

SAGIT Col for the Stock Journal

## Further tests on suspension fertilisers

Ground-breaking research work with suspension fertilisers is about to enter a new phase.

These fertilisers, which include standard MAP or DAP mixed in water and held in suspension by clay, have been shown to match clear liquid fertilisers in boosting yields on some soil types when compared to 'dry' granular fertilisers.

With the support of SAGIT, work on suspension fertilisers has been carried out by staff at Minnipa Research Centre as these fertilisers are seen as a lower cost alternative to clear liquid fertilisers given that they can be manufactured locally and do not have to be imported.

Over the next two years SAGIT has committed \$118,400 to further suspension fertiliser research which will be headed by research engineer, Brendan Frischke.

Utilising a new suspension fertiliser mixing plant imported from the US, a range of suspension fertiliser 'mixes' will be tested beginning this cropping season.

As well, research staff will assess the storage and transport stability of the suspensions; their ability to be filtered; and ease of pumping.

To date, trials comparing crop growth and yields on highly calcareous EP soils from granular, clear liquid and suspension fertilisers have been conducted at a single phosphorus rate.

In the 2004 and 2005 work, several trials comparing the three forms of fertilisers will be carried out across a wider range of phosphorus rates.

While this research will reveal valuable yield and grain protein data it will also enable researchers to compare the residual phosphorus effects from suspension fertilisers, compared to other forms.

Next year the effect on crop yields of applying suspension fertiliser at depth in infertile sand-over-clay soils will be tested.

"Meanwhile our work with clear liquid fertilisers to depths of 40 cm will continue this year and will be useful in determining whether we need multiple streams at incremental depths or just one stream as deep as practical when we introduce suspensions to the work," Mr Frischke said.

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