



GROWING SMARTER

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News & Information To Help You Grow



Durum Wheat Growers Hope for Another Big Year

Inputs and timing determine crop quality

Growers with high-quality durum wheat crops last year were able to earn historically good prices, so it's naturally tempting to plant it again this season. But as every agribusiness professional knows, success is based on a lot of different factors falling into place.

"Prices should be reasonably good this year, but it's too soon to tell," said Eric Wilkey, president of Arizona Grain, Inc. "We're still waiting for more harvest data from up north. There were some drought conditions in Montana and Canada, and their yields are down, but we don't know about the crop quality yet."

Quality is the key for top profits in durum wheat, mostly because durum requires high protein content: a minimum of 13%, with additional premiums paid for levels up to 14%. And protein depends on sufficient amounts of nitrogen being consistently available to the crop.

"Durum is a prolific nitrogen consumer," explained grower Karl Button of Sacaton, Arizona. "You'll get protein deficiency and yield loss if you don't have enough nitrogen. I personally think you need even higher levels of it than the University of Arizona recommends."

"The fertilizer issue was critical last year," Wilkey continued. "Because of the shortages of good-quality durum around the world, everybody came to us for desert durum. We warned farmers then that they needed to fertilize to keep their quality levels up, and fortunately they listened. For the growers who invested in more nitrogen, it was money well spent."

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Finding Opportunities Among the Challenges



Jim Compton
President, Fertizona and
Compton Ag Services

The recent downturn in the Chinese economy has many in the US concerned. Uncertainty about this sector makes people insecure about the future, as witnessed by wide fluctuations in US and global equity exchanges. For American Agriculture what is even more distressing is the high value of the US dollar relative to the rest of the world. Depressed worldwide commodity prices coupled with a strong dollar will curb overseas exports. Next, throw in the reluctance of many foreign countries that are wary of GMO crops, and the worldwide commodity market becomes challenging to say the least.

Though it is easy to get caught up in all the bad news the media dishes out every day, let us continue to focus on the good things that can

make us successful. Southwest agriculture has many issues, but at the same time we are truly blessed by the diverse amount of cultivars we have in the desert. Due to unique market benefits influenced by our climate and timing – versus the rest of the country – we have the capability to be resilient and therefore at an advantage compared to most.

At Fertizona, we recognize the challenges, but we are also very aware of the many opportunities that exist to make your business succeed. Talk to your local Fertizona branch about how we can help make the right decisions for you to be successful. Both of our futures depend on that.

Two longtime employees retiring

This summer, Fertizona said farewell to a pair of gentlemen heading for retirement after many years in our company family. We're grateful for their decades of service to Fertizona customers, and we wish them continued health and happiness.

Good luck to both of you!



John McClain left a competitor's organization in 1994 to join Fertizona, and we were always glad he did. Now after almost 21 years as the dispatcher in our Yuma location, John has moved to Dallas, Texas, to enjoy retirement with his wife Vickie.



Jim Osborn, Sr. had a career as a PCA spanning more than 45 years, with the last 20+ at Fertizona. Now instead of helping growers, Jim will be able to spend more time with his wife Margo, their grandchildren, and hobbies like his Hudson Car Club.

Story continued from cover

But as important as it is to apply necessary amounts of nitrogen for high-quality durum, there are many other related management decisions that affect the results you get from your fertility program.

"You have to be sure you put nitrogen down at the right times throughout the season, and adjust for growth stages," Button said. "I've seen guys apply preplant fertilizer thinking it'll be good all season, and that can be foolish."

Minimize your risks

"Durum has been a bread-and-butter crop for us, but it's also kind of a wild card," said Jason Walker, a third-generation wheat grower in Marana, Arizona. "The downside has a lot of potential risks. That's why you have to be willing to invest in enough N to make your protein contract and protect your investment."

Button pointed out that an effective fertilizer strategy also has to address whether you're growing for protein or for yield. "To go from a three-ton durum yield to four, you don't need to add just one-third more nitrogen, you need to add about one-and-a-half times as much," he said. "And any fertilizer you apply past ten days after flowering will go to protein."

Proper timing of applications also helps make your nitrogen go farther, Button added. "You want to control the amount of feeding by fertilizing more often," he explained. "If you can time your applications to maximize plant uptake, it's not only better for the crop, but you'll avoid losses to leaching, volatilization and denitrification."

