

Trend, Or Industry Standard?

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Submission: 📅 September 20, 2017; **Published:** 📅 December 07, 2017

Opinion

Is the highly progressive “Nano-technology”, a temporary trend, or a new industry standard?

Agriculture has understood for many years that foliar feeding, or spoon-feeding is a superior means of providing the soil and a plant with nutrition. This is hardly a new revelation. Foliar spoon-feeding is a practice utilized by superior crop and agricultural managers everywhere. Spoon-feeding is generally accepted as the most efficient manner of providing nutrition to non-indigenous crops. A foliar application provides the phenomenal possibility of providing the nutrition directly into the plant. A highly positive feature, right? The challenge is the difficulty in doing so. The stomata of a plant generally face down. Try spraying the underside of a plant! Humor aside, the real challenge is that of sizing. I heard it explained as “getting nutrition into a plant’s stomata is equivalent to squeezing a basketball into a 5/8-inch garden hose”. Conversely, Nano-technology is like “a basketball into a basketball hoop”. AMP Agronomy made it easy for us. One quart per acre provides results comparable to 1 lb. of P or K. Foliar applications also have an important biological benefit. When nutrients are foliar applied, the plants exude more sugars and other compounds (exudates) into the root zone. This will increase microbial activity around the root zone, which in turn, enhances the uptake of chemical nutrients by the plant from the soil. Therefore, “win-win”. Plants and beneficial

bacteria maintain the ultimate “give and take” relationship. Each gives, and each takes!

Does that mean that if I use older granular technology, that I am using antiquated technology? Well, yes. The salt content of 50’s, 60’s and 70’s commonly used ingredients is staggering. And yet, 97% of potassium used is still MAP. One step forward and two back. My research has shown that Nitrogen is the most efficient of the macro-nutrients with a 30 to 70% efficiency rating. Phosphorus is 2 to 3 % and Potassium is 6 to 8%. But this is a strictly chemical perspective. A more modern view focuses on the biology of the soil. The difficulty is that we were raised in a chemical world with few parameters outside of “pounds per N, P, or K”. It is etched into our minds and our agronomic programs. In the Mid-Atlantic, I believe in a well-balanced diet focusing on Carbon, Humic Acids, Plant Deriver Amino Acids, and Calcium. Hum... eerily like our human physicians and animal veterinarians. But today very few managers focus on soil biology rather than an outdated chemical analysis. Those that do provide an efficient, affordable, environmentally friendly, agronomic program that greatly lessens environmental damaging, nutrient leaching. The interesting thing is that when agricultural manufacturers develop new products, clients never state that “unless you use as much, as I used prior, it will not work”. The challenge is getting out of the “ONE POUND” plant food thing. Let’s all “walk the walk”.