college, Dwight set his career path on agribusiness. He graduated from UA in 2004 with a degree in Agricultural Technology and Education.

After several years working for another ag company, Dwight joined Fertizona in 2012. He now serves a long list of growers in the Yuma area, typically driving about 40,000 miles a year to call on his many customers. Dwight’s territory represents a wide variety of crops, including lettuce, citrus, cole crops, cotton, seed crops, and hay.

“I really enjoy walking different crop types, since they all have their own set of challenges,” Dwight said. “My favorite part of my job is finding issues before they become a bigger problem, and then working to solve them at a conservative threshold with cost-effective products.”

In his role as a trusted PCA, Dwight appreciates the amount of valuable support available to him from the rest of the team at Fertizona.

“There’s a lot of knowledge throughout the company, and there are always other PCAs to bounce new ideas off of,” he said. “Since Fertizona takes care of many crops around the state, we know how to solve problems in different areas.”

He has variety with his home life as well. In their free time, Dwight and his family enjoy many types of outdoor activities, including team sports, fishing, water skiing, Jeeping, hunting, and camping. Dwight and his wife Sarah have two sons, 7-year-old Byron and Barrett, who is 5. The boys play baseball, soccer, and basketball.

“I was taught to work hard and always be honest with people,” Dwight said, “and to keep a balance with everything you have going on from day-to-day.”

Judging by what he’s accomplished in his life so far, he seems to be doing a great job of following that advice.

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**“I was taught to work hard and always be honest with people.”**

**– Dwight Palmer, PCA  
Fertizona – Yuma**

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# New restrictions added to paraquat herbicide



## Certified applicators must complete brief online training

The popular herbicide paraquat could be called a “good news/bad news” kind of product. The good news is that it’s highly effective and inexpensive. The bad news is that it’s also extremely toxic and has killed countless people over the years — both accidentally and intentionally — including 17 Americans since 2000.

Because of the many risks involved with handling paraquat, the EPA recently enacted new restrictions designed to reduce tragic accidents. Paraquat (sold under brand names such as Gramoxone®, Cyclone®, and others) was already a restricted-use pesticide, but now certified applicators must also complete advanced paraquat-specific training before handling the product. The training emphasizes proper transferring and storage of the chemical, and it also addresses new label requirements, consequences of misuse, etc. The training is available online.

“I took the test, and it’s easy to understand,” said Dennis Osborn, Crop Protection Sales Manager, Fertizona. “You just watch a video and answer a few basic questions about the product.”

The latest restrictions affect only newly labeled paraquat products, which suppliers are required to have in their channels by November of this year. Until then, old label material — which Fertizona still has in stock — is exempt from the new rules. Also, growers who currently have a supply of older paraquat are not required to complete the updated training.

Among other changes involving the newer labeled paraquat product, applications made “under the direct supervision” of a certified applicator will no longer be allowed. Also, there are more requirements for product transfer using closed-system packaging. To reduce exposure to the chemicals, a closed system allows pesticides to be pumped into a spray tank more safely through lockable couplings and hoses. Under the new rules, even small containers will require closed-system transfer by 2020.

As a retailer, Fertizona is required to have proof of an applicator’s certification before we can sell anyone the product, and a copy of each applicator’s license must be kept on file.

“Paraquat is a good product, but it’s gotten a bit of a bum rap,” Osborn added. “However, there’s no question that it needs to be handled safely and carefully. All in all, the new training isn’t a big deal, but care should be exercised when reviewing the new restrictions.”

