



AUTUMN FERTILISER STRATEGIES

New fertiliser blending service to boost legume production, profits



CSBP Market Development Manager Pastures Kirk Reynolds and CSBP Bunbury Distribution Manager Bruce Gillam with Alosca blended fertiliser.

CSBP has responded to farmer customer demand with the announcement of a new service to custom blend Alosca inoculants with the company's fertilisers to help boost production and profits from legume-based crops and pastures.

Alosca dry granular inoculants comprise clay granules containing Rhizobium bacteria that aid in boosting legume nodulation and nitrogen fixation. The granules enable nodulation deeper on the root system, which can allow fixation to occur further into spring when the topsoil dries out.

Alosca's developers claim up to 50% of legume production potential can be lost through nodulation failure. Cereal crops

following legume rotation have been demonstrated to achieve enhanced yield performance, and that excellent nodulation and nitrogen fixation can decrease subsequent nitrogen fertiliser inputs.

CSBP Pastures Market Development Manager Kirk Reynolds said growers re-establishing their pastures had shown increasing interest in the Alosca granules and CSBP had received enquiries for the blending service.

Kirk said one of the major benefits of blending the granules with fertiliser was that it eliminated the conventional slurry inoculation on seed for farmers.

The bacteria also remain viable

even when stored and applied in dry conditions, allowing for dry-sowing and, hence, providing flexibility to growers' seeding operations and potential for increased pasture growth. Fertiliser blends with the Alosca Dry Flow inoculant can be stored for up to six months, excluding moisture.

Fungicides and insecticides can also still be applied to seed without affecting nodulation.

Kirk said the granules were successfully blended with CSBP fertilisers at the company's Esperance facility for a number of local farmers last year.

CSBP Area Manager Craig Burton said the growers arranged for the blending of the particular Alosca product and percentage

they wanted with their fertiliser and were very happy with the results.

"We saw huge results with nodulation with clovers and legumes. Where it wasn't used there was no nodulation, and where it was it was huge," Craig said.

"There will be a benefit in the nitrogen fixation this year from last year. There will likely be double the nitrogen fixation from the excellent nodulation."

Keith Green, who farms north-east of Esperance, enjoyed the logistical and production benefits of using Alosca granules with AgNP fertiliser for his Tanjil lupin crop last year.

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"We previously always used the peat inoculant on the seed and it had to go in the ground in 24 hours - and then we still had the risk of it failing in non-wetting country," Keith said.

"Using Alosca blended with the fertiliser is a lot simpler. It makes the job a lot easier at seeding time compared with peat inoculant."

He said because the bacteria survived in storage and dry conditions, it provided added convenience to the seeding operation and reduced the risk caused by the non-wetting soils.

Using the Alosca and AgNP blend also did the job of enhancing the lupin nodulation last season.

"There was very good nodulation and therefore good nitrogen fixation," Keith said.

Wittenoom Hills grower Chris Meiklejohn had similar success last year with the blending of Alosca with Super Potash 3:1 for his serradella and oat fodder crop grown on leased land that had been continuously cropped for a decade.

"It worked really well and it is a lot easier than using the peat, saving all that mixing," Chris said.

"The conditions we went into were also a bit marginal, so the fact that the bacteria don't die was a big benefit."

He said despite only using half of the recommended rate of Alosca with the fertiliser, the nodulation

was strong.

The Meiklejohns will also blend the granules with their lupin and pea fertilisers this season, again replacing the peat.

Local Landmark agronomist Karina Zacher said the Alosca granules enhanced nodulation significantly earlier in the season - also along the depth of the roots and on the laterals.

"It was pretty impressive. They weren't just congested around the seed-coat, they were spread over the roots evenly," Karina said.

Kirk said the new Alosca blending service was available at CSBP's Kwinana, Bunbury and Esperance facilities and farmers could order the blend, similar to

other custom blends, through their local CSBP Sales Agent.

He said it was important to match the particular Alosca product with the correct legume, as different strains of Rhizobium bacteria were required for different plant species.

CSBP is offering Alosca AL for lucerne, strand and disc medic, Alosca C for clovers (sub, balansa, crimson, gland, arrowleaf, rose and persian), Alosca F for faba bean, lentil, field pea and vetch, and Alosca S for serradella and lupins.

Kirk said he expected the Alosca granules to be particularly popular with Super Phos and Super Potash fertiliser mixes.



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