Phosphorus: An Essential Element For Farming

(NAPSA)—Those who paid attention during basic chemistry classes may recall that phosphorus is one of three essential elements for plant life. Without phosphorus, farming and food production would be impossible.

For this reason, some say that phosphorus is just as important as oil in the industrial world. However, while issues involving petroleum are front-page news, phosphorus rarely garners any attention at all. That is, unless you work in agriculture.

Dependency, Shortages and Concerns

The truth is that phosphate rock is a limited resource and supplies are under siege. The largest global reserves of phosphate are located in places where it is difficult to access for political or environmental reasons, such as China, Morocco and the western Sahara Desert.

The world's largest phosphate mine is in Florida, but production in that mine is limited by environmental regulation due to concerns about phosphorus runoff into waterways and groundwater.

Dr. Larry Sanders, president and CEO of SFP, observed that marketplace volatility in 2008 caused phosphorus prices to increase several hundred percent. "This scenario could happen again," he warns.

Sanders added that phosphate is finite in nature, and supplies are threatened by geopolitical situations, which are compounded by the fact that phosphorus, when applied as a fertilizer, loses as much as 75 to 95 percent of its value due to "lockup" in the soil. He says the fixation of phosphorus in the soil makes much of the element unavailable for plant uptake.

Increased uptake of phosphorus improves plant health, root structure and growth.

Technology Creates Solution

Fortunately, today there is a product designed to reduce soil lockup of applied phosphorus and help maximize the availability of the element for the plant.

Called AVAIL® Phosphorus Fertilizer Enhancer, it's added to phosphorus fertilizer and allows a much higher percentage of the nutrient to be available for plant uptake.

Increased uptake can improve plant health, facilitate a stronger root structure and generate better crop growth. The results are higher-yield opportunities for any crop where AVAIL-treated phosphorus is applied.

To date, AVAIL has been used on more than 36 million acres of crops worldwide, with the majority of those acres being corn, wheat, soybeans and forages.

To learn more, visit www.sfp.com.