



Industry Development

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By Paul McIntosh

The farming community is looking anxiously at the rising price and availability of our Australian fertiliser supplies, particularly nitrogen.

Nitrogen products are very important in nutritional input for most of our northern region summer crop options.

Notice I said 'most of our northern region crops'?

However, many of the questions coming my way this week have been in relation to planting our humble Mungbean crop and how much fertiliser is needed.

True, they are a grain legume plant, are mungbeans, and also true they don't need nitrogen fertiliser, however they do need nitrogen to attain some good economic yields.

The research story on applying nitrogen fertiliser for growing mungbeans is long and, many times tragic, as far as positive results go.

So, the standard and the best practice for your mungbeans is to get your planting seed inoculation process correct and effective.

Even though our short and quick mungbeans are a legume they still need about 60 kilograms to 70kg per hectare of plant-available nitrogen to produce one tonne per hectare of clean green grain.

I am sure many farmers would like 2- 3t/ha yields, so multiplying those numbers is a huge cost, if you went down the expensive



track of pre-plant application of 140kg to 210kg/ha of nitrogen or 300kg to 400kg/ha of urea.

So, a very expensive and yet not very effective method of getting nitrogen into the paddock for your clean green mungbeans, I am sure you will agree.

No, the best way by far is getting live rhizobia bacteria in your inoculant product onto your planting seed in a cool, shaded area just prior to planting.

These millions of microscopic bacteria form a symbiotic relationship with the small and developing root system and they can access the atmospheric nitrogen and convert it into usable plant nitrogen.

Much cheaper and certainly more effective than applying big heaps of nitrogen.

So, look after your inoculant away from direct sunlight and heat levels of more than 30 degrees Celsius to ensure live bacteria



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A well-nodulated mungbean crop will reduce fertiliser costs as the rhizobia bacteria fix atmospheric nitrogen to meet the crop's nitrogen requirements.

survive on your mungbean seed.

Also, in the nutrition states is a reasonable amount of Phosphorus (P) of five to seven kilograms per hectare of P to produce one tonne per hectare of green grain.

Add in Zinc and Sulphur and you have a good basis for producing quality, as well as clean green Mungbeans.

For years, many have said it is too much trouble inoculating legume planting seed.

I would suggest that this year they really need to develop a successful process that can apply inoculant, be it peat or freeze-dried product, onto their mungbean planting seed.

No excuses here everybody.

The facts speak for themselves and, that is, good inoculation will save you money on expensive fertiliser and make you money on the beans developing active nodules on a mungbean plants' healthy white root system.



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