



Agri-News

October 12, 2009

Lower Fertilizer Prices a Benefit for Fall Application

Fertilizer prices have dropped significantly since last October. In fact, the average fertilizer price is less than half what it was in the fall of 2008, which is a pleasant surprise for Alberta farmers.

“Producers were very concerned with fertilizer prices last year,” says Dr. Ross McKenzie, agronomy research scientist with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. “In October 2008, 46-0-0 urea was priced at about \$935/metric tonne and this October it is in the range of \$430/metric tonne, less than half the price. The story is basically the same for phosphate fertilizer. Last year the price for 11-51-0 was about \$1370/metric tonne, while this year the average price is in the range of \$480/metric tonne.”

These prices mean that fall fertilization is certainly an option for farmers to consider. While last year many farmers were looking for ways to cut back on fertilizer, this year producers can get back to fertilizing normally and basing their fertilizer application on crop removal and not solely on what they can afford.

“Fertilizer prices have come down because the world demand for fertilizer has dropped off slightly and there is an excellent supply available,” says McKenzie. “Also, with energy costs falling, it follows naturally that fertilizer prices have dropped.”

While the concept of a one-pass direct seeding system is a very positive practice that McKenzie strongly encourages, spring can be a hectic time. In some cases, farmers might want to look at their overall time-management and get the fertilizer on selected fields in the fall.

“Fall fertilizing, especially with costs being down, is something worth considering,” says McKenzie. “The first factors that come to mind are which fields and how much fertilizer to put on. I always strongly encourage soil sampling to test for nutrient

levels remaining in the soil in the fall after soil temperatures have dropped below 7° C, and then plan fertilization accordingly. With nitrogen application, it is especially important to test for nitrate levels, what the carry-over from summer is, what nutrients are needed based on what is in the soil and what crops are planned for next year.”

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When it comes to nitrogen, urea and anhydrous ammonia are the two nitrogen fertilizers that, when put on in late fall, convert to ammonium. Ammonium is positively charged and will attach to the negatively charged soil particles to remain stable in the soil until next spring. Ammonium won't leach, unlike nitrate fertilizer or soil nitrate that are prone to leaching or to denitrification where the fertilizer is lost to the air.

"Do plan on applying fertilizers such as 46-0-0 urea or 82-0-0 anhydrous ammonia as late in the fall and as close to freeze-up as possible," says McKenzie. "You want to ensure the nitrogen remains in the ammonium form over winter. If nitrogen fertilizer is applied too early in the fall, the ammonium nitrogen will be converted to nitrate nitrogen by soil bacteria which could then be subject to leaching or denitrification losses under wet soil conditions. Fertilizing in late fall is key to minimizing nitrogen loss. Ideally, the nitrogen fertilizer should convert to nitrate in the spring when crops require this form of nitrogen."

- **Fall Fertilization - Frequently Asked Questions** – [www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/faq7502](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/faq7502)
- **Fall-applied Nitrogen: Risks and Benefits** – [www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex5695](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex5695)

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Energy Information Sessions for Landowners

The Farmers' Advocate Office (FAO) is embarking on a series of 26 energy information sessions, scheduled for the winter and spring of 2009/2010. This educational project is intended to help landowners understand the life cycle of energy activity as it relates to their surface land base and to be proactive in managing risk associated with energy activity. This project is supported under the Growing Forward initiative, a new commitment from Canada's Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Agriculture.

The FAO is partnering with local landowner groups in each location to host the upcoming sessions. Five key Alberta regions have been selected for the presentations; south central, east central, northern, west central and central Alberta. These locations were determined by the FAO as areas where there had not been recent presentations or where it was felt the FAO could provide useful and prudent information to a wide variety of landowners. The sessions will include 21 one-day general information sessions followed with five detailed interactive sessions.

The advanced interactive sessions are intended for those who have attended the general information session and wish to expand their knowledge to consider risk mitigation specific to their land. Each community will have a local contact to oversee the registration process. Information on dates, locations, local contacts and registration forms is available on the Farmers' Advocate website at www.farmersadvocate.gov.ab.ca and through the local contact person. Local contact information for the winter 2009 and spring 2010 sessions will be updated on the Farmers' Advocate website as it becomes available.

The first series of sessions is scheduled to begin November 2009, in east central Alberta.

