



## New low sodium, chloride fertilisers on their way



By Trevor Dennis  
Managing Director

HAIFA is now in its sixth year of having a dedicated office in Australia.

During this time, our agronomists and other representatives have attended hundreds of field days; presented to thousands across the industry on the application and benefits of Haifa fertilisers; and discussed the specific nutrient formulations required to suit Australia's conditions.

In this vein, Haifa has identified strong market demand for a low chloride and sodium, granular NPK fertiliser and,

consequently, has moved quickly to develop and launch the new product, 'Haifa Turbo K™', for growers.

Haifa Turbo K™ comes in two different analysis, including 18-3.9-14.9 and 14-6-14.1. Both products come as pink granules between 1-3 millimetres in diameter.

Ideally suited to planting or topdressing of horticultural crops, the major benefit of the fertilisers is that they use potassium nitrate as their potassium source and, hence, have very low chloride and sodium levels.

The Haifa team expects the Haifa Turbo K™ range will set a new standard in the granular NPK market and will help Australian farmers become more productive by limiting the additional "salts" applied to soils.

The first shipments of Haifa Turbo K™ are set to hit distributor stores this month, with both analysis available in 25-kilogram or 1.1-tonne bulk bags.

The product may be priced higher than the traditional NPK farmers use, however, when considering the amount of nutrients supplied and the quality, there is no doubt Haifa Turbo K™ will be here to stay.

benchmark for potassium nitrate in greenhouse production.

Meanwhile, it is encouraging to see that an increasing number of growers and industry participants are heading to our website for a range of information, including the YouTube channel and the 'Haifa Community' section.

The YouTube channel contains an extensive library of videos on plant nutrition and includes agronomical tips for growers, while the 'Haifa Community' is connecting growers with experts and other growers to help widen their knowledge. They can gain information, identify crop nutrient deficiencies quickly with the help of an image library, ask questions, report their own experiences and much more.

Haifa Australia is also continuing its training for growers and other industry participants. In conjunction with the Chisholm Institute of TAFE based in Victoria, we are holding a series of nutritional training seminars across the country in coming months for the hydroponic industry (see story, page 3).

We look forward to continuing our strong involvement and contribution throughout the horticulture sector and catching up with many across the industry at the upcoming AUSVEG National Convention in Cairns next month.



### COME AND TALK TO THE HAIFA TEAM AT

#### AUSVEG National Convention

Cairns Convention Centre

June 19-21

#### AUSVEG Potato Tour

Atherton Tablelands

June 22

#### Chisholm Greenhouse Training Days

Perth, Sydney, Coffs Harbour, Adelaide, Bundaberg, Melbourne

See story page 3 for further details

#### Australian Almond Conference

Adelaide

Oct 28-30

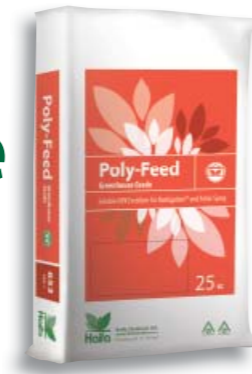
#### MULTI-K™ ABSOLUTE

In further good news, Haifa is adding another new product, 'Absolute', to its range of Multi-K™ potassium nitrate fertilisers.

Multi-K™ Absolute is ideally suited to soilless growing systems that recirculate and reuse their nutrient water.

This product is even lower in chloride and sodium than our class leading Multi-K™ and now sets a new

# Variable north Bundaberg soils require strategic nutrients for cane, small crops



POLY-FEED™, WHICH IS VIRTUALLY FREE OF CHLORIDE, SODIUM AND OTHER DETRIMENTAL ELEMENTS, PROVIDES COMPLETE PLANT NUTRITION THROUGHOUT THE GROWTH CYCLE.



▲ North Bundaberg grower Brent Attard and Lindsay Rural Senior Agronomist Neil Innes pictured investigating fruit setting in watermelons on the Attard's 'Swan Ridge Farms' property.

GROWING cane and small crops in rotation over about 15 different soil types north of Bundaberg has seen the Attard family adopt a range of nutrient and ameliorant strategies to help meet target production and quality levels.

Brent Attard and his father, Tony, grow cane for three years and then rockmelon and zucchini small crops before returning to cane, while they also plant some ground to watermelon and Jap pumpkin.

Their 'Swan Ridge Farms' property comprises 120 hectares, with the land ranging from red scrub soil to white tea-tree sand – a challenge Brent said they had one approach for: "we just have to make it work".

He said soil testing was carried out prior to the rockmelon planting and this always recommended a dolomite application at 1 tonne per acre, which they generally performed every year.

