



GROWING SMARTER

SPRING 2020 • Issue No. 58

NEWS & INFORMATION TO HELP YOU GROW

Adjust Your Fertilizer Balance to Grow Better Alfalfa

Additional phosphorus shows increased yields

There's always room for improvement. How often have you heard that said? In farming, that attitude is an every-year thing, because successful growers are always looking for ways to increase yield and quality, or to produce a crop more cost-effectively.

Those goals are part of the motivation for researchers like Dr. Ayman Mostafa of the Cooperative Extension at the University of Arizona College of Agriculture & Life Sciences. For the last few years, his work has included comprehensive studies of phosphorus fertilizers in alfalfa, with the objective of increasing forage yield.

"It started when we talked to growers and asked them where they needed help," explained Dr. Mostafa. "They gave us a long list of things, including questions about nutrition in forage crops. That led to these studies in alfalfa."

In a series of separate trials over two years, Dr. Mostafa and his team fertilized a number of alfalfa fields, on both established stands and new crops. They experimented with different fertilizer blends and then compared results. In all cases, the key nutrient was phosphorus.

"In our desert environment, the main nutrient need for alfalfa is phosphorus," he said, "and there are many factors—like our heat, water, and sandy loam soil—that affect the availability of phosphorus for the plants."

Phosphorus is essential for a good alfalfa stand. It serves key roles in metabolic functions such as photosynthesis and the transfer of carbohydrates, it promotes root growth, it supports nitrogen fixation, and more. A phosphorus deficiency in alfalfa can reduce plant height and leaf size.

"Phosphorus also helps alfalfa mitigate 'summer slump'" added Dr. Mostafa, "because when plants have to use more energy to cool themselves on hot nights, the crop suffers."

The UA field trials tested various blends of nutrients. One of the most successful programs was based on an application of 125 pounds of phosphorus with 100 pounds of potassium.

Story continued on page 2

IN THIS
ISSUE:

3

**Operations
Overview**
Gary Shiflett
Farms; Deming,
New Mexico

5

**New Product
Spotlight**
Grow With
The Flow

6

Tech Update
Agrian Puts A
World Of Crop
Data In Your
Hands

7

**Market
Update**
LGMA:
Fighting for
More Food
Safety

A Lot to Be Thankful For

If you're old enough to remember that far back, you know that a whole lot has changed in the last forty years. If somebody had told you then about cell phones or laptop computers, it would have sounded like science fiction. And think about the many changes we've seen in agriculture since then, like amazing new chemistries and genetics and herbicide-tolerant crops.

In 1980, the U.S. was suffering its worst recession since World War II, with interest rates in the high teens. It was a tough time to start a business, but that's just what we did. In May of that year, I was given a great opportunity to buy a small ag-chem company in Casa Grande, along with all of its assets, which included a branch office

in Willcox. I optimistically took the leap, and that was the beginning of Fertilzona.

The business started out with several lean years. It took us quite a while to become an established force in the regional agricultural scene. But as competitors dropped out and Fertilzona built a good reputation, the company continued to grow. We added a third location in Coolidge, and then our Fennemore facility, and the momentum kept going.

Throughout it all, over the ups and downs and constant changes, a few critical things always stayed the same: the excellence and dedication of our people, and the faith and trust of our growers. You can look around at

what we've put together during that time—the products and buildings and equipment—but our customers and our employees are truly what's important. That's our real company legacy and what we're most proud of. It's also been a lot of fun.

Thank you all for your loyalty and support for forty years.



Jim Compton
President, Fertilzona &
Compton Ag Services

Story continued from cover

"That gave us a real synergy effect, because the nutrients worked better when used together," said Dr. Mostafa. "The combination works."

One grower who has seen those effects for himself is Shannon Schulz, who applied a special fertilizer blend on 2600 acres of alfalfa at his farm in the Harquahala Valley in 2019.

"It was incredible," he said enthusiastically. "It was the best yield we ever had."

Shannon described the program as a customized phosphate blend with potassium, plus smaller amounts of nitrogen and sulfur. The fertilizer was applied once at the beginning of the season at a rate of 250 pounds.

