

# New facility doubles urea capacity

By JOSH FLINT

**R**ISING nitrogen prices have U.S. farmers hoping for increased supply in 2009. With a new stabilized urea facility in St. Louis, Lange-Stegmann is working to fill that need.

According to Jeff Whetstine, vice president of global marketing, urea is the world's most popular source of N. Since the facility will receive via barge and ship via rail, Whetstine hopes the increased distribution will make urea a popular

**Key Points**

- Lange-Stegmann's new urea facility can store 63,000 tons.
- Distribution is to 32 terminals in the U.S. and Canada.
- Next door, stabilized urea will be produced.

source of N in the U.S.

"By providing higher volumes at competitive prices, urea should become even more popular here in the United States," he adds. "Plus, with Agrotain technology to help



overcome the volatility of urea, there aren't the barriers for use that once existed."

The \$20 million facility features a 63,000-ton storage complex, which holds urea in 15 separate bays. Lange-Stegmann employees can fill a semi in six minutes and a rail car in 17 minutes.

Previously, Lange-Stegmann operated a 37,000-ton storage facility in the same area. The new facility will provide urea to 32 rail terminals in the U.S. and Canada. In addition, the operation will serve a 200-mile radius around St. Louis via truck.

**Maximizing efficiency**

Adjacent to the urea warehouse is a stabilized N production center. With the rapid increase in N prices, Whetstine says the Agrotain-brand stabilized urea has sold extremely well.

"We sold out of inventory this season in April for SuperU,

**UREA HUMIDOR:** Jeff Whetstine of Lange-Stegmann says the climate-controlled storage center in St. Louis keeps urea from breaking down into ammonia.

**N TRAIN:** Almost all of Lange-Stegmann's St. Louis products are shipped via rail. Pictured are Neil Yelland (left), regional manager for Saskatchewan, and Tom King, regional manager for the north-central U.S.



Uflexx and Umaxx," Whetstine notes. "These products will be produced at the new stabilized nitrogen center, and we anticipate that we will reach maximum capacity in the second year."

Dan Kuttenkuler, project manager, says the stabilized urea is produced using a falling curtain granulation process, which layers stabilizer onto seed urea.

Once the product is ready for shipment, an infrared system gauges how much N is present in each granule.

**Coverage area**

The facility will produce 12 tons of stabilized N per hour, from sizes of 150 size guide number to 280 sgn, and possibly larger. Kuttenkuler estimates the facility will produce 125,000 tons of stabilized urea annually.

At 30 pounds per acre, 125,000 tons would cover more than 8 million acres.

Whetstine notes, "If this volume was sold as SuperU in the southern Illinois corn market, it would cover 1 million acres."

Considering urea typically loses an average of 30% of its N before it's incorporated, Whetstine notes the 125,000 tons is more like 178,000 tons of conventional urea.

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