Given his smart approach to efficient plant nutrition, Button always includes a nitrogen stabilizer with his fertilizer. Fertilzona offers stabilizers such as N-Yield™, which slows the nitrogen's conversion so that more fertilizer goes to the crop and less to the environment.

Other helpful steps

Another way to promote the success of your durum is to use Palisade® 2EC* plant growth regulator, which can significantly help to reduce lodging.

"When Palisade first came out, I went wall-to-wall with it on 2,000 acres and loved it," said Walker. "Palisade works by keeping that last leaf extension shorter, because if you've got too much height, the crop will fall down. I'd rather have three tons standing in the field than four tons laying down in rows."

Fertilzona has prepared a very helpful guide to advise durum growers on seed, nutrients, pesticides, timing and other useful suggestions, and you can access the information at: www.fertilzona.com/downloads/Durum-Wheat-Tech-Brochure.pdf

"It really helps when you know somebody like (Pest Control Advisor) Tom Montoya who can give you a second opinion," concluded Button, "because you can be doing this for thirty years and still have more to learn."

For more information, please contact your local Fertilzona or Compton Ag Services location.

"Durum is a prolific nitrogen consumer."

– Grower Karl Button,
Sacaton, Arizona



* Not registered for use in California

Improved Chelate Promotes Fertilizer Effectiveness

Greater availability of micronutrients enhances crop yields and quality



The science of agriculture includes a lot of big words, so it's often easier to just use abbreviations. Most of us don't know what ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid is, but you've probably heard of EDTA, its more common name. EDTA, DTPA (diethylenetriaminepentaacetic acid) and EDDHA (ethylenediamine-di-o-hydroxyphenylacetic acid) are chelating compounds often found in fertilizers and feed supplements.

Many growers have been asking Fertilzona about those different initials and what chelated products are. In simple terms, chelating (pronounced "KEE-lay-ting") is a process used to bind metal micronutrients, especially iron, in a chemical compound which helps to keep the nutrients available to crops.

"I get a lot of questions about chelates too," said Vátrén Jurin, Director of Agronomic Services and Development for Brandt Consolidated,

Inc., a manufacturer of specialty crop nutrient products. "But chelates aren't a new idea. There's documented use of growers trying to improve micronutrient uptake in high-pH soils of the Mediterranean basin as far back as the mid-1800s."

For growers in the Southwest, today's chelated products are particularly useful because they enhance the performance of fertilizers in our region's high-pH soils. Specifically, chelated products increase the availability and effectiveness of micronutrients to crops in conditions where they might otherwise be inhibited.

"Chelating helps to protect fertilizer nutrients from the environment," explained Andy Hancock, Southwest Regional Manager for YARA North America, a large supplier of ingredients for the global fertilizer industry. "I like to use the analogy that chelation is like putting a little blanket around the minerals."

"That's a good description," agreed Steve Petrie, Ph.D., Director of Agronomic Services for YARA, "because the word 'chelate' actually comes from the Greek word for 'claw'. So imagine the chelated nutrient as having this protective layer wrapped tightly around it like the talons of a hawk."

But why is that important to growers? By protecting essential fertilizer ingredients with the chelation process, the nutrients that are applied will be more available to the plants' roots, rather than getting tied up in soil or water and going to waste.

Getting more from your soil

"When soils are high in calcium carbonate like you commonly find around here – they inhibit plants' uptake of nutrients such as iron," explained Pest Control Advisor Ken Narramore of Verde Ag Consulting, "and iron

Brand Name Examples	Common Name	Abbreviation	pH Range
Brandt Sequestar® 9% Zinc EDTA Dissolvine® E-MN-6	Ethylenediaminetetraacetic Acid	EDTA	<6.3
Brandt Sequestar 11% Fe DTPA Dissolvine D-FE-6	Diethylenetriaminepentaacetic Acid	DTPA	<7.3
Brandt Sequestar 6% Fe EDDHA Ferti-Plus Iron 6%	Ethylenediamine-di-o-hydroxyphenylacetic Acid	EDDHA	4-9
Brandt Sequestar 4.5% Fe HEDTA Dissolvine H-FE-4.5	Hydroxyethylethylenediaminetriacetic Acid	HEDTA	5-6.2

“A chelated product can translate to bottom-line benefits.”