"We didn't know what to expect," he said, "but the crop really responded, and you could see the difference. My neighbors even commented on it."

Shannon also liked the ease of applying the dry blend as opposed to the liquid fertilizer

his operation had used before. In addition to the savings of time and labor, the dry application eliminated concerns about runoff or inconsistent distribution.

Because every farm is different and soils aren't uniform, Dr. Mostafa pointed out that some fields may benefit from multiple fertilizer applications throughout the year. Regular testing of soil and petioles can help to determine how much phosphorus is available to the crop and is being taken up efficiently by the plants.

Although Shannon was very pleased with the results of his single application last year, he is currently planning to add another 50 pounds to his alfalfa in July, hoping to avoid the summer slump and promote yield even further.

"We saw that the right blend makes the difference," he added. "We have faith in what Fertilzona puts together for us."

Dr. Mostafa is clearly excited about the phosphorus research which has been conducted so far, and what it means for growers, but he also noted that more studies are needed.

"One thing we know," he concluded, "is that the added yield covers the expense of the extra fertilizer."

For more information about fungicides or any other products, contact your local Fertilzona or Compton Ag office, or visit www.fertilzona.com.

**"It was the best
yield we ever had."**

– Shannon Schulz,
Harquahala Valley, Arizona

Gary Shiflett Farms; Deming, New Mexico

Award-winning grower is clearly one of a kind

Many times in business, a company or an individual earns a reputation for “going the extra mile,” meaning they’re willing to devote special effort to get the job done. At Fertizona, a literal example of that is grower Gary Shiflett, of Deming, New Mexico, whose farm is quite a distance east of the Arizona state line.

“The nearest Fertizona location is in Willcox,” Gary said. “For years, I worked with Lee Walker over there, and now it’s mostly Jimmy or Casey Compton. I’ve had a great relationship with Fertizona for a long time.”

Gary’s operation in Deming covers about 1400 acres of crops, mostly green chile and onions, but also wheat, corn silage, alfalfa, and cotton.

“He grows some great cotton,” Casey Compton said. “Gary produced over five bales an acre for two years in a row, and that’s hard to do!”

Gary’s been farming his family’s land since 1978, right after he finished high school and went to work alongside his father, who first settled there in the 1960s.

“My dad is the one who taught me many valuable things about farming, but much credit is due to the excellent advice and dedication that my agronomist has given me over the years,” Gary said. “My dad taught me to put the Lord first, be a man of your word, and look at obstacles as opportunities to overcome.”

As evidence of Gary’s success, he has the unique claim to fame of being the 2005 winner of the annual Grower Achievement Award sponsored by American Vegetable Grower® magazine. Every year, the magazine and the United Fresh Produce Association select one outstanding grower—chosen from an impressive national list of deserving nominees—to get the prestigious award. It’s quite a special honor, and it says a lot about the quality of the winning operation.

“Our agronomist, Bill Cox, was the one who nominated me,” said Gary. “Bill and I go way back together. He actually started out with my dad.”

Gary and his wife Sandy have been married for 42 years. They tied the knot in 1978—right about the same time Gary got into full-time farming after graduating from high school. The Shifletts raised two daughters, but tragically lost one in an accident several years ago. Their other daughter is a nurse in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

“My wife has always been a big help,” Gary added. “She’s a great support for me.”

When not working with his crops, Gary likes to pursue his outdoor hobbies, including bow-hunting. His other favorite pastime is team roping events, which is actually how he first met Jimmy Compton.

“We have a great relationship with Fertizona and the Comptons,” he said, “and I consider them to be good friends.”

Gary said he relies on Fertizona to provide him with a variety of essential inputs he needs for his operation, especially pesticide products.

“I can’t say enough good things about Fertizona,” he added, “and I mean that. I’m not just blowing smoke.”

We truly appreciate exceptional, loyal customers like Gary. It’s a privilege for us to “go those extra miles” to support him.