Sourcing most of their fertilisers through the local Lindsay Rural store, they have recently been applying a custom-made, base pre-plant fertiliser, which Brent said they were pleased with.

Then, from the first male flower, they start applying water soluble fertilisers, including the high quality Multi-K™ potassium nitrate product from Haifa as well as calcium nitrate.

Sap testing is undertaken around first fruit set and when the fruit is at about golf ball size, the Attards start applying potassium sulphate.

Brent said the zucchini crop was planted into the old rockmelon plastic and benefits from the residual nutrition.

"Once you start picking zucchinis you can work out what you are doing. We do a lot of experimenting with the zucchinis," Brent said.

The family grows the Regal Black winter zucchini variety and from flowering applies the well balanced Haifa

Poly-Feed™ 12 fertiliser formula, which contains 12 per cent nitrogen, 3pc phosphorus and 30pc potassium and is enriched with 1.2pc magnesium and chelated micronutrients.

Poly-Feed™, which is virtually free of chloride, sodium and other detrimental elements, provides complete plant nutrition throughout the growth cycle.

Brent said the fertiliser was regularly applied through their 100-litre pressure differential irrigation units.

"We water every second day and fertigate every time. We water twice a week during winter and also fertigate each time."

He said he was also taking an interest in new controlled release fertilisers and may trial a 2-month release product on the property.

Some of their zucchini crops are harvested at four weeks, with some at six weeks and even out to eight weeks.

"We aim to always put good quality in the box," Brent said.

"We have traditionally been exporters of zucchini and so have picked them small, which affects yields.

"We would like to push zucchini yields a bit and we think this will be more of a varietal issue."

The Attards target 1000 cartons/acre for zucchini, 1000 trays/acre for rockmelon and 20 tonnes/acre for watermelon.

◀ Brent and Neil inspect early growth of Jap pumpkin at 'Swan Ridge Farms'.



# National training course for hydroponic growers

A SPECIALIST nutritional training course for participants in Australia's hydroponic growing industry kicks-off in Perth this month.

The one-day seminars, 'Fertiliser mix and nutrient solution calculations for hydroponics and soilless media', are being coordinated by the Chisholm Institute of TAFE based in Victoria in conjunction with Haifa Australia.

Upcoming seminars in the series will be held in Sydney week commencing May 12, Coffs Harbour week commencing June 2, Adelaide week commencing September 1, Bundaberg week commencing September 15 and in Melbourne at a date to be confirmed.

Chisholm Institute's Controlled Environment Horticulture Leader Tony Bundock said the seminar presented an excellent opportunity for participants to learn more about the technical aspects of hydroponic growing from some of the industry's leading agronomists.

Tony said delegates would be informed about available soluble fertilisers, mixing limitations, nutrient level calculations and stock solution preparation via theoretical and hands-on exercises.

He said in addition to this event, other training courses would also be delivered for:

- New entrants to hydroponic growing.
- Growers keen to learn more about incorporating technology into their crop growing.
- Priva Connex and Integro users who wish to increase their understanding of using these systems.

**Growers and industry participants interested in attending the seminars can contact Tony on (03) 5990 7163 or by email: [tony.bundock@chisholm.edu.au](mailto:tony.bundock@chisholm.edu.au)**



# Essential ingredients to maximise your production potential



# 'Vietnamese quality' marks Lowood Lebanese cucumbers



VIETNAMESE vegetable growers are renowned for the way they tend their crops – and this is not lost on father and son team Thanh and Tin Van Vo on their property at Lowood in Queensland.

Thanh said they do undertake soil testing every two years through their local Farmcraft Rural Supplies store, however, most of their crop treatments are based on intricate visual assessment and constant monitoring.

"We visually look at what they need," Thanh said, who was in Brisbane prior to working for his brother's vegetable growing enterprise in the region and later establishing his own operation.

Thanh grows the Mascot Lebanese cucumber variety in three hot houses on his property and eggplant in open field crops.

The cucumbers are established in trays of potting mix and dipped in Fongarid fungicide to prevent damping off and root rot diseases before being planted into the black, heavy soil in the hot houses.

Chicken manure is applied about a month prior to planting and phosphorus acid is injected into the trickle system two to three weeks after the cucumbers are transferred for further protection against root diseases and damping off. Fortunately, they have not had to contend with soil nematodes.

Thanh said the nutritional program then focuses on balanced nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium treatments.

They apply Haifa's high quality Multi-K™ potassium nitrate and Haifa Cal™ calcium nitrate water soluble fertilisers, supplied through the Farmcraft store.

"These products are very good in going through the trickle system," Thanh said.

"Cucumbers really need potassium and calcium nitrate is another main requirement.

