

O-15 (243)**HIGHLY SOLUBLE CHLORIDE-FREE SULPHATE OF POTASH (SOP) FOR BETTER YIELD AND QUALITY IN HORTICULTURAL CROPS**

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When it comes to potash nutrition many horticultural crops are sensitive to chloride, meaning that chloride free potash sources such as potassium sulphate (SOP) and potassium nitrate (NOP) are much better suited to these crops. Whilst potassium nitrate also contains the nitrogen, important for the development of green tissue early in the plants growth, at the later stages the plant's need for potassium increases and the need for nitrogen decrease. The latest trials results conducted by Tessenderlo Group in a series of horticultural crops throughout the world demonstrate that in many cases potassium sulphate gives better results than potassium nitrate leading to increases in both yield and quality. Even in cases where performance is comparable, potassium sulphate is the more cost-effective potash choice for growers of horticultural crops. In many areas fertigation is becoming popular as a means of delivering the nutrients needed by the crop, since it offers greater water use and fertilizer efficiency. In such systems high quality fertilizer products are required that dissolve completely and rapidly. Tessenderlo Group's extensive analysis of the many forms of water soluble SOP available in the market clearly indicate that there are massive differences in quality, with some low quality products clearly unsuitable for use in fertigation. To assist horticultural growers, Tessenderlo Group has developed an objective scoring system to rank the different forms of SOP available on the market based on those characteristics that the users identified as being the most important. This added transparency is a valuable tool in assisting horticultural growers makes an informed choice of product to ensure that they will get optimum results from their fertigation systems.

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