The following is an overview of the sessions:

- **Session 101** will provide a general overview of the various stages of energy development. Everything from surface title ownership, seismic, survey, initial lease negotiation, the roles of the regulatory agencies, mitigating impacts through the energy facility life cycle, and the reclamation process will be covered. FAO would like to see participants leave this session with a broader understanding of how they can find a balanced approach to mitigating the impacts of energy development and feel like they may be in a better position to manage their ongoing relationship with the energy industry. This session is intended for anyone with an interest in energy development. There is a registration fee of \$20 for this full-day session, and lunch is included.
- **Session 201** is intended for those who attended Session 101 and wish to create a specific plan related to their land base. Participants will be provided with maps of their property and other resources to assist in pre-planning for energy activity and developing a risk mitigation strategy to identify areas that they wish to conserve versus those areas that you could sacrifice to energy development. The Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB), Surface Rights Board (SRB) and Alberta Environment (ENV) will make presentations at each of the sessions. The key outcome for participants at this session will be the creation of a plan for their land base that can assist in negotiations with energy companies when they approach landowners seeking access to their land. This session is intended for those who have attended Session 101 but is also open to those who may have a broader knowledge of energy development. There is a registration fee of \$50 for this full-day session, and lunch is included. Those registering for this session will be required to provide the legal land description of their farming operation to the FAO office 10 days prior to the session. The information will be used to create maps for participant use.

For additional information, contact Carol Goodfellow, assistant Farmers' Advocate - Land and Energy at 310-FARM (3276) or by email at carol.goodfellow@gov.ab.ca

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New Agri-Food Leadership Program Launched

The Agriculture and Food Council of Alberta and the University of Alberta's School of Business Executive Education have collaborated to launch a new program to encourage and develop the next generation of agri-food leaders.

"The Agri-Food Leadership Program will address the opportunity to build leadership skills throughout Alberta's agri-food industry," said Amber Havens, chair of the council's Innovation in Agribusiness Management Fund (IAMF) Action Team. "As a pilot, we hope to provide an exceptional learning experience for participants and tap into their thoughts on what more we can offer to build on the program for the future."

The program will guide participants from across the value chain on a four-module experience that focuses on understanding one's self, leading others, coaching and mentoring, and leading the organization. Throughout the program, participants will work on an individual project that is applicable to their own personal situations and present the project to their peers in the final module.

The University of Alberta's School of Business Executive Education program brings expertise and more than 11 years of successful program development to the project.

"The strength of this program lies not only in the leading edge education with top instructors, but the peer-to-peer learning of sharing common problems and finding innovative solutions," said Brent Collingwood, senior director of client development with Executive Education. "Participants are engaged in meaningful, relevant discussions and leave with practical tools they can apply directly to their individual circumstances."

The deadline for program application is October 23, 2009. Applications and other information about the Agri-Food Leadership Program can be found at www.agfoodcouncil.com/funding/iamf/leadership.aspx.

Funding support for the leadership pilot is provided by the Agriculture and Food Council's Innovation in Agribusiness Management Fund (IAMF), Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund.

The council is a leader in Alberta's agriculture and food industry. It is a unique agri-food industry agent with a vision for Alberta's agriculture and food industry to be globally competitive, profitable and sustainable. To help realize this vision, the council has developed various partnerships with industry and governments. It operates a number of targeted programs and initiatives, and is viewed by industry partners as a catalyst for policy discussions on vital issues and trends affecting the sector.

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In Case of Emergency – Lift Tractor Here

When working on a farm, knowing what to do if you came across a co-worker or family member in an emergency situation, perhaps pinned by a baler or stuck in a combine, could mean the difference between an injury and fatality.

"It's a horrible thought, but in a careless moment, things can happen," says Kenda Lubeck, farm safety coordinator with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. "Often an injury victim is discovered by a family member and it is vital that the uninjured person on the scene remains calm and knows how to start rescue procedures."

Rescuers from fire departments across Alberta had the chance to learn rescue techniques this summer at two separate Farm Extrication Clinics hosted by the Barons Fire Department in Southern Alberta. Seven instructors came up from the Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads, Montana State University and East Jefferson Fire Rescue, Washington, to teach the courses.

"Each two-day clinic included a half-day of lecture and then participants were sent out into a field of retired farm machinery," says Lubeck. "They were guided through hands-on experience rescuing "dummies" from various heavy equipment including combines, balers, swathers and tractors."

While the clinic was designed to teach rescuers and fire fighters with access to tools such as the Jaws of Life and a trained crew of people, there were key messages that could certainly help farmers in a time of need.

"The first and foremost piece of advice for any farm work team is that someone, or ideally everyone, on the team has first aid training," says Lubeck. "It really may be the difference between the life and death of a victim."

For the first person on the scene of an emergency, these are the steps recommended by the training crew to rescue the victim:

Step one: Call for help. If the victim is entangled, pinned or crushed by equipment call the fire department or rescue squad and an ambulance. Do not call family members first if you can help it.

Step two: Ensure all rescuers are safe and not in any danger.

Step three: Assess the situation. What equipment is involved? Are there chemicals? Could further damage or injury occur? Perform a 360-degree walk-around to completely assess the situation.

Step four: Secure the site. Stabilize all equipment and machinery. This includes cribbing to keep the equipment from shifting and causing more harm or greater injury. Cribbing is using blocks of wood or similar material to cradle and secure any piece of equipment.

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Step five: If possible, without causing additional injury, quickly and carefully extricate the victim in the safest manner possible. This most likely will require a team of rescuers, depending on the situation.



