

## FERTFACTS

# FERTILISING SPORTING FIELDS

## (Northern Territory, Queensland and Northern NSW Fact Sheet)

### ESTABLISHMENT

#### Soil Amelioration

If lime, dolomite or gypsum is required, apply it when the ground is worked up for the first time, and thoroughly incorporate it into the soil. Ideally this should be done three months before planting.

#### Planting

The use of a fertiliser with a high phosphorus (P) content, compared to those used on established fields, is recommended when establishing a new playing surface. Phosphorus has a longer residual life in the soil than nitrogen (N) and potassium (K), and its use encourages strong root growth and development.

In the days or last couple of weeks before sowing the grass seed or laying down turf, apply Incitec Pivot "Complete Mix 1" or "CK 800" at 350 - 450 kg/ha (3.5 - 4.5 kg/100 m<sup>2</sup>), or "CK 55" at 250 - 300 kg/ha (2.5 - 3 kg/100 m<sup>2</sup>). Incorporate into the top 5 - 10 cm of soil.

### MAINTENANCE

Fertilisers such as Incitec Pivot CK 88 (15.1%N 4.4%P 11.5%K) and Nitrophoska Blue Special (12.0%N 5.2%P 14.1%K), which are high in nitrogen and potassium and lower in phosphorus, are popular top-dressing fertilisers for lawns and playing fields.

Incitec Pivot Urea (46%N) can be used in between applications of these fertilisers to apply extra nitrogen.

A basic program for fields comprised of couch and other summer active grass species is:

Time	Product	Rate
September	Incitec Pivot CK 88 or BASF Nitrophoska Blue Special	300 kg/ha
Late October	Incitec Urea	100 kg/ha
December	Incitec Pivot CK 88 or BASF Nitrophoska Blue Special	300 kg/ha
January-February	Incitec Pivot Urea	100 kg/ha
March	Incitec Pivot CK 88 or BASF Nitrophoska Blue Special	300 kg/ha
Mid-May	Incitec Pivot Urea	100 kg/ha

Fertiliser is applied less frequently over the cooler months of winter, as grass growth is slowed at this time of year.

If the field has been over-sown with winter-growing grasses such as Rye Grass, e.g. for football, an additional application of Incitec Pivot CK 88 or Nitrophoska Blue Special at 300 kg/ha or Incitec Pivot Urea at 100 kg/ha may be considered during the winter months.

Fertiliser granules and dust that lodge on plant leaves may burn the foliage.

Therefore, if irrigation is available, it is best to water the fertiliser into the soil after application. This should be done as soon as possible on the day of application.

If the fertiliser can be applied when rain is imminent, this may avoid the need to water the fertiliser in. 10 - 15 mm of rain should be adequate.

If the fertiliser is left dry on the leaves, it can absorb atmospheric moisture or dissolve in overnight dew, forming a concentrated solution that burns the plant foliage. Light rain or showers will have the same effect as dew, enough to dissolve the fertiliser but not enough to wash it off the leaves and into the soil.

Watering the fertiliser in also minimises the risk of any gaseous nitrogen losses to the atmosphere, which can occur after the surface application of many nitrogen fertilisers, and avoids the risk of accidental ingestion by children, pets or wildlife.

Applying fertiliser to wet grass with no prospect of follow up rain or irrigation poses the greatest risk of fertiliser burn, as more fertiliser granules will lodge on leaves rather than fall through the canopy.

## PETS AND WILDLIFE

While the risk is slight, the ingestion of freshly-applied fertiliser may temporarily affect the health of grazing animals and wildlife, and in isolated incidents result in death. If practical, it is best to remove animals from areas being fertilised, and not to readmit them until after rain is received or irrigation applied, and regrowth occurs. This minimises the risk of direct ingestion of fertiliser, and nitrate poisoning of grazing animals from young regrowth.

## AREAS/UNITS OF MEASUREMENT

A hectare (ha), if you are not familiar with large areas or metric units, is 10 000 m<sup>2</sup> (square metres). It is best visualised as a 100 m square, i.e. an area of 100 m by 100 m.

A field with the dimensions of 100 m by 50 m is 0.5 ha.

## FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

This Fact Sheet contains brief Use Directions only, which by necessity are of a general nature.

Fertiliser programs may need to be varied depending on the grass species being grown, the soil's fertility, and cultural practices.

More detailed advice on fertilising playing fields is presented in the Incitec Pivot Agritopic on "Fertilising Sporting Fields (Old and Northern NSW)". These can be obtained from your Incitec Pivot Fertiliser distributor.

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