Haifa

DownUnder

SPECIAL BULLETIN FROM HAIFA AUSTRALIA

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Haifa fertilisers ready to roll

DESPITE concerns from some sectors of the industry over fertiliser availability during the COVID-19 pandemic, Haifa Australia has allayed any fears over its product supplies to growers.

Managing Director Trevor Dennis said coronavirus had not had any impact on the company's fertiliser supplies.

"Our warehouse is full of our products, including the popular Multi-K™ potassium nitrate range, Poly-Feed™ range and magnesium nitrate products," Trevor said.

"We also have a couple of new fertilisers this season, including greenhouse grade Multi-K™ with magnesium and Haifa calcium nitrate with boron added.

"All of our products are ready to roll and our team is ready to support customers.

"Everything is in place to ensure seamless delivery of Haifa fertilisers."

▲ **Despite some fertiliser supply concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic, Haifa Australia has a full warehouse of products that are running out to local rural stores. Pictured here with the Lindsay Rural team at Bundaberg in Queensland are latest deliveries of Poly-Feed, Multi-K GG and new product Multi-K Reci, a potassium nitrate fertiliser with the lowest sodium content on the market.**

ALSO IN THIS EDITION

DO YOUR CUSTOMERS VALUE CLEAN AND GREEN, QUALITY PRODUCE?

Haifa supplies Australia's highest quality, fully water soluble fertilisers. Haifa Multi-K GG, MKP and Multi-K Reci comprise 100% pure plant nutrients and extremely low sodium and chloride levels. Growers have confidence using these products for their high quality crop production programs because every bag comes with a batch number and corresponding certificate of analysis (COA). Have you checked your fertiliser for a COA?

HAIFA – QUALITY YOU CAN TRUST!

FERTILISER CHECKLIST

- WHERE IS IT FROM?
- DOES IT HAVE A BATCH NUMBER?
- DOES IT HAVE A CERTIFICATE OF ANALYSIS?

MUCH MORE THAN JUST A FERTILISER SUPPLIER…

UN Global Compact

Haifa Group is fully committed to the Global Compact on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. We also are fulfilling the UN's Sustainable Development Goals to help end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all.

Motti Levin, CEO

Haifa

Waste and recycling

Haifa has been one of the leading organisations behind the Farm Waste Recovery industry stewardship program for large bulk bag collection. It has been actively promoting the program to ensure the industry is seen in a positive light. Haifa has been driving the outcomes for larger growers and smaller growers, so they understand what their responsibilities are.

Stephen Richards, Farm Waste Recovery

Haifa 'building knowledge' webinars prove popular

COVID-19 restrictions have not stopped regular Haifa Group communications with its sales partners, global staff and growers in an effort to continue to build knowledge and grow better crops.

The popular Zoom online platform has been used to deliver a number of free webinars, most recently focused on the efficient plant nutrition provided by Haifa's Multicote Agri™ controlled release fertilisers; training for the company's powerful NutriNet system that helps to design customised fertilisation programs; the benefits and practice of Nutrigation; as well as identifying and managing plant nutrient deficiencies.

The sophisticated online Haifa NutriNet system incorporates plant nutrition knowledge accumulated by the company over decades of field and research and development activities worldwide.

It integrates data regarding the crop, soil type, water analysis, irrigation system setup and other grower preferences. Together with comprehensive plant nutrition databases covering 80 common crops, the data is then compiled in order to generate a precise fertilisation program that meets the specific need of the crop under actual growth conditions.

Haifa NutriNet also incorporates a wealth of data characterising climatic conditions at a large variety of meteorological stations.

The software directs growers' workflow, supports decision-making and simplifies calculations. The majority of the process can be completed before each season, providing growers with a detailed work plan for the season ahead. The fertilisation programs also can be retrieved at any time for adjustments and to create "task reminders".

More than 100 participants logged-in to the Nutrigation webinar, which discussed how the practice allows better crop nutrition.

Haifa Group Soluble Fertilisers Marketing Manager Tal Shani said a carefully planned nutritional program can help save water, improve nutrient use efficiency and increase yields.

Tal said effective Nutrigation programs require top quality fertilisers with the highest levels of purity and can be further optimised by using the online Haifa NutriNet system.

Click for further info

Multicote Agri

HAIFA ACADEMY

FOR those who have missed Haifa's popular Zoom training sessions, there is a wealth of material on the Haifa Academy YouTube channel.

GO TO CHANNEL

Talking fertiliser quality

with Trevor Dennis Haifa Australia

IS THERE A RANGE OF FERTILISER QUALITY IN THE MARKET?