– Andy Hancock,
Southwest Regional Manager,
YARA North America

deficiencies cause problems like chlorosis in sorghum.”

In the past, many growers tried compensating for iron deficiencies by using additives like ferrous sulfate, but those products were never very effective beyond about 7.0 pH. The devel-

opment of better chelating options, especially EDDHA, has made a big difference.

“The chemistry has evolved and chelates have a range of strengths,” added Brandt’s Jurin. “It’s more difficult when you’re dealing with iron, but we strongly believe in EDDHA.”

“Most of our soils have pH levels above 8.0,” Narramore said. “Some chelation agents keep iron available up to 8.5 or 9.0. EDDHA is stable to a pH of 11.0.”

“On high pH soils, it’s been shown that the chelated form of a fertilizer is simply more effective than a non-chelated form is – depending on the product and the mineral, of course,” said Petrie. “Sorghum is a classic example of a crop that exhibits iron deficiency in high-pH soils, but there are also issues with zinc, manganese, copper and other micronutrients in different crops.”

“In terms of nutrient delivery, a chelated product is generally faster and more efficient,” said Hancock, “and that can translate to bottom-line benefits of crop yield and quality.”

Before choosing any fertilizer product, have your soil tested first to see what minerals are available. It’s also very helpful to do leaf testing, because even if you have adequate nutrients in the soil, it doesn’t mean they’re getting taken up by the plants’ roots.

“Soil testing is a small investment,” said Petrie, “and it can easily pay you back with increased crop yield and quality. It also helps you prevent problems.”

“Some growers wait until they see visible signs of a mineral deficiency, but once the problem manifests itself, it gets a lot more expensive,” added Hancock. “Don’t put it off.”

Improved Fertizona Website Offers Many Benefits

New links and search functions provide faster answers

At Fertizona, we pride ourselves on being able to deliver valuable advice and solutions whenever a customer needs help, and our improved website is a great new tool to help fulfill that purpose.

The Fertizona site has recently been upgraded and redesigned to support online searches that are both faster and more comprehensive. Product listings are now clearly separated and designated by categories and subcategories, so you can quickly find the topics you want.

As a subscriber to Agrian, Inc. – the Web-based agridata tracking system – Fertizona can also give you instant access to label data for all of our products. The Agrian options even allow you to file regulatory reports digitally from your iPhone or iPad. The enhanced Fertizona website features many other useful links to related products or services, including manufacturers' web pages.

Suppose you want to know about application rates or timing of a certain foliar nutrient in a particular crop. Just click on that product name on the pull-down menus, and you'll immediately get information such as product labels, instruction sheets, MSDS and more. Many of the links offer Spanish-language versions as well.

With the website's new capabilities, now growers and advisors in the field can access a virtually endless library of useful data on the spot, giving you vital product support in the most timely way possible.

"This range of accurate, time-sensitive, digital data is something that successful growers are all coming to rely on, and we want to be a leader in providing good information," said Tyrell Currie, Marketing and Safety Director,

Fertizona. "When someone needs answers, they should be confident that Fertizona will provide them – and being able to get answers online, 24/7, just makes it that much better."

"We want to be a leader in providing good information."

– Tyrell Currie,
Marketing and Safety Director,
Fertizona



Agropecuaria Malu

Florencio Rivera handles a big job with a big crew

In the Mexican state of Sonora, one of the most successful and well-known growers is Florencio Rivera Aviles. With help from his family, 150 full-time employees and many seasonal workers, Rivera farms several thousand acres/hectares of potatoes and wheat.

One large operation, known as Agropecuaria Malu, is in the southern part of the state near the coastal city of Huatabampo. At this location Rivera has approximately 700 hectares (1730 acres). Farther north in Sonora, near Caborca, are another 600 hectares (about 1500 acres) on a farm called San Humberto de los Chirriones. The northern facility primarily grows high-quality specialty potatoes for domestic consumption, such as French fries and potato chips, as well as for seed potatoes.

"I started farming many years ago with my father, Francisco Rivera Hurtado," Rivera said. "We were growing potatoes, chilies, peppers and squash, and my Dad taught me the qualities of being a good farmer. I'm really grateful for the knowledge he passed on to me from his 38 years of farming, and the lessons he taught me about commitment."

As a young man, Rivera left home to go to college, and in 1977 he earned a business degree from Universidad de Sonora. But his love of agriculture brought him back to farming, and that career choice has proven to be a wise business decision.



