



KENTUCKY

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Humic-based conditioners can reduce stress on soil

Nothing can control or eliminate weather-based challenges but better soil management will increase the crop's ability to handle weather-related stress. By using humic-based soil conditioners farmers could notice a difference in the impact weather has on soils, and ultimately their crops, whether they are raising hay, pasture, row crops or fruits and vegetables. These products are designed to rebalance, or create a new mineralization, in soil.

"They work to free up nutrients that are currently bound in unusable forms within the soil profile," according to Dennis Stephens of Monty's Plant Food Company. "Humic technology will create more pore space, improve the organic structure, and boost microbial activity. If applied in the fall, you allow time for maximum effectiveness within the soil profile, allowing results in subsequent seasons."

The inability of soils to adapt to changing weather conditions relies largely on the ability to process water, air and nutrients; compacted soils can prohibit all of these from occurring. At levels as low as 200psi, according to Certified Crop Advisor Joe Dedman, soils cannot support any but the hardiest of plants. In a drought year, the roots are not able to penetrate deeply enough to access nutrients and moisture that may be available. With the plant roots bound in the upper four inches of the soil profile, even the slightest of droughts can have a big impact.

Compacted soils can also cause crop loss in a wet year because the moisture is trapped between the surface and the hard pan layer. Whether the source of your compaction concerns are chemical or mechanical, products like Monty's Soil Conditioner can help. Using a plow, sub-soiler or similar methods to break through the hard pan does not eliminate the problem; it only moves it deeper into the earth. The latest independent lab results indicate that Monty's, on the other hand, can lower compaction in a relatively short period of time.

While it is intended to be part of an ongoing program, in most cases Monty's soil conditioner can create a change in the compaction levels. Additionally, it can boost microbial activity which will enhance natural sources of nitrogen and free up sizeable quantities of other nutrients. Once farmland is less compacted, more organic in nature, has freely moving nutrients, and is better able to regulate the flow of water, there's the opportunity to reduce input costs, time spent working the fields and prevented plantings and crop failures. While you cannot change the weather, this fall you can begin tests on your own farm to see the benefits this new technology can provide in controlling the impact of next season's unpredictable crop stresses.



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