

AgriGator increases yields

Four major field trials were conducted during the development of the product.

Farmers are the first to point out that plant growth and yield potentials are enhanced significantly when the soil profile is properly structured and roots have room to breathe and grow. Moreover, soil scientists agree that polymer chemistry can restructure poorly drained, crusted and compacted soils to increase commercial crop performance.

University researchers, who have studied soil conditioners for more than four decades, recently concluded that water-soluble polymers are effective in keeping soils tillable even where irrigation or rains would normally tend to compact them. All of these notable developments have been reinforced by promising studies in which a new soil conditioner, AgriGator, produced significant yield in creases and water savings.

Four major field trials were conducted during the development of the product. One trial was on garlic ground in Lost Hills, Calif., another on a tomato trial in Vernalis, Calif., a third on corn, and separate trials were conducted on corn and pickling cucumbers in Sinaloa, Mexico.

The 159-acre field test in garlic near Lost Hills verified what researchers have long been discussing about soil composition that a well structured soil with space for good water penetration and aeration produces bigger, healthier and more abundant crops.

Where AgriGator was applied at the rate of 10 pounds

per acre through a sprinkler system on a 24-acre block, yields were increased over the control by 1,475 pounds per acre. The increase would boost the profit to the grower by \$663 per acre. The soil conditioner costs \$50 per acre.

The same treatment rates were utilized on a 46-acre tomato field trial near Vernalis. Where the soil conditioner was applied through furrow irrigation on a 10-acre block, the production was 46.6 tons per acre.

Applied through the sprinkler system on a 12-acre parcel of tomatoes, production was 50.5 tons per acre. Both treatments produced more tonnage than the control which produced 43 tons of tomatoes per acre. The monetary increase over the control was \$212 per acre on the furrow irrigated block and \$442 per acre increase where it was applied through a sprinkler system, researchers said.

A trial at a farm in Sinaloa on 20 acres of corn, produced eight tons more per acre where the material was used, an increase of 44 per cent over the control acreage field average. Researchers calculated that income in that instance would be increased by \$971 per acre.

The pickling cucumber trial at Serg Agrícola produced a 14 percent increase over the control, reported owner Roberto Gutierrez.

"After application of the product, the soil structure was improved considerably, reducing crusting," said Gutierrez.