"Florencio is very well respected for being both a good farmer and a good man," said Casey Compton, Manager – Fertizona de Mexico, Hermosillo. "He's a natural leader who generously advises the people around him."

Rivera has a long-standing relationship with Fertizona de Mexico, which supplies his farms with a variety of fertilizers such as UAN-32, potassium thiosulfate, foliar nutrients and many more. Every winter he also buys an exclusive frost control product called Frost Shield®, which provides a protective coating for vulnerable crops in cold weather.

Because Rivera's operations represent so much size and geographic diversity, they rely on three different Fertizona sales representatives to handle their many business needs: Gilberto Gil, Francisco Davila and Eduardo Medina.

"Fertizona is able to deliver the products we need."

– Florencio Rivera Aviles,
Agropecuaria Malu,
Sonora, Mexico

"Growing the best potatoes is very expensive, and we insist on using only top-quality fertilizers and other products," Rivera said. "Fertizona is able to deliver exactly the products we need, when we need them, and their service is excellent."



A Legendary Figure Who Touched Many Lives

This year, Fertizona and the agribusiness industry lost a real visionary when Jim Compton, Sr., passed away peacefully at his home on May 5 at the age of 85. As a co-owner of Fertizona, Jim was instrumental in shaping the careers and fortunes of countless growers and employees across the Southwest, and his legacy will never be forgotten.



“He was kind and generous and larger than life.”

– Casey Compton,
President,
CYC Seed Company

Jim Bob Compton was born on a ranch in Matador, Texas, in 1929, as the fourth of five brothers. At the height of the Dust Bowl, when Jim Bob was five years old, the Compton family pulled up stakes and headed to California in search of a better life. But along the way, they broke down in Arizona and ended up settling in Pinal County, near Coolidge, where Jim's father started a grocery store and the boys went to school. According to family folklore, Jim's first-grade teacher thought his name "Jim Bob" sounded too Southern, and she asked his parents to change his name to James Robert.

James – or as most people knew him, Jim – later moved to Buckeye where he finished high school. Then he enlisted in the Air Force and proudly served during the Korean War, mostly on the island of Guam. When he finished his military service, Jim came back to Arizona to start a new career and – with the birth of his son, Jimmy, Jr. – a new family as well.

Always a lover of the outdoors, Jim worked as a cowboy for several years and then got a job as a lineman for Arizona Public Service. But with an itch to start his own company, Jim opened a store in Buckeye that sold supplies to feed lots. Shortly thereafter, with a bank loan of \$1,000, he opened Jim Compton's Fertilizers in 1963. The company quickly became a big success.

