

Fertiliser calibrations have never been easier

Calibrating your fertiliser applicator can be a chore. SRA has developed a new tool called CogCalibrator™, which does some of the hard work for you.

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WHY IS CALIBRATING A FERTILISER APPLICATOR IMPORTANT?

The task of calibrating a fertiliser applicator may seem mundane and repetitive, but it is a necessary part of efficient nutrient management. While you may be using the same fertiliser blend as last year, consistency and granule size of fertilisers will vary from year to year. In addition, different granule sizes and mixtures will flow at different rates, so when changing fertilisers, a calibration should be conducted prior to application.

Calibrating a fertiliser applicator will tell you how much fertiliser is being applied. This is necessary information when it comes to ordering fertiliser, so that you will not have too much or not enough to finish the job. With a reduction in sugar prices, over-application of fertilisers is an unnecessary expense that can be avoided with calibration.

It is important to ensure all nutrients are supplied as per the SIX EASY STEPS nutrient management guidelines to ensure a balanced nutritional program and to give the crop the best chance of reaching its potential. Another reason to calibrate your fertiliser applicator is to comply with legislation. Under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (QLD), all Queensland sugarcane growers are required to keep records of soil tests, use of fertilisers and use of agricultural chemicals. This includes calibration results.

IS THERE ANYTHING THAT CAN HELP WITH THE CALIBRATION PROCESS?

SRA has developed a new tool to make calibrating a cog driven fertiliser applicator simpler.

CogCalibrator is a Microsoft Excel based tool that will give you a recommendation

on the cogs to use to achieve your target application rate.

While the tool doesn't stop you from having to collect fertiliser in a bucket over a specified distance and weighing it, it does do the rate and cog configuration calculations for you. ■

FertFinder® V2 has been released with a new calculator, allowing plant mixes to be found easier.

Fertiliser blends can now be searched using N or P as the rate determining nutrient.

You can find both FertFinder® V2 and CogCalibrator at www.sugarresearch.com.au