ALBION®

Metalosate® Plant Nutrition News

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Update on Metalosate® Organic Powders

By Jeremy O'Brien

History of Metalosate® Organic Products

Prior to the implementation of the United States Department of Agriculture National Organic Program (NOP) in 2003, Albion's Metalosate products were recognized by the Washington State Department of Agriculture as acceptable for organic production. Many of the other states used the WSDA guidelines for their individual state regulations as well. As a result, the Metalosate liquid products were approved and accepted for Organic production in most parts of the U.S.A.

When the NOP rules and regulations came into effect in 2003, the Metalosate products were no longer accepted for use in organic production. This ruling was based mainly on the fact that the liquid Metalosate products must contain a preservative to keep the products fresh. With the amino acids in the liquid environment it becomes a food source for microbes and fungi. We decided it would be better to create a new product line rather than to try and change something that we knew worked exceptionally well.

Two years of research and development finally produced the current products certified for organic production in the U.S.A. which we have on the market. It is a dry formulation of the Metalosate chelated minerals.

Challenges and Tips

The fact that it is a dry formulation has created some unique challenges. We have taken all steps possible within the guides of the NOP to make these materials as user friendly as we can. One of the biggest challenges is getting used to measuring them. Probably the second biggest challenge with the materials is the fact that they are such a fine powder (due to manufacturing restraints placed upon us by the NOP guidelines). Because of this, the materials when added to water have the tendency to clump together. Care must be taken to make certain that the materials are fully mixed in the spray tank. It is not an issue with solubility, as they are completely water soluble. One way to overcome this difficulty is to place the required amount of powder into a bucket of water to wet the powder. It can then be mixed into the spray tank. Mix the next spray tank worth of powder into a bucket and let it hydrate while spraying the first load. This makes the mixing much easier. A second manner is to use an inductor system, or a third is to wash it through the anti-splash screen on the top of the spray tank.

Performance and Usage

During the 2005 growing season the Metalosate Organic Powder materials were applied to the following crops with tremendous success: apples, apricots, cherries, peaches, pears, pluots, grapefruit, oranges, tangerines, lemons, table grapes, blueberries, watermelons, cantaloupes, fresh market tomatoes, roma tomatoes, bell peppers, potatoes, beans, romaine lettuce, leaf lettuce, spinach, salad greens, onions, and strawberries.

Availability

The following minerals are currently available in the organic powder formulations: calcium, copper, iron, magnesium, manganese, zinc. We are also nearing the completion of the development of a multimineral product that is a combination of all these. We do not have a specific date at this time when this material will be available.

These materials have proven to be extremely safe and effective. If you are unfamiliar with them, contact your local Albion representative for information. These materials are currently available only in the U.S.A..

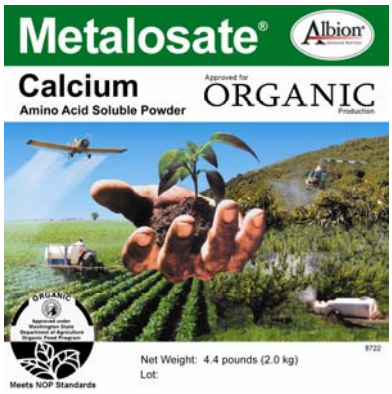

Figure 1. Label for the Organic Version of Metalosate® Calcium

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