

Food Policy and Fertiliser

*Without phosphorus, there is no cell, no plant, and no grain.
Without phosphorus, there is a lot of hunger...
And this goes for potassium, nitrogen, sulphur, zinc, and so forth.*

I use this homily when addressing the issue of fertiliser use in food production.

It is unfortunate that in too many countries of the world, food policy either doesn't exist or it is solely directed towards reducing the cost of food. In either case, primary agricultural producers are inevitably given too little compensation for their efforts, and progress is slowed. Hence, too many people suffer the ravages of insufficient food, malnutrition, or both.

The appropriate use of plant nutrients – fertiliser – in high yielding and progressive crop production is essential if the world is to feed itself. When nutrients are supplied at adequate rates and in balanced formulations, the environment is much better protected as are farmers' incomes and society's supply of food. U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt astutely observed that: "The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself." This is a true and guiding principle for sustainable development...for today and tomorrow. It is as appropriate now as it was in the 1930s when President Roosevelt made that comment.

Food policy becomes the fulcrum on which we balance risk versus benefit in adding fertiliser to the environment. It provides the perspective for developing technologies that improve the quality and quantity of food and the efficiency by which it is produced. The world can no longer be content with a simplistic food policy.

Each and every nation needs clear direction in developing meaningful food production strategies. The readers of this publication have great 'stories' to tell; information on how we can produce food better with fertiliser applications. Tell it!

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