

New fertiliser, fertigation system a life changer for Innisfail grower

A NEW specialist fertiliser blend applied through a new fertigation unit is making life a whole lot easier for Innisfail banana grower Kerry Alcock.

Kerry has chalked up 35 years on the family property after commencing in the industry in 1962 at Murwillumbah near the Tweed River on New South Wales' north coast.

Most of the family's 'Alcock Bananas', produced off about 80 hectares, head to Brisbane and Adelaide.

Until recently, Kerry has encountered some problems delivering fertilisers through his existing fertigation system.

Potassium nitrate with some trace elements has mainly been applied.

"We have had to put the nitrates through one week and the sulphates through in another week," Kerry said.

"We also manually spread Nitrophoska and we have been using liquids too, but they don't seem to give the bananas a jolt."

He said the family had been trialing the new 'Banana One-Shot' fertiliser blend developed by Lindsay Rural and Haifa for the past eight months over a 6.5ha area planted in July 2011 that was previously in cane production.

The one shot fertiliser mix, which is based on the high quality Haifa fertiliser, Poly-Feed, comprises pure plant nutrients and generous quantities of essential micro-elements such as magnesium, boron and zinc.

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Haifa Australia Queensland Sales Agronomist Peter Anderson, local grower Kerry Alcock and Lindsay Rural Innisfail Agronomist David McDowell check a section of the Alcock's banana plantation that has received the new Banana One-Shot fertiliser blend.

Banana One-Shot Analysis

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Total nitrogen (N) | 13% |
| Nitrate-nitrogen (N-NO3) | 7.8% |
| Ammoniacal nitrogen (N-NH4) | 5.2% |
| Phosphorus (P) | 0.17% |
| Soluble in water and in neutral ammonium-citrate solution | |
| Potassium (K) | 24% |
| Sulphur (S) | 8.7% |
| Magnesium (Mg) | 2.1% |
| Micro Nutrients | |
| Boron (B) | 900 ppm |
| Iron (Fe)* | 500 ppm |
| Zinc (Zn)* | 440 ppm |
| Manganese (Mn)* | 250 ppm |
| Copper (Cu)* | 55 ppm |
| Molybdenum (Mo) | 35 ppm |

* EDTA-chelated



Further information

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Banana One-Shot

Exclusively available through Lindsay Rural



LINDSAY RURAL

A Division of **LINDSAY AUSTRALIA**

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Banana One-Shot was developed to help growers supply complete crop nutrition in “one shot”, rather than have to use mixtures of “straight” fertilisers. It virtually supplies all nutrient requirements, except calcium, and when applied consistently, it should achieve better results than slugging straight fertilisers through irrigation systems at periodic intervals.

PETER ANDERSON, HAIFA AUSTRALIA

“With the new fertigation unit, we can put 600 kilograms of the Banana One-Shot through it in one go for the 16 acres in 10 minutes. It goes through really well,” Kerry said.

“We also have another set-up we can put it through and stop it using a timer.

“We got the fertiliser in 600kg bags rather than smaller individual bags, which is a hard job and hard on your back.

“It saves work and time. We get the 600kg in and out every two weeks. It (the area) is getting about 250kg (per hectare) per month.

“We haven’t noticed a lot of difference with the bananas yet, but we started in the real cold months and we are at least getting the same production with less effort and less time.

“It was also an old cane paddock that had been growing cane for 106 years. It’s had a flogging. It will have been in bananas two years

in June – and it can take five years to set soils up for bananas, so it’s going well.”

Since the application of the Banana One-Shot fertiliser, the area produced its second crop of bananas in just seven months instead of the typical nine months and it is now bunching again for its third crop.

“It has been a couple of months ahead. We got four trailers out of the first returns after it had been in just 14 months,” Kerry said.

The quality of the early “followers” also has been very good and healthy.

The area has since also received an application of Nitrophoska.

Leaf tissue testing coordinated for the site by Haifa Australia and Lindsay Rural clearly highlighted the improved nutrition levels following the Banana One-Shot applications.

Analysis at the start of applications indicated

very low to marginal uptake of phosphorus, potassium, zinc and boron, however phosphorus and boron uptake was at optimal levels in just two months and potassium and zinc after just four months of applications.

Haifa Australia Queensland Sales Agronomist Peter Anderson said Banana One-Shot was developed to help growers supply complete crop nutrition in “one shot”, rather than have to use mixtures of “straight” fertilisers.

“It virtually supplies all nutrient requirements, except calcium, and when applied consistently, it should achieve better results than slugging straight fertilisers through irrigation systems at periodic intervals. There are no temporary setbacks caused by delays in application,” Peter said.

Banana One-Shot is recommended to be applied at the rate of 250kg/ha/month.

