

Fluid Fertilizers: Properties and Characteristics

Dale F. Leikam

Fluid Fertilizer Foundation

www.FluidFertilizer.com

Dale.Leikam@sbcglobal.net


785-776-0273

785-770-0009

Indianapolis Marriott East

Wednesday, December 8, 2010

8:00	8:15	- - -	Welcome and Announcements	- - -
8:15	9:00	- - - - -	Fluid Fertilizer Solutions and Opportunities (D. Fairchild)	- - - - -
9:00	9:45	- - -	National/Global Fertilizer Outlook and Trends (T. Erny)	- - -
9:45	10:10	- - - - -	Break	- - - - -

		Session A	Session B
10:10	11:00	Operation Issues/Maintenance (C. Schultze)	Basic Fluid Characteristics, Salt-out, Solubility, Etc. (D. Leikam)
11:00	11:50	Storage Tank Inspection, Maintenance & Failure (C. Brooks)	Use of VRT Programs In Dealer Research (M. Wiebers)
11:50	1:00	Lunch	Lunch
1:00	1:50	DOT Rail Tank Car Certification (M. Orr)	Urea Volatilization: How Large Is The Issue and Losses (D. Kissel)
1:50	2:40		New Technologies: Products and Additives (D. Leikam)
2:40	3:30		Statistics: How They Are Used and Mis-used (S. Staggenborg)
3:30	3:50		Break - - - - -
3:50	4:40	UAN Management: Corrosion, Composition, etc (R. Satterfield)	Fertigation: Equipment and Agronomics (J. Schepers)
4:40	5:30	Formulation Issues At The Plant (M. Orr)	Fluid Starter Fertilizer Sources (D.. Zabel)
6:00	7:30	- - - - -	Social Time / Reception - - - - -

Thursday, December 9, 2010

8:00	8:10	- - - - -	Announcements, Housekeeping	- - - - -
8:10	9:00	- - - - -	What's New In Washington? TFI Update (F. West)	- - - - -

		Session A	Session B
9:10	9:50	Micronutrient Compatibilities (A. Robinett)	High Yield Systems; Fertility Programs For the Future (M. Alley)
9:50	10:10	- - - - -	Break - - - - -
10:10	11:00	Regulatory Update and Other Issues. (J. Payne)	Five Factors To Improve The Odds For High Yields (M. Bauer)
11:00	11:50	Fluid Storage and Shelf Life Issues (J. Walker and Panel)	High Yield Systems: Role of Placement and Timing (S. Murrell)
11:50	12:00	- - - - -	Wrap-Up, Thank You, Have a safe trip home!! - - - - -



[Home](#)

[Research](#)

[Fluid Journal](#)

[Fluid Forum](#)

[FFF Resources](#)

[FFF Members](#)

[Links](#)

[About US & FAQ](#)

[Contact Us](#)

NEWS & NOTES

**High Soil Test P Essential for
Maximum Corn Yields and Profits**

**Don't Forget Starter
Fertilizer - Especially Now**

**10-34-0 Storage
and Handling**

MORE

EVENTS

2011 Fluid Forum
February 20-22, 2011
Scottsdale Plaza Resort
Scottsdale, AZ
Phone: 480-948-5000

Fluid Technology Roundup
Indianapolis, IN,
December 8-9, 2010.
Wednesday, December 8, 8:00am -
Thursday, December 9th, 12:00 p.m.
Indianapolis Marriott East
7202 East 21st St.
Indianapolis, IN 46219.
Phone: 317-352-1231
Program • Letter • Registration

**North Central Extension-Industry
Soil Fertility Conference**
November 17-18, 2010
Holiday Inn Airport
Des Moines, IA

Welcome to the Fluid Fertilizer Foundation Website!

Fluid Journal Articles

Fall 2010 Issue:



Sign Up For Our Email Newsletter
Get news, article updates, and Fluid
Journal info delivered right to your inbox!

Fluid Journal Articles

Are Current Fertilizer Recommendations Adequate?

Corn being a primary responder, yield goals in the next 20 years are targeted at 250 to 300 bu/A by some in the seed industry.

■ **Dr. Gyles Randall**

The Fluid Journal • Official Journal of the Fluid Fertilizer Foundation • Fall 2010 • Vol. 18, No. 4, Issue #70

Summary: Challenges undoubtedly face the fertilizer and nutrient management industry as crop yields and potential demand escalate. Are today's nutrient recommendations appropriate for the future? Will they enable these ever-increasing yields to be realized or will they become yield-limiting? Do we have the research in place to develop nutrient best management guidelines for these very high yields? If not, where do we start and what are the nutrient/crop priorities? What are the economic and environmental consequences of this extraordinary high-yield production system? Will time of application and placement method guidelines need to be reevaluated? How will the logistics and capabilities of the farmer and the dealer fit into these "new" nutrient management guidelines?



Current status

Aging recommendations. Many of the current recommendations are based on research conducted in the '70s and '80s, and even earlier. Back then U.S. average yields ranged from 80 to 120 bu/A, and it is likely that yield in many of the calibration research trials seldom exceeded 175 bu/A. Yield response probabilities and critical levels are currently based on these calibration studies. In some states, little phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) calibration research has been conducted since. In other states, notably Iowa, some perceptive scientists began long-term P and K response trials that have been most helpful for updating nutrient rate recommendations. Recently, the University of Nebraska changed its longtime soil test P (STP) critical level from 15 ppm to 25 ppm for corn after corn, based on current high-yield data.

Logistical concerns. Soil testing is critical to the implementation of sound nutrient rate recommendations. But, soil testing has its share of uncertainties and a vigorous research and extension effort is needed to complement new fertilizer recommendations.

Variable rate application has come a long way since its inception. With improved technology and information, it will be desirable to apply variable rates of P and K to the soil to obtain very high and profitable yields with reduced risk of insufficient P or K.

