

Silage boost for Grafton grower

A new ammonium stabiliser applied to nitrogen fertilisers is helping one local dairy farmer improve yields in his silage crops.

Rod Madden grows a variety of silage and hay crops on his 160 hectare property near Grafton in New South Wales to feed his 225 milking cows.

After speaking to his local agronomist, Steve Leeson from Norco Rural, Rod decided to try ENTEC® Urea in his silage crops to help boost productivity.

ENTEC is an ammonium stabiliser that slows the conversion of ammonium nitrogen to nitrate nitrogen for up to several weeks when applied to nitrogen fertilisers.

Rod said one of the early advantages he had discovered when swapping to ENTEC Urea was the increased flexibility when planting.

He applied one upfront application of 200 kg/ha of nitrogen using ENTEC Urea at planting.

"ENTEC helps keep the nitrogen in the root zone for longer, so we're at less risk of losing it through leaching and it means there is more nitrogen for the crop when it needs it."

He said this had made a significant difference when it came to harvest, with yields increasing by 25% in his silage crops.

He added that he didn't have to sidedress nitrogen later in the season despite heavy rainfall, therefore reducing his fertiliser costs.

"Our yields in our silage crops are generally between 30 – 35 t/ha, but on the crop where we used ENTEC Urea, we saw yields increase to 40 – 45 t/ha."

"We're also going to trial ENTEC Urea in our hay crops to see if we get a similar response."

Steve Leeson, from Norco Rural in Grafton, said ENTEC technology had been well adopted by maize growers in the Clarence Valley.

"ENTEC helps reduce the leaching and denitrification of nitrogen fertilisers by holding it in the ammonium form for longer, which means there is more available for the crop when it needs it."

"It is also a good fit in maize, as in the early growth stages, the crop prefers to take up its nitrogen in the ammonium form."



Rod Madden has seen a significant improvement in his silage crop yields since switching to ENTEC urea.

Steve said local farmers had also discovered ENTEC had helped some varieties reach their grain potential.

"Some maize varieties that are being grown these days will produce two cobs, although the second one is normally small and has a lower grain content," he said.

"In double cob varieties such as Hycorn 901 and Hycorn 727, we are finding that the second cob is similar in grain yields to the first cob.

"This hasn't happened before and it is very exciting to see two cobs per plant grow to 22 round and 40 long."

As well as using ENTEC fertilisers in maize, Steve said farmers in the area were also adopting the new technology in their sugar cane and pastures.

Rod Madden on ENTEC fertilisers :

- Reduced the need for sidedressing nitrogen later in the season
- Improved cob size and greater potential of second cobs filled
- Increased silage crop yields by 25%.

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