Absolutely – you get what you pay for.

In some countries, sometimes you don't have large factories producing one product. They might buy raw material from 10 different producers. This is why batch numbers are important for traceability.

IS THE ORIGIN OF FERTILISERS A CONCERN FOR INDUSTRY TODAY?

Growers should ensure they get the nutrient analysis they pay for on the relevant label, without getting extra salts that can impact plant growth. They need to check the quality control that's been in place.

WHY SHOULD WE BE SO CONCERNED ABOUT THIS?

A: You may not get what you are paying for.

B: It might contain impurities that can impact human health.

C: If you are not receiving quality NPK fertiliser, you may be limiting your yield potential.

IS DETERMINING THE QUALITY OF FERTILISER BECOMING MORE CRITICAL?

Yes, because higher quality fertiliser uses less water, plus you get better quality produce. With less chloride, crops can absorb more of the useful nutrients for growth and producing fruit.

HOW CAN GROWERS LOOK AT GUARANTEEING THE QUALITY OF THE FERTILISER THEY ARE USING?

A: Buy from a reputable supplier.

B: Ask for a certificate of analysis (COA).

C: Make sure the COA correlates with the batch number on the bag.

DO ALL SUPPLIERS USE BATCH NUMBERS AND COA?

Not all suppliers do. This is why it's important to buy from a reputable supplier, or agent who is directly supplied by the manufacturer of the fertiliser, rather than a supplier who may be a trader in fertiliser.

WHAT DOES HAIFA DO TO GUARANTEE QUALITY?

Haifa checks every batch in its own manufacturing laboratory. It provides a COA with the products it manufactures. The COA will correspond with the batch numbers on the bags.

Bigger, better quality fruit buoys Perth Hills orchard expansion

WA fruit growers Joseph and Matt Borg, of Jarrahdale in the Perth Hills, discuss the fertiliser program for their nectarines with Rob Illiano, Mirco.

Fourth generation orchardist Joseph Borg takes a closer look at the family's nectarines at Jarrahdale in the Perth Hills, WA.

INTRODUCING high quality, water soluble fertilisers into their fruit growing program several years ago has put the Borg family in Western Australia on the path to bigger and better quality produce, generating added excitement for the further expansion of their enterprise.

Matt Borg said it also had helped to halve spreader applications of granular fertilisers in their orchard.

Matt and his son, Joseph, are third and fourth generation orchardists in the Jarrahdale area of the Perth Hills, located in a 1000-1200 millimetre annual rainfall zone. The family originally commenced fruit growing in the nearby Roleystone area and Matt's father, Charlie, still lends a helping hand today – or a word or two.

They have followed the market to predominantly stone fruit production after mainly growing apples previously. Nectarine and peach trees range from one through to 15 years of age and apples comprise about 20 per cent of their production, while they also grow some avocadoes and roses. The fruit sells through the Perth markets to major supermarket chains, although the Borgs also are hoping to commence exporting soon.

About 12 hectares (30 acres) at Jarrahdale comprising loamy soils and some gravel is at full capacity and they are looking forward to another similar sized property coming on stream soon.

Matt said the largely nectarine operation allowed easier management compared with apples, which also were more prone to bruising.

After previously adopting a trellising system, the trees are now based on a vase growing structure. Row widths are 4.5 metres and tree spacing is gradually reducing from 3m to 2.5m.

The new block is fed by a dam and uses a Netafim 8-litre per hour dripper irrigation system, while the main property also uses bore water and its vine sprays are being converted to drip irrigation.

Matt said the daily irrigation schedule was automated, however the pump was nearby and so they visited it every day and adjusted the schedule as necessary according to conditions.

They have traditionally spread Potato E and NPK fertilisers at around the budburst stage depending upon the crop and property, and also have applied Super Copper Zinc Moly on new orchard land, but these applications have halved as they have advanced their use of water soluble fertilisers.

The Borgs were introduced to the high quality range of soluble fertilisers from Haifa several years ago by Rob Illiano with Mirco. Haifa's greenhouse grade potassium nitrate, Multi-K™, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium formulas, Poly-Feed™, and calcium nitrate, Haifa Cal™, have since been regulars in their fertigation program.

"Granule fertiliser is good, but it doesn't last," Matt said.

The family also has used liquid fertilisers, but Rob said there had been a swing to soluble products in recent years.

"We use a high N (nitrogen) Poly-Feed as well as a high K (potassium) and low N Poly-Feed and we have had good results. We also do some foliar spray applications with Poly-Feed and liquid K, mainly for colour at the end. They are going right through the trees and into the root system," Matt said.

