

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate use



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Fertiliser price changes add to the mix

With the recent change in pricing relativity now favouring mixes of superten and urea over the alternative of DAP, it is likely that demand for special mixes containing superten and Ballance's patented Coated N-rich Urea will increase over late summer and through autumn.

'Farmers will be relieved at the price drop in superphosphate since this type of product, blended with coated urea as in the PasturezealG2 range, is far better suited than DAP to the majority of New Zealand pastoral soils, which do need regular sulphur inputs,' says Aaron Stafford, a Technical Advisor at Ballance Agri-Nutrients.

'Many farms now have good phosphate fertility as a result of a good history of P fertiliser inputs, while K is not usually limiting in the soils in these areas. Sulphur is likely to be the most limiting nutrient to clover and therefore pasture production.

'Hence the advice has been to farmers that where finance dictates, you can mine into your soil phosphate reserves by applying less than maintenance P, with little short-term effect on productivity.'

Aaron warns farmers not to forget about sulphur as the mobility of this nutrient means repeat applications are needed each year, with the 'sulphur clock' being reset after each winter leaching episode.

'The consequence of this, and do not forget every farm will be a bit different, is that we have and will continue to see a swing to products with lower P and greater S contents, such as the Sulphur gain range. On top of this, different mixes should be expected on different parts of the farm system.

'In summer dry hill country with Olsen-P levels >15 and soil sulphate levels > 6, there is likely to be little economic benefit from continued fertiliser P and S inputs. Fertiliser N is likely to give a better return on investment in these areas.'

He says there will be areas in all farms that need to be treated differently, depending on factors including base fertility, age of the pasture, production potential, and value to the farm system.