**“I can’t say enough
good things
about Fertizona.”**

– Gary Shiflett, Owner,
Gary Shiflett Farms



Building a Legacy

Jim Compton and Fertizona have come a long way together

This “Meet your rep” section of the *Growing Smarter* newsletter is often used to introduce new Fertizona employees. However, in honor of the company’s 40th anniversary, we are doing something different this time: a salute to our founder, Jim Compton.

In 1980, Jimmy was offered an attractive deal to buy a small agricultural-chemical supply company in Casa Grande, including all its existing inventory. That was a unique opportunity and a daunting challenge. After his father suffered a machinery accident, Jimmy had managed his father’s ag-chem company for a year, so this type of business was not entirely new to him.

“It was tough to get the business going,” Jimmy said. “I knew very few people in Casa Grande then. I think my wife cried every day for five years, trying to figure out how to make ends meet.”

When Jimmy started the business, there were several more companies selling agricultural inputs than there are today. For a variety of reasons, many of those competitors are no longer operating.

Fast-forward forty years: dedication, perseverance, and patience—along with blessings of good timing and fortunate circumstances—have helped the company to succeed. Jimmy also emphasizes two other key reasons for Fertizona’s longevity.

“The most important assets of our business are our employees and our customers,” he said. “These two factors are the true value of Fertizona.”

Jim and his wife, Cindy, both grew up in Buckeye, which was a small town back then. Their families knew each other. Their grandfathers played dominoes every afternoon. Cindy’s mother was actually Jimmy’s seventh-grade teacher. After dating for several years, Jim and Cindy were married in 1978. Their first child,

Kirsten, was born in 1981. She now lives in Idaho with her husband Scott and children Ryle and Cort. Their son Casey was born in 1983. He lives in Casa Grande with his wife Laurie, son Jack, and daughters Kate, Claire, and Charlotte.

In addition to his family and business, Jimmy enjoys roping. He qualified for the National Finals Rodeo in 1977 (ending the year in third place) and in 1978. Today Jim still enjoys competing in World Series of Team Roping events.

“You might say I’m addicted to roping,” he said with a bit of a chuckle. “When I was a kid, I spent a lot of time with my grandparents who were ranchers and cowboys in Buckeye. I got started with horses there at an early age, and I just always loved being around them.”

There is a strong tie between Fertizona and roping. Several people in the company share Jim’s “addiction” to competitive roping.

Jim’s other favorite pastime is fly fishing. “We have had the good fortune to travel to many beautiful fishing spots around the world,” he said. “It’s a great challenge to catch fish on the fly. It is a break from the constant connections of phone, texts, and emails.”

Fertizona is a family legacy. The Comptons look forward to the next generation building on a solid foundation and taking the company forward.

“After all this time in the business,” Jim said, “it still makes me want to get up every morning and go to work.”



“The most important assets of our business are our employees and our customers.”

- Jim Compton, President, Fertizona

**FERTI-FLOW**

Grow with the Flow

Promote successful crops two ways with Ferti-Flow

Every now and then a product comes along that delivers multiple benefits at the same time, and Ferti-Flow from Fertizona is a great example. Ferti-Flow improves the performance of the seed you plant and the efficiency of your seed-planting process.

An exclusive 2-12-0 fertilizer blend (with 2% manganese and 10% zinc), Ferti-Flow is a dry seed nutritional treatment specially formulated to promote early seed growth and plant vigor. By providing optimal nutrition to the seed, Ferti-Flow stimulates longer, more developed root systems. Its combination of nutrients also works to increase young plants' resistance to early-season cold and water stress. With that kind of a stronger start, plants can do better throughout the vegetative growth stages.

In addition, Ferti-Flow is an excellent seed-drying source. Use it as a replacement for talc or graphite to improve lubrication and

flowability in your planter. That enhances planting performance and efficiency by ensuring that only a single seed is picked up and fed to the planter. As a result, you minimize skips and seed bridging.

Ideal for use on corn, cotton, wheat, alfalfa, and all other major row crops, easy-pour Ferti-Flow can be applied to seed in the planter box, in the seed bag, or in a mixing pail. It can also be mixed with most fungicides and pesticides.

This year, put Ferti-Flow in your planter box and give your crops the critical early boost they need to maximize yield.