**John Maughan, Branch Manager of the Farmcraft Rural Supplies store at Lowood, and local Vietnamese cucumber and eggplant grower Thanh Van Vo with some of Thanh's Mascot Lebanese cucumbers.**

# Expanding vegetable operations driving fertiliser sales at Lowood



NEW and expanding vegetable growing operations are driving sales of Haifa's high quality water soluble fertilisers at the Farmcraft Rural Supplies store at Lowood, near Brisbane.

Branch Manager John Maughan said a wide range of crops were grown in the region, including capsicum, tomato, cucumber, zucchini, melon, potatoes, carrots and onions.



Located in a mixed farming area, the store also services cereal growers, including of corn and sorghum; livestock producers, where forage sorghums and lucerne are in high demand; and the strong local equine industry.

In addition to John, Agronomist David Sides is on-road servicing clients, while Salesperson Chris Booby also assists with deliveries.

John said local vegetable growers prefer quality fertilisers and this had put Haifa's Multi-K™ potassium nitrate, MAP™ and MKP™ products in high demand, as well as Grow Force's FlowFeed fertilisers, which use Haifa products in their formulations.



"New and existing growers who are expanding their enterprises are increasing our fertiliser sales volumes," John said.

**Chris Booby, Salesperson at the Farmcraft Rural Supplies store at Lowood in Queensland, and the store's Branch Manager John Maughan with the high quality Haifa Multi-K™ potassium nitrate fertiliser, which is keenly sought by vegetable growers throughout the region.**

"The potassium nitrate helps fill the fruit out and the calcium helps strengthen the fruit."

He said they also used Haifa's MKP™ fertiliser when necessary.

The fertilisers are applied together in winter because they water only every two to three days, while in hotter months they fertigate every morning and afternoon.

In terms of pests, there is little pressure in winter, however white fly and thrip can be a problem during summer.

Thanh's Lebanese cucumbers head to the Brisbane and Sydney markets, where prices have been challenging in recent times, mainly due to greater volumes of cucumbers from an increasing number of growers.



John and Thanh discuss the irrigation system used for Thanh's three hot houses on his property.

# Old Childers avocado orchard on track to former glory days



AFTER 10 years experience as the Orchard Manager on the largest avocado property in Queensland's Childers district, taking over an aging avocado orchard in the area has presented its challenges for Denham Rackemann.

Denham worked at Simpson Farms after earlier attending the University of Queensland's Gatton Campus before taking up the position on the 60-hectare 'Avocado Hill' property near Childers.

Avocadoes are grown on approximately 95 per cent of the property, which comprises red volcanic soils and three dams including a small spring-fed supply, while there are also about 220 mango trees.

Around 60 per cent of the orchard is on 10 x 5-metre spacings, with newer plantings set on narrower six by 3m spacings, which Denham prefers.

One of the oldest orchards in the region, Denham said the property was very rundown after almost a decade of neglect and, hence, had thrown up all the problems of an aging orchard, particularly phytophthora root rot.

Bad blocks were bulldozed and other trees have been injected with phosphorous acid.

"The focus is on bringing back the blocks that phytophthora took away," Denham said.

"We want to improve the average yield across the property and then we will focus on increasing the fruit size. The better blocks produce from 15 to 25 tonnes (per hectare) year-in year-out, which is pretty good.

"We have found the most successful strategy is to grow them like hydroponics."

'Avocado Hill' is one of the oldest orchards in Queensland's Childers region and Denham Rackemann has been busy upgrading it after a period where it was rundown. He wants to improve the average tonnage between the bad blocks and the better blocks and then fruit size will be a priority.

Assisted by BGA AgriServices at Childers, Denham undertakes one soil test and two leaf tests through Incitec Pivot in Melbourne and around Christmas and again in late winter through CSBP's laboratory in Western Australia to help devise the orchard's nutritional program.

Denham tends to avoid nitrogen applications for one-third of the crop life, with the bulk of the fertiliser program applied after Christmas during the fruit-fill period.

He has used Haifa's Multi-K™ potassium nitrate product for 20 years.

"In a normal crop, we apply 1-1.2 kilograms per tree for the season."

Denham applies his own fertiliser blends and said when mixing products, it was better to use higher quality products like Multi-K™.

"We steer clear of some fertilisers that can contain heavy metals."

Slow release zinc and boron are applied every two to three months, calcium nitrate is used especially towards fruiting, while potassium sulphate and magnesium sulphate are applied weekly according to the leaf analysis.

Grow Force's FlowFeed BM7 and DM3 fertilisers, which use Haifa products in their formulations, are also used.

BGA AgriServices has coordinated trials featuring different fertiliser products on the property as well.

"The aim is to have all the nutrients in balance," Denham said.

