



For Immediate Release

For more information, please contact:

Randy Groff

The Mosaic Company

763-577-2765

randy.groff@mosaicco.com

USE BALANCED FERTILITY TO MANAGE WEATHER EXTREMES

With varying weather conditions from one growing season to the next, coastal bermudagrass producers are wise to concentrate their efforts on factors they can control, like soil fertility.

Maintaining adequate fertility levels helps forage reach yield potential attainable in any given season, says a Potash & Phosphate Institute (PPI) soil expert. Yield responses can be just as significant to nutrient additions in dry years as those applied under more optimum conditions.

"Putting a balanced fertility program in place improves crop performance and reduces the risk of yield loss in unfavorable growing seasons," says Dr. Cliff Snyder, Southeast director of the Potash & Phosphate Institute. "When soil nutrient levels are not adequate to meet plant growth demands, they add more stress to plants already struggling."

In bermudagrass hay production, two to four cuttings at 30-day intervals remove relatively large quantities of nutrients from the soil. Each ton of hay harvested removes about 50 pounds of potash (K₂O) per acre and up to 12 pounds of phosphate (P₂O₅), Snyder says.

If yield at harvest were six tons per acre, then about 300 pounds of potash and 70 pounds of phosphate would be needed to keep the system in balance. He notes that about 20 pounds of magnesium and 30 pounds of sulfur also would have been removed.

Soil testing and crop nutrient removal information is critical to monitor the crop's nutrient status during the season. If soils were already sampled and tested this past fall, producers should review previous yield and fertilizer program records before doing their first application. Snyder recommends bermudagrass producers apply nutrients at least two to three times per season.

To manage weather extremes, a balanced soil fertility program includes an adequate supply of phosphorus and potassium, he says. Adequate phosphorus is important for successful seedling establishment and good early root development. Potash promotes root growth and is essential for maintaining yields, reducing susceptibility to certain diseases, increasing stand survival and the crops own ability to utilize water efficiently.

Snyder notes that potassium, sulfur and magnesium are often the most important nutrients needed when growing high-quality bermudagrass feed for livestock. He recommends building soil fertility levels prior to seeding and topdressing nutrients immediately after harvest before regrowth resumes when necessary.

As part of the fertilizer mix, producers can provide forages with several necessary crop nutrients in the form of potassium magnesium sulfate (K-Mag[®], formerly known as Sul-Po-

Mag®), according to Dr. Ray Hoyum, Vice President of Market Development and Communications at IMC Global.

"K-Mag delivers potash, magnesium and sulfur in a water-soluble form that's readily available to the plant," he says. "The nutrients work immediately to help improve nitrogen and phosphorus efficiency."

Mined and processed by IMC Global, K-Mag is a 3-in-1 fertilizer combination that consists of 21-22 percent potash, 10.5-11 percent magnesium and 21-22 percent sulfur.

"When using K-Mag, producers can reduce the amount of potassium, magnesium and sulfur from other fertilizer sources in an overall mix," Hoyum says. "Plus, a low salt index and low chloride content in K-Mag are additional product features that can be beneficial for producers to increase bermudagrass quality and profit potential."



The Mosaic Company, 3033 Campus Drive Suite E-490, Plymouth, Mn. 55441, Phone 763-577-2700

© 2009 The Mosaic Company. All Rights Reserved. K-Mag is a registered trademark of The Mosaic Company