For more information, contact Tyke Bennett at 520.836.7477, talk to your Fertizona or Compton Ag Services representative, or visit www.fertizona.com.



Agrian Puts a World of Crop Data in Your Hands



Valuable field information improves production efficiency

There's an old expression, "Knowledge is power," and although its original meaning was likely a reference to things such as education or politics, it now applies to crop production as well. In other words, the more you know about your land, your fertilizer, and your other inputs, the better equipped you will be to succeed with what you grow.

That's why Agrian Inc., is such a valuable tool for modern precision agriculture. Agrian was founded in 2004 to create a vast, user-friendly data resource for ag retailers, crop advisors, growers, and other agri-business professionals. Using exclusive software, Agrian maintains an in-depth and constantly updated information platform with a wealth of current, vital production knowledge and field-mapping capabilities.

Through the convenient mobile Agrian app, users can instantly pull up product labels, compliance requirements, specific field data, crop nutritional needs, and much more. With the knowledge it offers, Agrian can improve a grower's efficiency, compliance, safety, and sustainability.

"Agrian is a mechanism for users to document inputs and keep accurate records for their farming operations," said Scott Morehead, Senior Client Success Specialist at Agrian. "Our real strength is being able to provide standardized, actionable data that's readily

accessible. We have over 12,000 individual manufacturer-approved product labels, all in a cloud-based platform that's quick and easy to use."

Through the integrated Agrian system, a grower or consultant can immediately look up a product label to identify its chemical properties, application rates, warnings, etc., without having to consult Fertilzona.

When explaining its many versatile uses, Morehead cited Agrian's ability to write recommendations and completion reports for crop protection and fertilizer materials.

"It's an excellent tool," said PCA Gordon Goodwin, Fertilzona - Yuma. "With its recommendation-writing ability, we don't need to use the old 1080 forms."

The Agrian platform is an easy way to gather and store specific field data from year-to-year or field-to-field, and then use the information to improve planning.

"You can retrieve your data to see exactly what you did in a field in previous years—such as fertilizer or pesticide rates—and gauge the variables," Morehead said. "The planning and budgeting tools ensure that growers have a good picture of what is going to be done for a field during that season, tied to their yield goals."

For example, soil tests help identify exact nutritional needs or deficiencies in a field, and trap counting can measure pest pressures. Having such accurate, specific data allows growers to reduce guesswork and optimize crop production.

"Geo-referenced soil and tissue sampling results can be transmitted back from the lab for fertility decision making," Morehead added. "Using the sample data and equations, we can create a variable rate fertility prescription for that field."

By identifying precisely which nutrients need to go where, a customizable prescription increases the cost-effectiveness of a fertilizer application, potentially saving money while also promoting better yield.

To learn more about using Agrian and discovering its benefits, visit the company website (home.agrian.com) or talk to your Fertilzona representative.

"I've been using it since 2007, and it really works," said Goodwin. "It's a great product."

"It's an excellent tool"

– PCA Gordon Goodwin,
Fertilzona - Yuma



New
Hires

Jefferson Taylor
Ag Express

Gerardo F. Corral Jr
Casa Grande

Ronald Logue
Casa Grande

LGMA: Fighting for More Food Safety

Growers and industry groups take extra steps with leafy greens

There has been a lot of national news in recent years about health problems related to certain food crops coming out of the Southwest; one of the most high-profile instances was the outbreak of *E. coli* infections blamed on romaine lettuce in 2018. According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), at least 197 Americans were sickened by that affected lettuce, and five died. The romaine in question reportedly came from the Yuma area.

Produce growers didn't need another "wake-up call" about food safety, but that episode definitely got everybody's attention and reinforced the importance of industry diligence and protective measures.

Arizona and California grow about 98 percent of the romaine produced in the U.S., and the lettuce industry generates an estimated \$2 billion each year in revenue and jobs in Arizona. Obviously, it is a vital business that needs to be safeguarded.

In 2007, following a deadly *E. coli* outbreak traced to spinach, various groups in the leafy greens industry established a task force with the stated mission "to sharpen food safety systems for production and harvest." That was the beginning of the Food Safety Committee of the Arizona Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement (AZ LGMA).