"It gives us a better finish. When we need to push the fruit size, we can do that with Poly-Feed."

Rob said growers were seeing the results – bigger fruit and better quality.

"With these products, they are confident they can get the high yields and quality. They can get more fruit into the premium sizes," Rob said.

Matt said newer varieties producing fruit that "coloured-up" and looked better also contributed to the improved yields and quality.

The Borgs use the Haifa Cal calcium nitrate, often in the apple orchard, when they need more growth.

For a "quick fix" when necessary, particularly where trees are not yet fertigated, they also still use a shower rose boom set-up rigged to the side of their tractor for applications.

"We also might treat certain pockets of the major fertigated area this way," Matt said.

He said their newer block, formerly a dairy farm and market block that had been a little neglected, was particularly "hungry" for fertilisers.

Rob said growers had learned it was a fine line with fertilisers and careful decision-making was required.

"You can spend a lot of money and not get the return," he said.

"The Haifa products are very good – they are easy to mix. The quality is unbelievable – they are just easy to use. Other products can be cheaper, but they are not as soluble."

Meanwhile, the Borgs also operate 'Jarrahdale Roses', which is set over 2ha (5ac) and sells mainly two-year-old bush, standard, climber and ground cover potted plants to Bunnings Warehouse.

The family earlier was using a slow release fertiliser with the plants before several years ago switching to Haifa's Multicote controlled release fertiliser and a formula offering an eight-month controlled release.

"Our issue was getting the fertiliser to hold up until the end – and this does hold up until the end," Matt said.

"There are other cheaper products you can use, but they are not as good."

Click for further info

Multi-K GG

Poly-Feed

Haifa Cal

Multicote

Rob, Matt and Joseph with newly delivered Haifa Poly-Feed fertiliser set for Nutrigation at the family's Jarrahdale orchard in the Perth Hills, WA.

BlazeAid warriors

THE Haifa Australia team enhanced its community engagement activities earlier this year, joining in efforts by BlazeAid to help repair fences on properties impacted by the bushfires.

The December and January bushfires ravaged more than 1,000,000 hectares of natural bushland and farm lands.

BlazeAid helps farmers get back on their feet by arranging volunteers to help refence properties and also provides mental health support.

The Haifa Australia team included Trevor Dennis, Peter Anderson, Jason Teng and Navindra Gamlakshage Don.

Navindra said the team decided to throw its support behind BlazeAid after the initial fire front and found itself working in the Buchan community, about four-and-a-half hours east of Melbourne, an area that claimed the only Victorian death due to the fires.

The region features mainly sheep and cattle grazing, however river flats also are used for seed production crops like maize.

In addition to repairing fences, the team also helped to reconstruct livestock yards.

Trevor on the front line, looking dangerous!

Navindra said volunteering in the bushfire area was a great experience and the regeneration of

plants and grasses just a few months after the massive fires was amazing.

Peter said tree stumps and fence posts burned down to a metre in the ground and grey ash on hills provided an indication of the extreme heat from the fires, while rivers were brown with topsoil and ash.

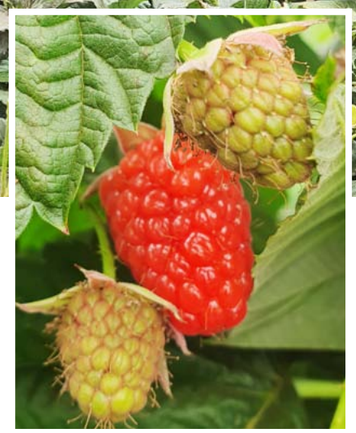
The relief effort also was consistent with Haifa's commitment to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the UN Global Compact initiative, contributing toward sustainable communities.

Jason, Navindra and Peter ready to get busy.

Nutrien Tassie team gets tips on soilless berry fertigation

Haifa Australia Managing Director Trevor Dennis takes a closer look at some of the Costa Group strawberry production in Tasmania.

Heather Cosgriff, Nutrien, and Haifa Agronomist Peter Anderson pictured inspecting the development of the Costa Group raspberries.



TASMANIA was the latest location for Haifa Australia's in-field training support with its retail partners, at least before COVID-19 interrupted these activities and has since prompted increased delivery of Haifa's online training webinars.

Two members of the Haifa Australia team joined Nutrien staff in the Apple Isle earlier this year, visiting the Costa Group's soilless berry production enterprise in the region and particularly discussing the sensitivity of these crops to different fertigation programs.

The Costa Group operation featured strawberry, raspberry and blueberry crops, the latter noted for comprising the Northern Highbush varieties grown in the south. Southern Highbush varieties are grown in Northern New South Wales and Queensland.