**The EPA site and online applicator training module can be accessed at: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/paraquat-dichloride-training-certified-applicators>.**

**For more information about paraquat or its new restrictions, contact your Fertizona rep or nearby location, or visit [www.fertizona.com](http://www.fertizona.com).**



## New Hires

**RAYMOND ESQUEDA**  
Willcox

**JOSE LUCERO**  
Casa Grande

**JOSEPH RUIZ**  
Casa Grande

**JOSEPH “IAN” JOHN**  
Compton Ag Services



## PBO 2-2-1 organic fertilizer meets a vital need

### Plant-based formulation helps prevent health risks

The demand for organic products keeps expanding, and growers are eagerly looking for new certified options to support and enhance their operations. Fertizona addresses those needs with PBO 2-2-1, an excellent plant-based liquid fertilizer that provides key macronutrients (N,P,K) plus other important benefits critical to organic farming.

“Many organic growers use animal-based fertilizers such as manure, blood meal, or fish meal, but they can pose certain health risks for problems like listeria and e. coli,” said Casey Compton of Fertizona. “Our PBO product — which stands for Plant-Based Organic — is formulated to avoid those problems.”

PBO 2-2-1 is unique because it’s made from only plant-based ingredients such as fermented corn extractives and condensed distillers solubles. It also contains beneficial aminos, humic and fulvic acids.

“We’ve seen a lot of great results with this fertilizer on organic vegetables, produce, and nuts, especially pecans,” Compton said. “We just started using it on potatoes, and it looks very good there, too.”

Fertizona’s PBO 2-2-1 has been certified by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and approved by Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI). OMRI certification means a product has been independently reviewed against established organic standards and is deemed appropriate for organic uses.



The USDA requires that processors of organic products be certified by an accredited agency.

In 2016, it was estimated that the U.S. had about 4 million acres of organic farmland, but that number is likely much larger today.

“The market has really seen a lot of growth in the last five years,” Compton said, “and the organic growers need more products that are compliant with their standards. PBO 2-2-1 is a great option for them.”

# More Fusarium wilt seen in Arizona lettuce

## Preventive measures help reduce disease threats

Theoretically, every problem has a solution... but the timing isn't always right. That's the situation with the fungal disease Fusarium wilt in lettuce: it's a problem that definitely needs solving, but there's no real answer on the near horizon.

"There isn't any silver bullet for it," said PCA Brad Brchan, Fertizona – Yuma. "I wish we could figure out a treatment. Standard fungicides don't really help."

The soil-borne pathogen (official species name *Fusarium oxysporum*) was first identified in Yuma lettuce in 2001. In a typical case, affected plants show leaf yellowing and wilting, and a reddish-brown necrosis may be seen in crowns and leaf veins. Severely infected plants are stunted and often die.

"It seems to be getting worse every season," added Brchan. "It hits head lettuce the worst, but now it's showing up in Romaine, too."

Lacking any effective treatment, the best alternative is just trying to avoid having the disease, or if Fusarium is already in your fields, don't let it spread. If there's any positive news, it's that a lot of people are aggressively looking for answers.

"The key is for breeders to develop resistant varieties, but we're not there yet," said Steve Koike, Director of TriCal Diagnostics in Hollister, CA, and a 28-year veteran of the University of California Extension Service. "There are breeding lines that look promising right now, but nothing ready for commercial use."

Crop rotation can be a good solution, but not for all growers. Fusarium has the added risk of a long life, and the fungus will survive in the soil for many years.

"You can't just do an every-other-year lettuce rotation, because the disease will still be there," said Koike. "Most lettuce growers can't afford five years off, but that's probably what it would take, and then hope the fungus eventually dies away."

Fusarium is a threat in other crops such as cotton, but Koike explained that the pathogen that affects lettuce is host-specific. That means you could rotate to melons, vegetables, or cotton when those are viable marketing options. Another important strategy is to avoid transferring soil from a contaminated field, using simple precautions like washing all affected equipment and minimizing foot traffic.

"The exciting thing is to see the whole lettuce industry working together to figure this out," Brchan said. "We're still learning a lot, but the genetics will get us there."

**For more information about fungal diseases and control methods, contact your Fertizona representative or nearby location, or visit [www.fertizona.com](http://www.fertizona.com).**





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