Of course the most important message is to avoid accidents at all costs.

- Do not wear loose clothing. Watch for dangling threads, hair and strings – anything that can get caught up in equipment and create an injury.
- Always disengage equipment, shut off the power/motor and apply the brake before exiting the tractor or adjusting any equipment. This is one of those “at-all-costs” things.
- Look after yourself and your team. Get enough sleep. Drink enough water. Eat proper meals and take regular breaks. This keeps the mind and body working properly to make the decisions and exert the energy.
- Get the proper training on unfamiliar equipment for yourself, family members or coworkers. If you know how it works, you know the dangers that can come with it.

“Throughout the extrication clinic, the training crew emphasized keeping the big picture in mind. ‘Do not get tunnel vision,’ was the key concern for rescuers,” says Lubeck.

“Continually evaluate how the rescue is going taking everything into consideration. Not doing so could easily create more harm or even more victims.”

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Ivermectin a New Alberta-Made Product

Ivermectin Pour-on for Cattle is a new, Alberta-made product for cattle that treats and controls costly internal and external parasites such as sucking lice, biting lice, gastrointestinal roundworms, grubs, mange mites and flies. The product was developed in Calgary and is manufactured according to the strict regulations of Health Canada. Ivermectin Pour on for Cattle, which was tested in Alberta on Canadian cattle and registered with the Veterinary Drug Directorate of Health Canada, is now available.

“There are a number of advantages for producers when they have a Canadian manufactured product available to them, one of the foremost being that they can be more competitive,” says Dr. Merle Olson, DVM, director of research and technical services with Alberta Veterinary Laboratories (AVL). “This product will provide a significant price differential to similar imported products, allowing Canadian producers to reduce their costs and be more competitive with other markets.

“The introduction of a Canadian manufactured Ivermectin Pour on for Cattle will save Alberta cattle producers approximately \$9 million per year through reduced pharmaceutical input costs.”

The product was tested in Canada under Canadian conditions, proving its performance. Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development provided some funding and technical services during the development and testing stages and helped AVL throughout the registration process.

“Ivermectin Pour-on for Cattle was identified as the product critical to the industry and was chosen as the first product AVL would develop,” says Olson. “The launch of Ivermectin Pour-on for Cattle demonstrates that we have the established supply chain and technical expertise to make this and other veterinary pharmaceutical products right here in Alberta.

“Total traceability is very important. Another advantage with a locally made product is that traceability is made much simpler. We have the ability to quickly trace this product back by batch to the manufacturing plant, to the distributor and to the end user.”

Almost all of the ingredients and components in this product are made if not in Alberta, then in Canada, giving an additional benefit of immediate traceability.

AVL employs 20 highly trained staff, including chemists, engineers and compounding technicians, at their plant in Calgary.

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Agri-News Briefs

Agriculture Update for Professionals 2009

Agriculture Update for Professionals 2009, a seminar specifically for accountants and financial advisors who work with the agriculture industry hosted by Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development and Alberta Community and Co-operative Association (ACCA) is being held at several locations throughout the province. The series kicks off in Grande Prairie on October 26, 2009. The course offers a wealth of information, including topics such as how to optimize personal loss utilization, capital dividend accounting a section on technological traps and opportunities and partnership freezes and dissolution strategies. There will also be several select-a-sessions for participants to choose from at each of the locations:

Grande Prairie	October 26
Lloydminster	October 27
Saskatoon	October 28
Medicine Hat	October 29
Lethbridge	October 30
Edmonton	November 2
Red Deer	November 3
Calgary	November 4

Seminar registration is \$325 plus GST. To register, contact Dianne Schoepp at 780-963-3766. Online registration is also available at www.signupmaster.com/acca

Planning Your Winter Feeding Program

This age verification and beef industry update workshop is being held in four locations in Alberta:

Grande Prairie on October 21
(contact Jill Henry at 780-567-5585)

Savanna on October 22
(contact Amy Kaut at 780-864-3760)

Hines Creek on October 28
(contact Aaron Zylstra at 780-685-3925 or
Randy Perkins at 780-835-7541)

Manning on October 29
(contact Jana Ungarian at 780-836-3354)

The agenda includes topics such as feeding and management options in dry conditions; Livestock Identification Services update; CCIA and Verified Beef production update; and, hay and pasture insurance. Registration for these workshops is free.

Irrigated Crop Production Update

The biennial Lethbridge conference, the ***Irrigated Crop Production Update***, is being held in Lethbridge on January 12 to 13, 2010. Of special interest to irrigated crops producers and crop advisors, the conference agenda includes presentations on agronomic management, pest management, irrigated crops, irrigation equipment, water management and financial management. Speakers include experts from private industry, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Health Canada. For more information, contact Shelley Woods, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, at 403-381-5839 or e-mail shelley.a.woods@gov.ab.ca