



# PRESS RELEASE

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## Magnesium hunch pays off

*Micronutrient management benefits from lateral thinking*

“Convention sometimes dictates that you shouldn’t be conventional,” says Chris Rigley of the advice he gave to agronomy customer Phil Hoddy a year ago, after wheat yields started to slip in the previous season.

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Managing 1,000 ha of Yorkshire Wolds on the Birdsall Estate, Mr Hoddy was particularly concerned with the performance of Invicta, which had yielded less than average and was displaying several blind ears. Moreover, following the autumn 2011 drought, the northern-specific variety Cassius had, as he put it, ‘never gathered its feet’. Coming into spring, it needed attention.

“Organic matter levels in the soil were so low, we knew the only way we were going to get anything right with it was to feed from the top,” explains Chris, of Yorkshire Arable Marketing, “and given how it had never really got going during establishment, I was keen to see how we could accelerate its growth.”

Chris chose magnesium as the remedy. Although Birdsall’s soils weren’t lacking the trace element, their calcareous composition was ‘locking up’ the available mineral. The micronutrient plays a vital role in photosynthesis: chlorophyll, the plant pigment that enables them to absorb energy from sunlight, relies on magnesium.

“The classic sign of magnesium deficiency is chlorosis, the yellowing between leaf veins, as the plant breaks down chlorophyll and transports magnesium to the newest leaves,” Chris explains.



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The crop wasn't chlorotic, but Chris suspected it was suffering 'hidden hunger'. "Effectively, that's when the plant has enough to 'get by'; it's scrimping. Give it access to more, and it will make use of it."

His non-conventional advice was to not only to use a product new to the market, but to apply it earlier in the season. On the latter, Chris proposed that boosting photosynthesis in the plant, even during the minimal daylight of winter months, would provide an early start.

"To make the most of that available daylight," says Phil. "Chris suggested making the first of four planned Mg application at T0. That would also give us some breathing space if T1 was subsequently delayed.

"He also advised using a formulated micronutrient product instead of, for example, bittersalz. We opted for Safagrow's Magnesium Alloy, which gave the crop the immediate boost it needed as well as a longer-term controlled release to keep levels optimised."

Phil says the product appeared to vindicate its claims of longevity, which Safagrow attributes to the surfactants in Alloy's engineered formulation. "You could see the product was staying on the leaf despite all that rainfall we had over spring and summer. Another definite advantage was being able to tank-mix it reliably with Adexar (fluxapyroxad + epoxiconazole) and not worry about solubility in the sprayer."



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Although the four applications of Aloy weren't subject to a formal trials regime, Phil says that more than 20 years' of growing crops tells him when a crop's doing well. "And we saw it in the yield; although we still had a few blind grain sites in the Invicta, the extra Mg brought it closer to the normal level. Cassius, meanwhile, gave us a whole extra 1t/ha over the previous year, in a season when the average yield dipped."

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