

Pennsylvanians introduced to soil conditioner



Jim McHale

HARRISBURG — After 42 years of work, and what Jim McHale calls "an unforgivable amount of research to keep it away from us," a product to stimulate the soil is being made available to American farmers.

McHale, former secretary of agriculture in the Keystone State, was one of several key speakers at a meeting this week which introduced a product called Agrispon to a few of the

state's farmers and various representatives of the news media. Agrispon, says McHale, has been around for years. An American product, it hasn't been widely available here, but has been exported for years to European countries where researchers have given the product approval and encouragement.

A biological soil inoculant that stimulates the natural processes of the soil, Agrispon helps increase organic matter, build humus and accelerate the nitrogen cycle vital to plant growth. It is a living culture of microorganisms that includes fungi, algae and associated soil bacteria, many of which are in spore form.

Joining McHale in the nearly 7-hour long conference were television actor Eddie Albert, former deputy agriculture secretary (of Pennsylvania) Jane Alexander, and Agrispon's eastern regional representative, Hal Simms from Florida. About 50 people showed up for the meeting and questions



Jane Alexander

continued until it was time to vacate the room for another group. The educational affair was held at the Penn Harris Motor Inn on Wednesday.

Eddie Albert, who is perhaps best known to the public through his roles on television's "Green Acres" and "Switch," uses Agrispon in his garden. His sales pitch, if it can be called that, is very low-key in public. But he's convinced the product works and will come on a

little stronger about it in private when specific questions are raised.

McHale and Mrs. Alexander, who worked together in the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture until about two years ago, will be heading the Pennsylvania Agrispon sales team. Both have had experiences with the product. McHale has also observed its uses overseas and is enthusiastic with the potentials the product has. At the same time, he's upset about alleged actions in this country which have held the product back for many years.

McHale started his sales pitch by saying that he has "known for years that agriculture has been going in the wrong direction." He became aware of Agrispon through his friendship with Albert. He claims the product boosted his soybean yields 20 per cent last year when compared to check plots.

Retailing at a price of \$65 per gallon, this quantity is reportedly sufficient to cover 10 acres.



Hal Simms

Simms, who has 10 acres under glass in Florida for flower and shrub production, emphasizes that the use of Agrispon requires careful management. He says that's true of any agricultural tool.

Among Simms' findings in the South are that fields of corn which were grown on Agrispon-treated soil were free of aflatoxin. The dreaded disease ruined many crops in the South this year. He claims the aflatoxin resistance is due to the soil being healthier and therefore the plant being healthier and having a better resistance to stress conditions. Drought is another problem which Agrispon users claim some degree of "immunity" to.

Calling Agrispon a product designed to work with Nature, Simms told the gathered farmers that it is a totally natural and totally safe product. It's so safe that a person can drink it, commented Eddie Albert in private.

The organisms in Agrispon multiply every four hours and die every 100 hours. They spread through the field rapidly. For best results, however, the makers and distributors of

Agrispon recommend that the soil not be disturbed for at least two weeks after application. It's also recommended that chlorinated water not be used during application and there is still some uncertainty as to how compatible the product is when used with specific herbicides. In most cases, Agrispon will work well with conventional farming systems, the spokesmen claimed.

Fertilizer use is likely to be reduced once Agrispon is established in the field. Some users report having eliminated fertilizer bills entirely while still maintaining comparable or even increased yields from their crops.

In essence, farming with Agrispon might be considered ecological farming, Simms pointed out. It's essential that good management procedures always be followed. Clean equipment is a must, and the time of application is important for good results.

One of the best-liked traits of Agrispon is the product's ability to take nitrogen from the air and make it available to plants in the soil.

"I'm a farmer myself and will stake my life on the performance of the product," Simms said at one point.

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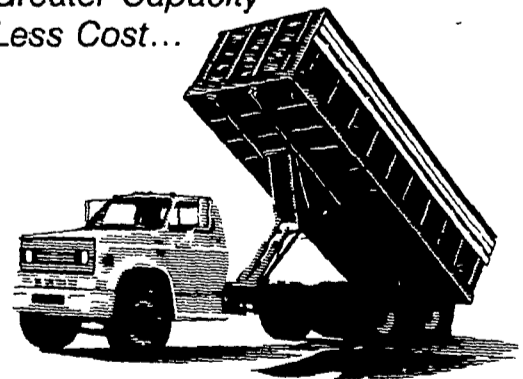
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