

Single application of Calcifert Sulphur boosts straw yields for Lancashire arable farmer



Farm facts

Cropping Year: 2015 | Crop: Winter Barley & Wheat | Farmer: James Tomlinson | Location: Clifton Preston, Lancashire

Application

In March 2015, James applied 185 kg/ha (1.5 bags/ac) of Calcifert Sulphur to his winter barley and wheat crops as one dose, supplying 72 kg CaO /ha and 104 kg SO₃/ha. This was supplemented later in the year with Nitrogen fertiliser, applied at a rate of 86 kg N/ha.

No lodging or brackling

Having applied Calcifert Sulphur James found that wheat and barley crops did not suffer from lodging or brackling, despite not being treated with a growth regulator. This benefit is attributable to improvements in plant cell strength caused by the increased uptake and provision of calcium in the soil thanks to Calcifert Sulphur application.

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Bumper harvest

When it came to harvest, James found that the quantity of straw that he obtained from treated crops was far greater than previous harvests. A local livestock farmer usually buys 30-40 acres of straw from James every year, but because of the sheer quantity of straw that each acre of treated crops produced, he was only able to fit 20 acres worth of straw in his stores. As such, James found himself with a surplus of straw to sell to other buyers.

Why?

The benefits to plant strength and health that crops gained from the application of calcium and sulphur dramatically reduced the level of lodging that crops suffered from. This helped to ensure that optimal levels of wheat and barley were collected at harvest time, as well as limiting crop damage.

The boost in plant vigour (even without applying a growth regulator) also enabled crops to grow taller without falling over and resulted in significantly higher straw yields compared to the previous year's harvest.

Both the final height of plants and lack of lodging suggest that plants were healthier than in previous years and required less fungicide application in order to fight off disease, resulting in a significant financial saving.

Financial benefits

The increase in straw yield added an extra 20 acres of straw for James to sell. At a conservative rate of 2.5 ton of straw per acre, with a value of £50/t, this increase in straw yields resulted in an extra £2,500 worth of income from the straw alone. Even without taking into consideration the reduction in costs by not having to use a growth regulator and reduced levels of fungicide application, the income generated by the extra straw would more than cover the cost of the 3 tons of Calcifert Sulphur applied to the 40 acres (16.2 ha).

Summary

With fluctuating arable crop prices, the need to produce high volumes of crops, as efficiently as possible, has never been more important. By using Calcifert Sulphur, James was able to ensure that all of his targeted crops received optimum levels of sulphur provision, with just one application of fertiliser James said: "I am convinced that old fertiliser practise was not putting enough sulphur on. It is much easier to get all the Sulphur on in March with Calcifert Sulphur & know I have applied the right amount and then use straight nitrogen."

About Calcifert Sulphur...

Applying Calcifert Sulphur is a quick and easy way to supply both calcium and sulphur to soil.

With a typical analysis of calcium as CaO: 39% and sulphur expressed as SO₃: 56%, Calcifert Sulphur is one of the purest calcium sulphate products available on the market. Calcifert Sulphur has a neutralising value of zero, meaning it won't affect the pH of your soil.

It can be easily applied using a tractor mounted fertiliser spreader, providing flexibility to farmers and growers.

