

Stressing Science and Quality to Promote Sales

By Deng Ke Min

Product development and market needs were accomplished using scientific technology, the result being high quality, crop and soil specific bulk blend fertilizer (BBFei). Market development made use of field research, field demonstrations, newspapers, TV, radio and pamphlets to introduce new products to farmers. When BBFei was compared to traditional fertilizing practices, it provided more profit to farmers.

The Kaida High Concentration Compound Fertilizer Factory is located in the Pearl River Delta. The complex has a warehouse storage capacity of 3,000 square meters and a production line with capacity to produce 40,000 tonnes of BBFei annually. It produces 11 crop specific Tanjiang BBFei blends, as shown in Table 1.

During all phases of BBFei production and distribution, scientific technology and product quality are stressed. Two areas receive special emphasis.

- Product development and market needs.
- Production capacity and product quality.

In both areas assistance was contracted from the Soil and Fertilizer Institute (SFI) of the Guangdong Academy of Agricultural Sciences. Through this cooperation, information on plant nutrient status of the soils and crop requirements provided science-based development of crop and soil specific fertilizer blends.

At the same time, a quality supervisory committee and laboratory were established to guarantee product quality. The SFI helped in development and in training technicians. In 1995, a certificate of high quality was awarded to Tanjiang BBFei.

Table 1. Tanjiang BBFei crop specific fertilizers.

Fertilizer type	Total nutrients	N	P ₂ O ₅	K ₂ O
		%		
Rice	55	26	10	19
Citrus	55	25	10	20
Sugarcane	54	27	8	19
Litchi offshoot	54	27	11	16
Litchi flowering	56	19	8	29
Banana	56	19	9	28
Vegetable	52	27	3	22
Watermelon	55	21	6	28
Pepper	55	22	8	25
Tomato	54	22	6	26
Peanut	56	20	11	25



Market development was accomplished by field demonstrations, field experiments and use of the media including TV, radio, newspaper and pamphlets. All efforts were targeted to local farmers to introduce the benefits of high analysis complete fertilizers with balanced plant nutrients for their specific needs.

BBFei was applied to this banana plantation. Improved yield and higher quality fruit are advantages.

Customer service contributed significantly to the success of Tanjiang BBFei. Orders are received from farmers and product is delivered directly to them. Furthermore, an on-going

program of market research which responds to customer feedback has been an important component. Work is also done with local officials to eliminate “fake” fertilizers that cause problems for farmers and harm the name of fertilizers in general.

Production capacity allows Tanjiang BBFei to be used on up to 200,000 ha in the area, assuring a bumper harvest in the region.

Table 2. Rice yield and grain size comparison on rice BBFei demonstration plots.

Treatment	Height (cm)	Ears/ha (10,000)	Ear Length (cm)	Grain each ear		Grain (%)	TGW (g)	Fresh kg/ha	Relative yield (%)
				total	full grains				
BBFei	111	246	26	151	136	90	28	9,621	114
Traditional fertilization	111	236	26	155	130	84	28	8,450	100

Table 2 shows comparisons of rice yield and quality when soil and crop specific BBFei versus traditional fertilization practices were used. Yield comparisons between Tanjiang BBFei and traditional farmer fertilizer practices showed that yields increased and production costs per unit decreased for rice, sugarcane, citrus and banana with Tanjiang BBFei. Farmers achieved greater profits because of the higher yields. In the cases of citrus and banana where higher quality fruit was produced, higher profits were also realized by the farmer.

Tanjiang BBFei increased sales from 2,000 to 10,000 tonnes from 1992 to 1995.

When science and technology are integrated with a quality product and a strong farmer oriented market development program, sales can be increased. The development of useful fertilizer products such as Tanjiang BBFei also provides benefits to both the factory and the local community. BCI

Mr. Deng Ke Min is General Manager, China National Means of Production Corporation, Guangzhou Branch, People's Republic of China.