

Increasing soil quality

The next most important thing behind water to grow a successful cotton crop is soil quality. A prolonged period of not cropping (caused by drought), with nil fertiliser usage and no crop residue to turn back in, can cause low soil fertility and compaction.

The greater percentage of soils where cotton is grown in Australia have high sodium levels and low calcium levels. This is directly linked back to soil compaction and poor water infiltration.

A good soil profile should consist of $\frac{1}{3}$ mineral, $\frac{1}{3}$ water and $\frac{1}{3}$ air. But when your soil is affected by compaction this greatly limits both water and air in the profile, and also limits movement of minerals (fertilisers) deeper into the soil profile.

Overcoming soil compaction can be targeted in many ways, but the prime focus is to reduce the sodium levels and increase the calcium.

Gyp-Flo (liquid gypsum) contains 35 per cent calcium and 25 per cent sulphur that works quickly into the soil profile to lower the sodium while increasing the calcium. Gyp-Flo is easily applied via ground rig or by plane due to its superfine particle size of only five micron.

Cotton growers have reported that with the use of Gyp-Flo their soil has been more friable with improved water infiltration and quicker subbing up. This will also benefit the plant by extending its root growth and mass to gain greater usage of minerals, water and air.

Gyp-Flo is available in 800 litre mini-bulks or bulk tankers from your nearest ag reseller.

Should you require any further details in relation to application rates, please contact Glen McDonald at Ultimate Agri-Products on 1800 003 244 or 0427 059 595.



Soil treated with Gyp-Flo (top) and untreated (bottom).

Total equipment control system

The GreenStar AutoTrac Assisted-Steering System from John Deere helps operators gain more efficiency in the field by reducing passes, saving fuel, and reducing operator fatigue. The system uses GPS to steer the vehicle down the field in straight, curved, or circular passes. The operator still must make turns at the end of the row before re-engaging AutoTrac.

Now, John Deere announces a completely automated system – iTEC Pro (intelligent Total Equipment Control) that can be used on 8030 Series wheel tractors with integrated AutoTrac. The system not only guides the tractor precisely through the field, but also automates implement controls, ground speed, and end turns at headland and interior boundaries.

“John Deere is the first to introduce this automated system which adds even more productivity to the 8030 Series tractors with AutoTrac,” says Royce Bell, Tactical Segment Manager, John Deere Limited. “Through the GreenStar 2 display, an operator can program the tractor to make turns at the end of the row. This automated system also slows down the tractor, raises implements, controls PTO engagement, and operates other functions to allow complete automation of the tractor at the headland boundary.”

This innovative module for the GreenStar 2 System, iTEC Pro, allows implement functions to be performed consistently on the headlands every time. This helps reduce input costs such as fertiliser, seed and fuel by reducing headland skips and overlaps. The system also provides additional accuracy by automatically guiding the tractor during headland turns and making sure the machine is positioned correctly for the next pass through the field.

“iTEC Pro is an evolution of guidance technology,” explains Bell. “The system will add even more productivity to overall tractor performance and help to reduce stress and operator fatigue.”

There will be a limited release of iTEC Pro early in 2008. For more information FREECALL 1800 800 981 to contact your local John Deere dealer.



The new iTEC Pro can automate headland turns.