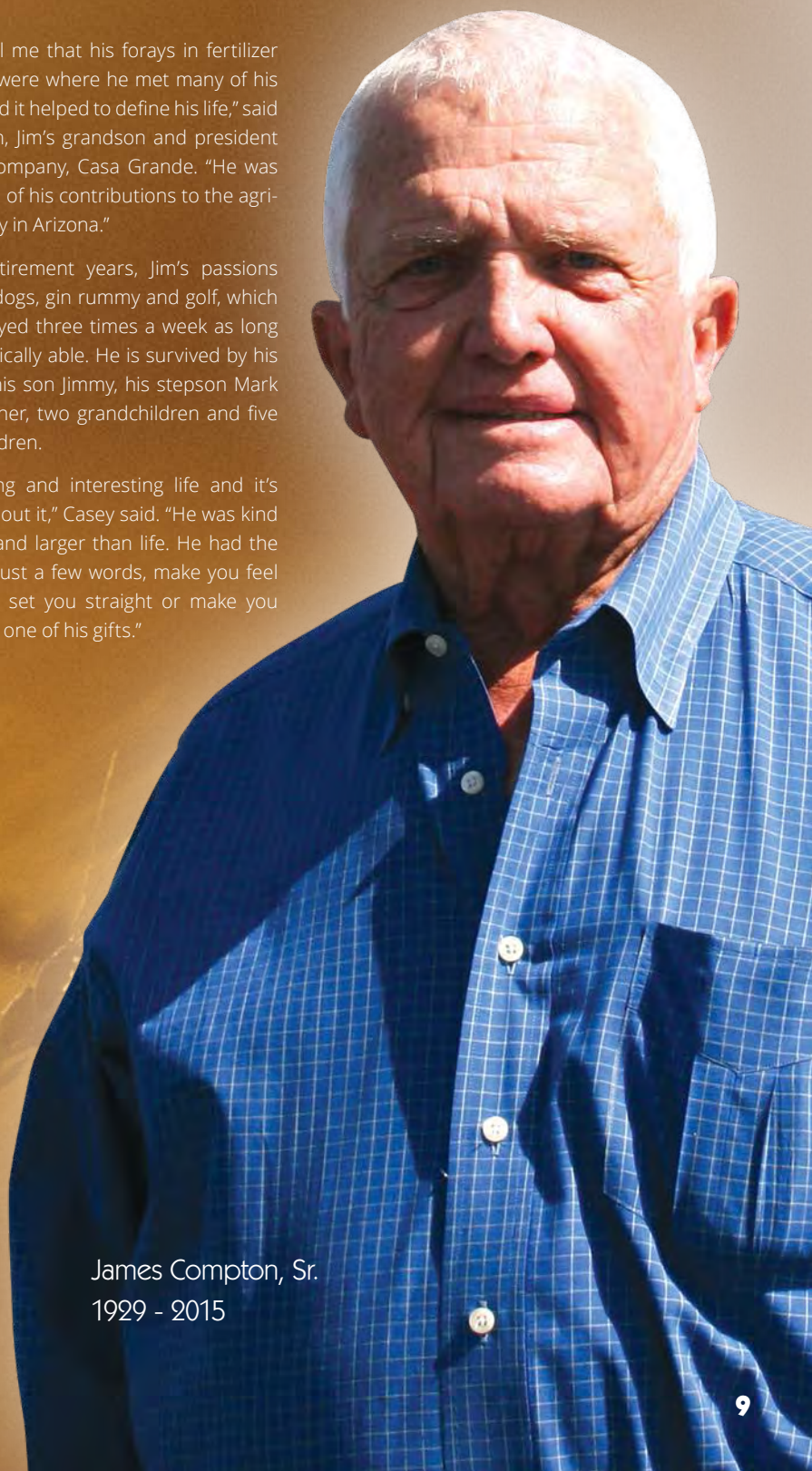
In a 2006 interview, Jim offered a description of his lifelong business philosophy: "What makes any company successful is the service you provide to customers," he said. "We do a better job of taking care of their needs, and getting things delivered to them on time."

In 1980, Jim helped his son Jimmy start Fertizona in Casa Grande, which has since grown into the thriving, diversified operation we have today.

"He used to tell me that his forays in fertilizer and chemicals were where he met many of his best friends, and it helped to define his life," said Casey Compton, Jim's grandson and president of CYC Seed Company, Casa Grande. "He was intensely proud of his contributions to the agricultural industry in Arizona."

In his later retirement years, Jim's passions included cars, dogs, gin rummy and golf, which he typically played three times a week as long as he was physically able. He is survived by his wife Marjorie, his son Jimmy, his stepson Mark Holly, one brother, two grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

"He lived a long and interesting life and it's worth telling about it," Casey said. "He was kind and generous and larger than life. He had the ability to, with just a few words, make you feel comfortable or set you straight or make you laugh. That was one of his gifts."



James Compton, Sr.
1929 - 2015

Developing Custom Alfalfa Blends for Better Yields

Large trial generates promising results in harsh conditions

At Fertizona, we believe in staying on the leading edge of agricultural innovations so we can help our customers to improve. Frequently that means introducing manufacturers' new technology or products, but sometimes it means developing unique concepts on our own.

For example, Fertizona Seed Products Sales Manager Tyke Bennett and independent Pest Control Advisor Doyle Stewart began a series of alfalfa trials on 80 acres near Paloma, Arizona, with the goal of finding the most productive desert varieties. 16 different alfalfas were planted in October, 2013, all with the same inputs.

"We wanted to identify varieties that perform in that exact location, where the soil and water are

both very high in salt," said grower Lee Banning of Gila Bend, Arizona, who manages the trial. "And that must be one of the hottest places on Earth."

Fertizona analyzed the results for the 16 varieties and selected the top performers. Then based on those results, we created a unique custom blend designed for low desert conditions. Marketed under the name "Saltbuster," the new blend includes established varieties such as Certified Cibola, SuperSonic and a variety of S&W seeds, which are known for salt tolerance.