The LGMA is a comprehensive, science-based food-safety program designed to protect public health by reducing potential sources of contamination. LGMA member companies are shippers who are responsible for the entire process of farming, harvesting, and shipping to buyers.

"97 percent of leafy-greens shippers in Arizona are members," said Teressa Lopez, AZ LGMA Food Safety Committee Administrator, "and they have to make sure growers and harvesters are doing their part. It's up to the growers and harvesters to implement the programs."

Lopez explained that the LGMA safety standards involve a wide range of risk-assessment procedures, including field-based audits of water and soil plus pre-harvest and daily harvest evaluations. The USDA and other agencies also collaborate with the LGMA.

"Those third-party audits are important, and we appreciate what they do for us," said leafy-greens grower Steve Alameda, partner/operator of TopFlavor Farms in Yuma. "The auditors come in to make sure we're clean and everything is in order. They really keep us on our toes."

"We're concerned about cross-contamination, so we're always looking for environmental factors," Lopez said. "For example, our members regularly test for pathogens."

Leafy greens produced by Arizona LGMA member companies carry a black-and-white service mark on bills of lading to make them easily recognizable. Many buyers won't accept leafy greens without the mark. It's all part of an integrated strategy to assure consumers of safe, high-quality greens.

The AZ LGMA offers valuable training and other resources for growers and members. More information can be found at the group's website (www.arizonaaleafygreens.org) or by calling 602.542.0945.



New Warehouse Coming to CYC

CYC Solutions Company is expanding again, and that's good news for Fertilzona customers. In February, construction began on a new 17,000 square-foot warehouse at our affiliated company's facility in Casa Grande. The extra storage and handling capabilities will enable CYC to provide more efficient and responsive service.

Specifically, the increased warehouse capacity means that the staff at CYC will be able to keep more product on hand. That makes inventory more readily accessible when a grower needs a particular product in a timely manner.

"We have two warehouses here already, but we really needed more space," said Casey Compton of CYC. "The new warehouse will result in faster and more efficient delivery for our growers, and speed is always an important benefit."

The construction work is progressing well, and completion of the new building is scheduled for this May.



2850 S. PEART RD.
CASA GRANDE, AZ 85193

PRE-SORTED
FIRST-CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PHOENIX, AZ
PERMIT NO. 1273

Return Service
Requested

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

Shea Nieto
Credit Manager

Jeffrey Bengé
Financial Controller

BUCKEYE

26705 West Baseline Road
Buckeye, AZ 85326
(623) 386-4491
John Haggard, Manager

FENNEMORE

17102 West Olive Avenue
Waddell, AZ 85355
(623) 935-4252
John Haggard, Manager

ROLL

4212 South Avenue 39E
Roll, AZ 85347
(928) 785-9016
Jared Osborn, 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
Kent Cleckler, Manager

YUMA

4290 East County 10½ Street
Yuma, AZ 85365
(928) 344-9806
Brad Brchan, Manager

COMPTON AG SERVICES

19751 South Defrain Boulevard
Blythe, CA 92225
(760) 922-3117
John Haggard, Manager

AG EXPRESS

15472 West Jimmie Kerr Boulevard
Casa Grande, AZ 85122
(520) 876-9982
Dave Barrett, Manager

CYC SOLUTIONS

3085 North Cessna Way
Casa Grande, AZ 85122
(520) 316-3738
Tanner Nelson, Manager

FERTIZONA DE MEXICO

Camino al Tazajal No 18 Col. La Victoria
Hermosillo. Sonora. Mexico. CP. 83304

Casey Compton (U.S.)
(520) 510-5054

Gilberto Gil (Mexico)
011-52 (662) 280-0121

Send address changes to:

Brian Daley
2850 South Peart Road
Casa Grande, AZ 85193-9024
bdaley@fertizona.com



Fertizona and Compton Ag Services accept
MasterCard, Visa, Discover and American Express.

© 2020 Fertizona.
All trademarks are the property of their respective owners.



www.fertizona.com
www.comptonag.com