

The high humidity during seeding caused a lot of headaches with handling dry fertilizer and a significant part of those problems came from Ammonium Sulfate. Fall spreading Elemental Sulfur is a great way to get away from using Ammonium Sulfate in dry blends. Some people choose to add other products like Potash or Nitrogen while spreading Elemental and they can provide some benefits to logistics as well. Here are some quick points to think about when setting up a fall spreading program.

- Elemental Sulfur needs to be converted to the plant available Sulfate Sulfur by bacteria. This process needs oxygen and temperature to happen. Elemental will convert much faster if it is left on the surface where it is exposed to more oxygen and higher temperatures.

- We need to remember that only 30-40% of the applied Elemental will be crop available to following year. There are higher release numbers out there but we are talking about availability for next year's crop and not total breakdown in a year.

- The typical strategy is to apply 100lbs of product which would be 85 lbs of sulfur in fall. This will breakdown slowly over 3 years and can usually provide enough sulfur for 3 crop years. You can adjust the rates higher or lower depending on what crops are grown and the yield goals.

- Timing of application is fairly flexible with Elemental Sulfur. You can start early because it has very low risk of losses from early application and it is possible to spread later in the year than you can with Nitrogen (N) products. After harvest and before freeze up is the ideal time to be spreading.

- Elemental sulphur is more inexpensive per pound than Ammonium Sulfate but you need to factor in the application cost. In most cases this makes the cost equal to that of an Ammonium Sulfate program. The big advantages to fall spreading Elemental is that you get a lot of bulk product out of your spring blends and those blends have significant handling improvements.

- Adding Potash (K) can help with logistics in spring as well. The two situations we see the best fit for it is for operations who only handle liquid fertilizer and have no other way of getting potash on. The other is for operations that are handcuffed by seed safe fertilizer limits and cannot get enough phosphorus (P) and K on with the seed. In both situations, broadcasting the K in fall with sulfur makes sense. Having said that, potash is not a mobile nutrient and broadcasting it is not the most efficient way to get it into the plant. Banding K with the seed or in the sideband is a more efficient use of that nutrient. Broadcasting offers a good solution to setups that do not have the ability to put any or the right rate of Potash on.

- Nitrogen can also be added to the Sulfur. Adding N to the blend makes it a little more sensitive to timing of application. If there is N in the blend you should not be spreading on frozen soils. The risk of N loss is too high in this situation. If N is being added to the blend it should be in a protected form Like Super U or some other NBPT product added.