"We reevaluate after every cutting, looking for traits like longevity and consistency," said Banning. "The trials are still ongoing, but the proof will be there."

"Saltbuster is like a prescription."

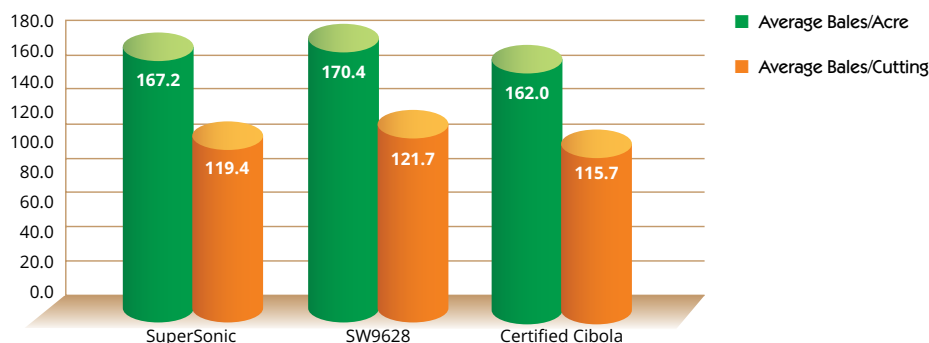
– Tyke Bennett,
Seed Products Sales Manager,
Fertizona

The Paloma alfalfa trial is currently in the second year of a three-year study, and the results have been very beneficial in helping Fertizona develop exclusive new blends. Using data gathered from this trial and comparable research, we're greatly improving our ability to make similar custom alfalfa blends that perform well in other certain areas in the Southwest.

"Saltbuster is like a prescription," said Bennett, "because it's made to work for exactly what someone is dealing with. As we move forward, we plan to offer other unique custom-blended varieties with the same kind of potential as Saltbuster."

Visit your local Fertizona or Compton Ag Services location for details about custom-blended alfalfa.

Saltbuster Blend - 2015 Average Bales/Acre & Bales/Cutting



The three varieties shown make up Saltbuster

Passion & Pride

Mexico's Gilberto Gil is focused on success

Fertizona opened our first office in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico in 1991, and for many years since then, one of the company's most familiar faces has been Sales Manager Gilberto Gil. After graduating from college in 1984, Gilberto started his own company to sell alfalfa seed in Mexico. But then one day he was offered a position at Fertizona.

"One of the best things about my job is helping customers resolve issues quickly."

– Gilberto Gil,
Sales Manager,
Fertizona de Mexico

"That was more than fifteen years ago," he said. "I had dealt with Fertizona and liked them, so I immediately said yes."

"When the borders opened up in the 1990s, Fertizona de Mexico was the first company to bring in higher-quality fertilizers," Gilberto added. "With those new fertilizers, agriculture in our region took off, and products from Sonora grew in reputation. Fertizona has really contributed to the growth of our agricultural region."

Today, Gilberto calls on more than 80 growers in the Mexican states of Sonora and Baja, providing fertilizers, seeds and other products for a wide range of crops, including wheat, beans, melons, grapes, pecans and citrus.

"We're focused on intensive agriculture with many high-value crops," Gilberto said. "One of the best things about my job is visiting customers in the field and helping them resolve issues quickly."

Gilberto is descended from a long line of ranchers, and horses are still a hobby for him. He and his wife, Lorena, have raised three children: a son, Rodolfo, and a daughter, Gilda, but sadly, their oldest son Gilberto passed away last year.

"I must brag that my family is smart and strong," he said proudly. "We have been through the most difficult times and stayed united."

Gilberto also takes pride in his work family. "Fertizona is one of the best companies in Mexico," he added, "and we are committed to being successful."

Gilberto Gil, his wife Lorena and their children Gilda and Rodolfo.



New Hires

Jefferson Taylor
Willcox – Delivery Driver

Tanner Nelson
CYC Seed Company –
Assistant Plant Manager

Francisco Alcala
Yuma – Delivery Driver

Tyler Unger
Compton Ag Services –
Field Assistant/Sales

Ramona Torres
Willcox – Office Assistant

Francisco Rascon
Yuma – Delivery Driver



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Tyke Bennett
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Jimmy Compton
Crop Nutrition

Lamont Lacy
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Jeffrey Bengé
Financial Controller

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