



SRA Adoption Officer, Gavin Rodman, discusses FertFinder with Mulgrave district grower Jeff Day.

Taking the legwork out of finding a fertiliser

SRA has developed a ready reckoner that will quickly and easily allow advisors and growers to determine which commercially available fertiliser blend is best suited to their crop's requirements.

By Gavin Rodman, Adoption Officer, Tully

There are times when calculating the right fertiliser blend becomes an arduous task, with hundreds of products on the market.

The current practice used to find a fertiliser that will meet your crop's nutrient requirements relies on experience, multiple calculations, plenty of time and sometimes a little bit of luck. Trawling through fertiliser product cards from your local suppliers can take time, particularly if your crop requires multiple nutrients (NPKS).

Finding a fertiliser blend that has each of these nutrients in an appropriate proportion can also be frustrating, as you may find something that meets your crop's nitrogen and potassium requirements, but not the phosphorus, for example.

SRA has done the hard work for you and developed a tool known as FertFinder.

This tool will make this task simpler by highlighting fertiliser blends that are available in your region and meet the nutrient requirements of your crop.

The SRA FertFinder is a tool that can be used in any region. The region selection buttons on the top of the tool allow you to select a list of fertiliser products/ blends to choose from that is relevant to you.

The SRA FertFinder has been developed to allow you to enter the nutrient requirements of your crop, click up to three buttons and have a product/ blend and rate recommendation that is appropriate for your crop's nutrient requirements.

This tool sits alongside the SIX EASY STEPS guidelines for calculating nutrient requirements and is available for download from the SRA website (www.sugarresearch.com.au).

Mulgrave district grower, Jeff Day, said that he farmed on a diverse range of soils including red volcanic, heavy clay, and sandy clays, which also meant that he requires a range of fertiliser rates based on soil tests and use of the SIX EASY STEPS.

"Based on the soil tests, I then follow the recommendations for the required nutrients. Quite often I require a custom blend, so that does cause me to wonder if that impacts the price of my fertiliser," Mr Day said. "A tool like this would really help with that decision making in terms of choosing the right blend, and potentially checking the price."

How to use FertFinder

FertFinder is a Microsoft Excel tool and it is available for download on the SRA website – sugarresearch.com.au

The use of FertFinder will allow SIX EASY STEPS nutrient recommendations from soil tests to become a product and rate recommendation.

FertFinder will always display the best available product options, closest to the nutrient requirements of your crop.

The first step is to select a region – Northern and Herbert, Burdekin, Central, Southern and New South Wales. Each region has its own list of fertiliser products that are available.

Some fertiliser products will be available in all regions, while some are more common or easier to access in other regions.

After the region has been selected, the next step is to enter the nutrient requirements for your crop. FertFinder calculates its recommendations based on four nutrients – nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K) and sulfur (S).

The next step is to filter the list of products down to those that closely meet the nutrient requirements. This is done by clicking buttons for P, K and S. Nitrogen does not need to be filtered in FertFinder, as it is used to determine the product rate.

Once the product list has been filtered by each of the nutrients, a small list of available products will be displayed that will meet the crop's nutrient requirements.

Keep an eye on the SRA e-Newsletters for FertFinder updates. For more information contact Adoption Officer, Gavin Rodman, SRA Tully, (07) 4088 0701 or grodman@sugarresearch.com.au.

