

WE HATE TO GOSSIP, BUT WE HEAR
SOME OF OUR COMPETITORS
HAVE A WEIGHT PROBLEM.



GLEANER / *Super Series*

Heavyweight performance. Lightweight design.

ARTHUR RING & SONS
Rushville, IL
217-322-4301

DITTAMORE IMPLEMENT CO.
Teutopolis, IL
217-857-3193
www.dittamore.com

MCCULLOUGH IMPLEMENT CO.
Watseka, IL
815-432-3965 • 888-488-6728
www.mcagplus.com



Gleaner is a registered trademark of AGCO. e3 is a global trademark of AGCO
© 2012 AGCO Corporation • GL12C012ST

Try dual-placement to maximize yields

By TYLER HARRIS

WITH the rise in corn prices in the last few years, more farmers have been seeking ways to maximize yields. Bill Houck, who has been doing custom application out of St. Charles Co-op for three of his 20 years in agriculture, says dual-placement has become more popular.

"I work with quite a few growers in Missouri and Illinois, and a few in Kansas that do it," he says. "If a guy picked up 5 bushels doing this when corn was \$2.50, it really didn't matter as much. Now, guys are more enthused about going after that extra 5 bushels."

The type of starter fertilizer used changes with location. "It just depends on what the farmer's needs are," Houck says. "It doesn't work the same with everyone."

He applies on farms up to Interstate 80 in northern Illinois, where the ground is different from that of the Mississippi River bottoms near St. Charles, Mo. "There is no such thing as an absolute in agriculture."

This means different times for application, tillage and planting. "Actually, I've got growers who will use their planter to apply phosphorus," Houck says. Other farmers use different combinations of starter fertilizer. "I deal with a lot of different ways of thinking. In my profession, you have to adapt to what the guy wants to do."

Different locations, different needs

On river bottoms, Houck prefers an NPK mix of 6-24-6 liquid fertilizer with a 32% urea ammonium nitrate solution and ammonium thiosulfate dual-placed. But farther west in parts of northeast Kansas, anhydrous and 10-34-0 liquid ammonium polyphosphate are often applied in the same band, which has benefits. The anhydrous sucks liquid out of the 10-34-0 and creates a white, acidic type of dry product that helps tie up nitrogen.

"It kind of dries up and helps seal the ammonia a little better," he says. "It creates a white band."

In the sandy soils along the river near St. Charles, N leaches more easily. If N leaches, sulfur has likely leached, as well.

"Nitrogen's tied so tight to the sulfur," Houck says. "It's almost impossible to take one without taking the other with it." So, applying sulfur with 32% is another common practice. "The sulfur and sulfate

Key Points

- Dual-placement of fertilizer is becoming more popular.
- Dual-placement makes phosphorus more available to young plants.
- High corn prices mean farmers are making extra efforts to maximize yield.

seems to be a big key."

Different nutrient levels mean different requirements in certain locations. The Bray P2 and P1 tests, measuring available rock phosphorus and soluble phosphorus, respectively, are an indicator.

"I don't like to see the P2-to-P1 ratio get past about a 3-to-1," Houck notes. The higher the ratio, the less soluble P there is and the more dual-placement pays off. "That's a big red flag that you need to supplement phosphorus," he says. "That's where we see the biggest benefit."

The benefit comes from the additional phosphoric acid. "Making it a little bit more of an acidic environment will break down more of that phosphorus in a rock form," Houck says. "The phosphorus that's not used will revert back to rock form ... then you've got to start all over again to break down that rock."

This is where liquid fertilizers are beneficial. "The majority of the liquid form is phosphoric acid," he says. It has a lower salt content, and is more soluble. "The phosphorus, to me, is more available in that form, and the plant takes it up in a rapid pace. It breaks down quick, and it's ready to go."

Houck says there are several benefits to ammonia and phosphorus synergy, including improved P availability and plant health. In some cases, he has noticed a 22- to 30-bushel increase. This is mostly because it makes P available to the plant at a young age. "Making the phosphorus available to the plant at a young age, to me, is where it's at," he says. "I'm trying to give that plant as much phosphorus at a young age as I possibly can."

This is an important stage in the growth of corn. "That's when corn determines how many rows of kernels around the ear it's going to have," Houck notes. "It might tip back in a drier year because of that, but you have a lot more yield potential by making it available at a younger age."



WHITE BAND: This white band, often called "white snot," is a result of applying anhydrous and 10-34-0 liquid ammonium polyphosphate in the same band. The anhydrous sucks the liquid out of the 10-34-0 and leaves an acidic type of dry product that helps tie up nitrogen. "It kind of dries up and helps seal the ammonia a little better," says custom applicator Bill Houck.