Costa use different growing media for each crop type, but similar crop coverings.

Haifa Agronomist Peter Anderson updated the Nutrien team on the latest soilless crop production systems and several novel products from the company being used in soilless operations.

Peter said in fertigation programs, electrical conductivity (EC), which is a measure of salinity, was a key component of effective nutrient solutions.

"Berries, as a group, are sensitive to excessive salinity. Yields can be reduced quite drastically with small increases in EC," Peter said.

"However, nutrient solutions with the same EC can also have very different constituents."

He said if crops performed better at lower EC, elements in fertigation programs that were not required would have a greater negative effect on crops like berries compared with salinity-tolerant crops like tomato.

"Unwanted EC is the minerals that contribute to the solution's EC, but which are not required, or are in levels exceeding their requirements. These can include sodium, chlorine and sulphur, many of which are present in traditional fertilisers."

Peter said Haifa had recently introduced several fertiliser products specially suited for hydroponic production with low levels of "unwanted minerals".

These include Haifa Cal™ Prime, a calcium nitrate that is low in sodium and ammonium, and Multi-K™ Reci, potassium nitrate with the lowest sodium content on the market.

"Even our popular flagship products have low levels of these elements," Peter said.

He also discussed the use of Haifa UP™ (urea phosphate), Poly-Feed™ pHast, Haifa Bonus™ and new polyphosphate products, Haifa GrowClean™ and Haifa VitaPhos-K™, which offer unique properties that clean irrigation systems whilst being very efficient sources of phosphorus and potassium.

The results of changing some of the phosphorus supply in hydroponics from orthophosphate to polyphosphate are quite beneficial, including:

- Availability of P regardless of pH – no mineral deposits.
- Removes existing deposits.
- More equal watering – more healthy plants.
- Improved root zone – more roots.
- More vegetative growth and better color.

Click for further info

Strawberry topics | Multi-K Reci | Poly-Feed pHast | Haifa GrowClean

Haifa Cal Prime | Haifa UP | Haifa Bonus | Haifa VitaPhos-K

Fertiliser suppliers, growers under pressure to manage big bag waste

Gideon van Zyl, Orchard Manager at Olam's 'Campbell' almond property in the Kenley area of Victoria's Sunraysia region, with Stephen Richards, Farm Waste Recovery (FWR), and another used bulk fertiliser bag from Haifa, one of the first companies to sign up to FWR's stewardship program for fertiliser bag collection.

LOOMING environmental regulations and new State laws already in place are building pressure on the Australian fertiliser industry to effectively manage waste and recyclable packaging.

Used fertiliser packaging, particularly large bulk bags predominantly used by the horticulture sector, has largely been exported to Asia for recycling, found its way into landfill or been disposed of inappropriately.

However, by mid-2021 and in-line with international agreements, exports of waste and recyclable plastics will no longer be permitted from Australia. With new laws in several States, incorrect disposable deemed to be harming the environment also can result in massive fines and/or imprisonment.

It has meant fertiliser manufacturers need to look at systems for future regulatory compliance, as well as protecting their brand and maintaining a strong commitment to the environment and their corporate and social responsibilities, while producers, or users, are under obligations to ensure correct disposal.

The developments have increased the spotlight on Farm Waste Recovery (FWR), which has been collecting large bulk bags from properties for some major manufacturers signed up to its industry stewardship program.

The FWR service has collected more than 3000 tonnes of plastic since commencing four years ago and will soon come under the new banner, Big Bag Recovery, covering all industries. Recovery is expected to jump dramatically to around 48,000t annually, commensurate with the volume of bags imported into Australia. FWR will continue to collect unbranded waste plastics.

The business has mainly exported the bags to Asia and has plans to build a network of regional processing facilities to establish a full circle recycle industry across the country under its parent, Industry Waste Recovery. The new recycle industry would create hundreds of regional jobs and refine the waste back to a resin before manufacturing various new plastic products.

"The resin can be used to manufacture products like evaporation balls to go on water storages for seven to 10 years before being harvested, refined back to a resin and starting again. This is true recycling," said Stephen Richards of FWR.

"As technology increases, it can be used to manufacture more sophisticated products like internal walls used in housing.

"Ultimately, it is about preventing the need for manufacturing new plastic."

The bags also have been recycled into outdoor furniture, including park benches. About 60 bulk bags, converting to 200 kilograms of plastic, can be recycled into a park bench.