The orchard is irrigated once every day via its pressure differential tank



Denham has continued the 'Agris Nursery' on the 'Avocado Hill' property, producing around 5000 seedlings a year for local district growers.



"I HAVE USED HAIFA'S MULTI-K™ POTASSIUM NITRATE PRODUCT FOR 20 YEARS AND IN A NORMAL CROP, APPLY 1-1.2 KILOGRAMS PER TREE FOR THE SEASON. I APPLY MY OWN FERTILISER BLENDS AND ALWAYS USE HIGHER QUALITY PRODUCTS LIKE MULTI-K™."

DENHAM RACKEMANN

and tree sprinkler system, drawing from a 270-megalitre allocation from SunWater, which Denham said was a cleaner source of water.

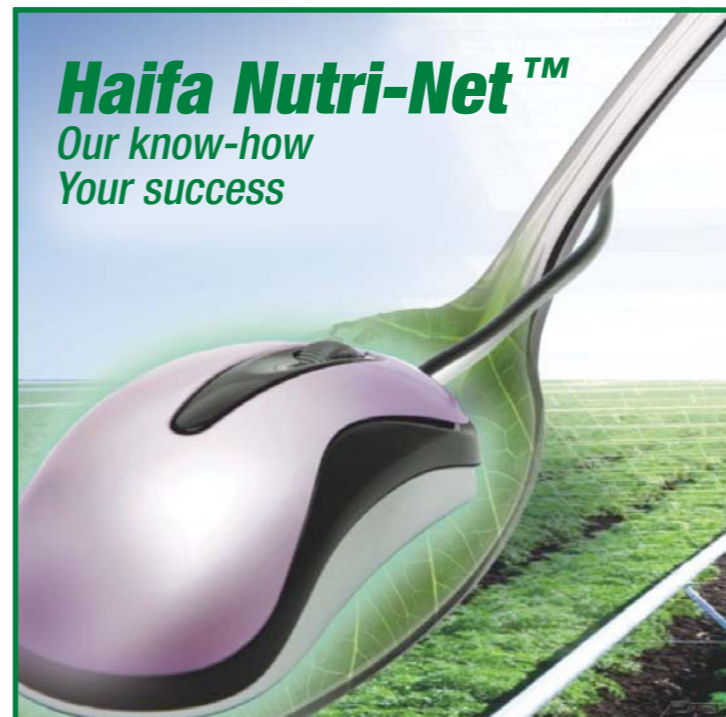
He hoped to move towards automated, nutrient-enriched irrigation in the future.

"Small and frequent irrigation and

fertigation events, in addition to managing stress, will help to improve fruit size," Denham said.

Meanwhile, Denham has also continued the 'Agris Nursery' on the 'Avocado Hill' property, which produces around 5000 seedlings a year for local district growers.

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Your success



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**Haifa**

Pioneering the Future

## Growers fine-tuning fertiliser programs to improve operations



BGA AgriServices Childers Branch Manager Lex Allen and Salesperson Lin Holden with some of the highly demanded Haifa Multi-K™ fertiliser at the Childers store. The Multi-K™ is the preferred potassium nitrate product for tree and small crops throughout the region.

DESPITE tough produce prices and the impact of imports on the horticulture sector, growers are continually striving to improve their operations, according to Lex Allen, Branch Manager with BGA AgriServices at Childers in Queensland.

In particular, Lex said producers were constantly fine-tuning their fertiliser applications to achieve improved productivity, production and quality.

“Growers are always tinkering, using different products at different times, to find the next efficiency and improvement in their operations,” Lex said.

The Childers store services a region within a 50-kilometre radius of the centre, featuring predominantly cane production as well as tree crops, tomatoes, capsicums and cattle.

The bulk of the store's fertiliser sales head to cane growers, including predominantly Muriate of Potash, phosphorus, nitrogen and sulphur, while water soluble fertilisers are highly demanded by horticulture growers.

Lex said the fertilisers were generally applied as side dressings.

Haifa's Multi-K™ is the preferred potassium nitrate product for tree and small crops, while calcium nitrate, magnesium sulphate and potassium sulphate are the other major fertilisers used.

“Most growers leaf test and use straight fertilisers and their own custom blends,” Lex said.

“They mostly use mixing tanks and irrigate through sprinkler systems.”

He said with crop nitrogen nutrition “running out” in some cases, there was also some work being completed into the use of slow release fertilisers.

## STOP PRESS

### AUSVEG PARTNERSHIP

HAIFA Australia has commenced a strategic partnership with national vegetable industry body, AUSVEG.

The company is looking forward to working closely with AUSVEG on a range of matters of value to the Australian vegetable industry.

## YOUR HAIFA TEAM

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