

A highly effective starter fertiliser

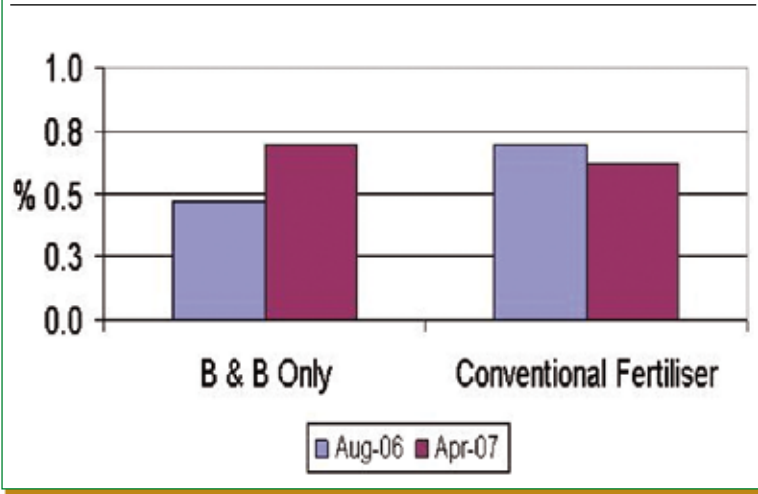
Conventional nitrogen fertilisers such as urea and NH_3 are known to harm soil biology. In the case of many fields where organic carbon levels are low and general soil health is already poor, using these fertilisers can often make things worse. Now cotton growers can use a fertiliser that helps improve soil structure and health, which in turn can increase crop vigour and yield.

Developed in Australia by Growth Agriculture, this innovative liquid fertiliser is called B&B Liquid Blood and Bone. It is an organic based compound that can be foliar or soil applied in a number of easy to use ways.

Richard Maples of Growth Agriculture explains how recent initial trials in cotton at Merah North near Wee Waa have shown results that give growers increased management options and flexibility. "In years when water is a limited resource, conventional fertilisers have been shown to easily go to waste," he says. B&B Liquid

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FIGURE 1: Organic carbon levels significantly increased in the area treated with B&B Liquid Blood and Bone



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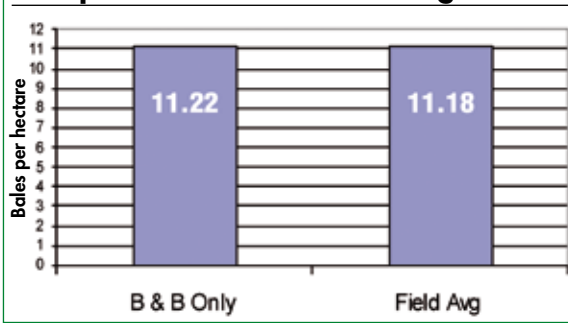


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FIGURE 2: The yield for the crop grown with B&B Liquid Blood and Bone alone was just above the field average



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Blood and Bone gives cotton growers the ability to eliminate conventional pre-plant fertilisers while encouraging crop vigour in all the important growth stages.”

Richard explained that there can be a delay of three weeks or more from application date to when nitrogen becomes available to the plant when using urea or NH_3 , but with B&B Liquid Blood and Bone, availability is instant. This means growers do not need to invest all their money up front, but can apply their crop’s nitrogen and other nutritional requirements throughout the growing season.

“Applying conventional starter fertiliser at planting is not only expensive — our trials also showed it can have a detrimental effect on the root system of emerging plants. With B&B Liquid Blood and Bone, root systems were shown to be healthier and more advanced. Not only that, crops were ready to harvest seven to 10 days earlier,” Richard added.

B&B Liquid Blood and Bone can be applied through the irrigation water whether through drip, overhead pivots or flood methods. It can also be easily applied to the soil through standard application equipment, not the heavy equipment needed for conventional fertilisers that can compact soil. B&B Liquid Blood and Bone can often be tied in with other passes across the fields, such as cultivation or insecticide/herbicide application — further reducing costs and minimising compaction. All these factors give growers options and flexible management practices that are not possible if using urea or NH_3 .

Ongoing trial work will continue in the coming season and will be independently monitored. “This year’s results have been extremely encouraging, showing we were able to grow a commercially viable crop of cotton using just B&B Liquid Blood and Bone at no extra cost to the grower, with all the added benefits of improving soil health and flexibility of planting. We intend to undertake more research to further prove the many benefits of using B&B Liquid Blood and Bone as a partial or full replacement fertiliser.”

For more information or a detailed write-up of the full results of the Merah North trial, contact: Richard Maples, Growth Agriculture, Freecall 1800 440 438 E: rmaples@growthag.com.au or visit www.growthag.com.au

Thanks to Geoff Brown from Geoff Brown Consulting Pty Ltd of Wee Waa and Ian Rochester of Myall Vale Research Station in providing independent monitoring and advice in regard to the conduct of this year’s trial.

LEFT: Root development is dramatically improved at 20 days when B&B Liquid Blood and Bone has been applied (top), compared to conventional urea (bottom).