FWR has recently been collecting bags in the almond industry in Victoria's Sunraysia region with manufacturers including Haifa Australia, one of the first companies to sign up to its stewardship program and which has been a major advocate with other suppliers and producers to help ensure the industry's future environmental sustainability.

Haifa is one of the major suppliers of water soluble nutrients to the horticulture industry. It has had strong success in Australia with its Multi-K™ potassium nitrate fertiliser, Poly-Feed™ nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium formulas, and Multicote™ controlled release nutrition products. It also recently launched several innovative, low sodium fertilisers for high quality horticulture and greenhouse systems.

The company has a strong brand in the horticulture, vegetable and nursery industries, distributing in all States through major suppliers as well as independent retailers.

"Haifa has been one of the leading organisations behind the stewardship program. It has been actively promoting it in the different industry segments and particularly the almond industry," Stephen said.

"Trevor Dennis (the company's Managing Director) has been very proactive and encouraging competitor suppliers to join because he's cognisant of his industry being seen in a positive light.

"The program is nationally run and we have been growing generically as we go into different industries, but not all companies are on-board. The significant leaders in industries have been the early adopters, which has then encouraged some of the smaller suppliers to also come on-board. For others, the risk is around regulatory compliance and social damage to brands, reputation and market share due to not being seen as a good corporate citizen.

"For growers, the risk is linked to the fact there is nowhere to dispose of the bags, so it has been pushed back onto the brand owners."

He said for industries like the almond industry in Victoria and wider region, where FWR collects bags seasonally from late spring, through December and again post-harvest in March, Haifa had played a significant role.

"Haifa has been really important for us and their customers because they have taken the lead in industries like almonds in this region."

"They have been driving the outcomes for larger growers and smaller growers, so they understand what their responsibilities are. This has been able to encourage other competitor companies to join – and they probably wouldn't have joined if Haifa and Trevor Dennis hadn't taken the lead."

Stephen said the almond industry was progressive, with most major producers supporting the program.

"The industry leaders are very supportive, which ultimately paves the way for all participants," he said.

"The big benefits to growers are having an outlet for plastic recycling, reducing the risk of fines or penalties and maintaining their image.

"For future exports from our almond industry, it is critical for the marketability of the product to know that on-farm plastics are being recycled."

Neale Bennett, Chair of the Almond Board of Australia (ABA), said the recycling program was an initiative the ABA Board immediately supported, as it saved on landfill and was a more efficient use of resources.

"It makes a lot of sense to reuse materials through recycling than to use raw materials that will be discarded after one use," Neale said.

CONT. PAGE 10 ▶

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>
> **Stephen Richards, Farm Waste Recovery**

> Most corporate companies in the almond growing industry have got on the front foot to protect their brand and reputation with all of their stakeholders, including investors. It helps uphold their social obligations, which is good for their brand, the environment, as well as for work health and safety on the farms.
>
> **Stephen Richards, Farm Waste Recovery**

He said the Australian almond industry was committed to sustainable farming practices, also including efficient water use by applying the best technology to schedule irrigations.

Stephen said FWR recently collected bulk bags from Olam almond orchards in the Sunraysia region, with all fertiliser suppliers to the properties now part of the stewardship program.

"Most corporate companies in the almond growing industry have got on the front foot to protect their brand and reputation with all of their stakeholders, including investors. It helps uphold their social obligations, which is good for their brand, the environment, as well as for work health and safety on the farms."

Gideon van Zyl is the Orchard Manager on Olam's 'Campbell' property in the Kenley area of the Sunraysia. The Campbell property produces almonds from 12-year-old and eight-year-old trees set over about 800 hectares. The almonds are processed at the company's Carwarp facility near Mildura.

Gideon said Olam maintained a strong focus on its environmental footprint. While changes to regulatory requirements were leading to improvements in Olam's operations, the process for bulk bag disposal has long been considered an area in which to further advance its practices.

He said the 'Campbell' team mixed up to 58 bags per week and this season was the first collection to be arranged with FWR.

"As we use FWR more, we will streamline things. The next collection will be after harvest. It will be good to get the bags off the farm on a regular basis. It's better to have them disposed this way".

Gideon said it was great that Olam's suppliers also were helping to lead the push across the industry.

"It's good to see the company is committed to supporting the industry and the environment – it's really about looking after things for the next generation."

He said with the sheer size of operations today, one of the best ways to handle waste was recycling with programs like this.

Stewart Ford and Stephen Richards, Farm Waste Recovery (FWR), with baled bulk fertiliser bags during a collection at Olam's 'Menegazzo' almond orchard in the Kenley area of Victoria's Sunraysia region. Each bale comprises about 65 bags and weighs around 210 kilograms.