Time and labor are substantial issues facing farmers and fertilizer suppliers, especially as farm operations get larger and the territory served by fertilizer dealers expands. Fertilizer applications that require more time, management and specific placement equipment often are passed over in favor of broadcast application as a farmer's acreage grows. With increased emphasis on early and timely planting, larger farm operations often pass on application methods that slow or delay planting. Storage space also becomes an issue for the dealer if non-traditional nitrogen (N) and P products are desired. Some of these products may have increased efficiency attributes desired by the grower, but extra storage needs for these products can be a negative issue for the dealer. Regardless, timing and fertilizer placement choices are influenced by the dealer's and grower's needs, and they

require consideration by the nutrient research community as research is developed and prioritized.

Risk of yield loss is a concern that faces both dealers and farmers. The possibility that yield is left in the field due to inadequate nutrient availability or supply is unthinkable for growers attempting to maximize return on their fertilizer dollar. As farmers work with their dealers and/or agricultural advisors to arrive at a nutrient application game plan, risk plays a key role in arriving at the final decision. Researchers, working to provide adequate nutrient supply for high and very high yield conditions, need to keep economic and environmental risks in mind.

Land tenure. Whether the land to be fertilized is owned or is rented can and perhaps should play an important role in decisions on fertilizer rate and placement. To date, this factor has not been included in fertilizer guidelines provided by most universities. Kansas State University has led the way in developing P recommendations based in part on land tenure. Farmers who own land to be fertilized generally have a long-term vision for that land that

A Further Look into Fertilizer Recommendation Adequacy Regarding Phosphorus and Potassium

Farmer-specific goals should be incorporated into the decision-making process.

■ **Drs. Dale Leikam, Gyles Randall, and Antonio Mallarino**

The Fluid Journal • Official Journal of the Fluid Fertilizer Foundation • Fall 2010 • Vol. 18, No. 4, Issue #70

Summary: There are several logical and appropriate approaches to managing phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) fertility. Within the bounds of environmental stewardship, it should be up to the individual producers to determine the appropriate fertility approach suitable for their production system. Nutrient sufficiency programs generally minimize fertility inputs in the early years but have increased risk of P or K limiting crop growth and long-term profitability. Build/maintenance programs may cost more in the initial years if soil tests must be built up, but they generally provide for maximum yield and long-term profitability while increasing fertilizer management flexibility in the coming years. In addition, an individual producer's attitude toward managing risk, the producer's long-term viewpoint in making investments in soil fertility, expected land tenure, and other farmer-specific goals and objectives should be incorporated into the decision-making process for determining the P and K fertility management program that best suits an individual producer's needs. To continue to increase crop yields in the future, it is important to note that research has shown that annual fertilizer applications may not fully substitute for high P and K soil fertility. Highest crop yields are often associated with soil tests greater than the established critical value. There may be a severe economic penalty associated with low P or K soil tests even when fertilizer is applied—especially in years/situations with high-yield potential.



Profitable crop production requires adequate crop nutrition and there are few fields that do not require the addition of supplemental crop nutrients. As a result, there has been much investment in time, expertise, and money devoted to developing reliable soil tests that are well correlated to crop nutrient uptake and crop yield response. Once a reliable soil test is developed, the test is then calibrated to estimate the nutrient application rate required for optimum crop growth at various soil test levels. Historically, the soil test value and crop to be grown have been the main, and often only, factors used in making nutrient rate recommendations—although there are sometimes adjustments made for factors such as expected crop yield, soil type, and/or soil association. However, there are many other factors that affect crop growth, nutrient availability, nutrient uptake, and crop production efficiency that need to be taken into consideration in order to arrive at a nutrient management program that best fits a specific field. The cultural and tillage system used, planting dates, soil/environmental condition, equipment

availability, an individual farmer's long-term approach to managing risk and land investment, crop fertilizer prices, and other factors are not estimated by soil testing but they generally influence crop nutrient rate decisions.

While plant-available nitrate and/or ammonium nitrogen (N) soil testing historically has been used for N recommendations in lower rainfall areas, such as the Great Plains and other western states, N soil testing has generally not been used in more humid regions such as the Corn Belt and southeastern states. Higher rainfall in these areas causes much more weather-induced variability in inorganic soil N supplies and much less reliability in assessing available N supply to the growing crop.

P, K Interpretation

Nutrient recommendations. As cropping systems change with the increased adoption of reduced and no-till systems, it is possible that nutrient recommendations may also need to change as compared to those developed with past conventional, aggressive

tillage. Additionally, as crop yields continue to increase year after year, the overall amounts of crop nutrients required and rate of crop nutrient uptake are also increasing. As yields continue to climb, farmers need to consider the total amount of nutrients required by these higher yielding crops and the daily nutrient requirements, especially at critical stages of crop development. Table 1 presents the very large total nutrient uptake and daily nutrient requirements of high-yielding corn and soybeans in a Rutgers University study. Since most P and K moves to the root surface across only very short distances by diffusion, questions sometimes arise about the adequacy of many current crop nutrient recommendations developed at much lower yield levels than are currently obtained by top producers.

Soil tests for P and K do not directly tell how much of a nutrient is available to a crop—nor do they accurately predict precisely how much of a nutrient to apply to a specific field situation. Instead, what soil tests do much better is estimate the soil's relative ability to supply a nutrient to a growing crop. This provides an index

Fluid Fertilizers

➤ Increasing in popularity in U.S. and elsewhere

➤ Advantages include

- ✓ Flexibility and versatility in application
- ✓ Efficiency and adaptability
- ✓ Benefits of continuous bands
- ✓ Ease of handling
- ✓ Does not segregate
- ✓ Flexibility, etc.

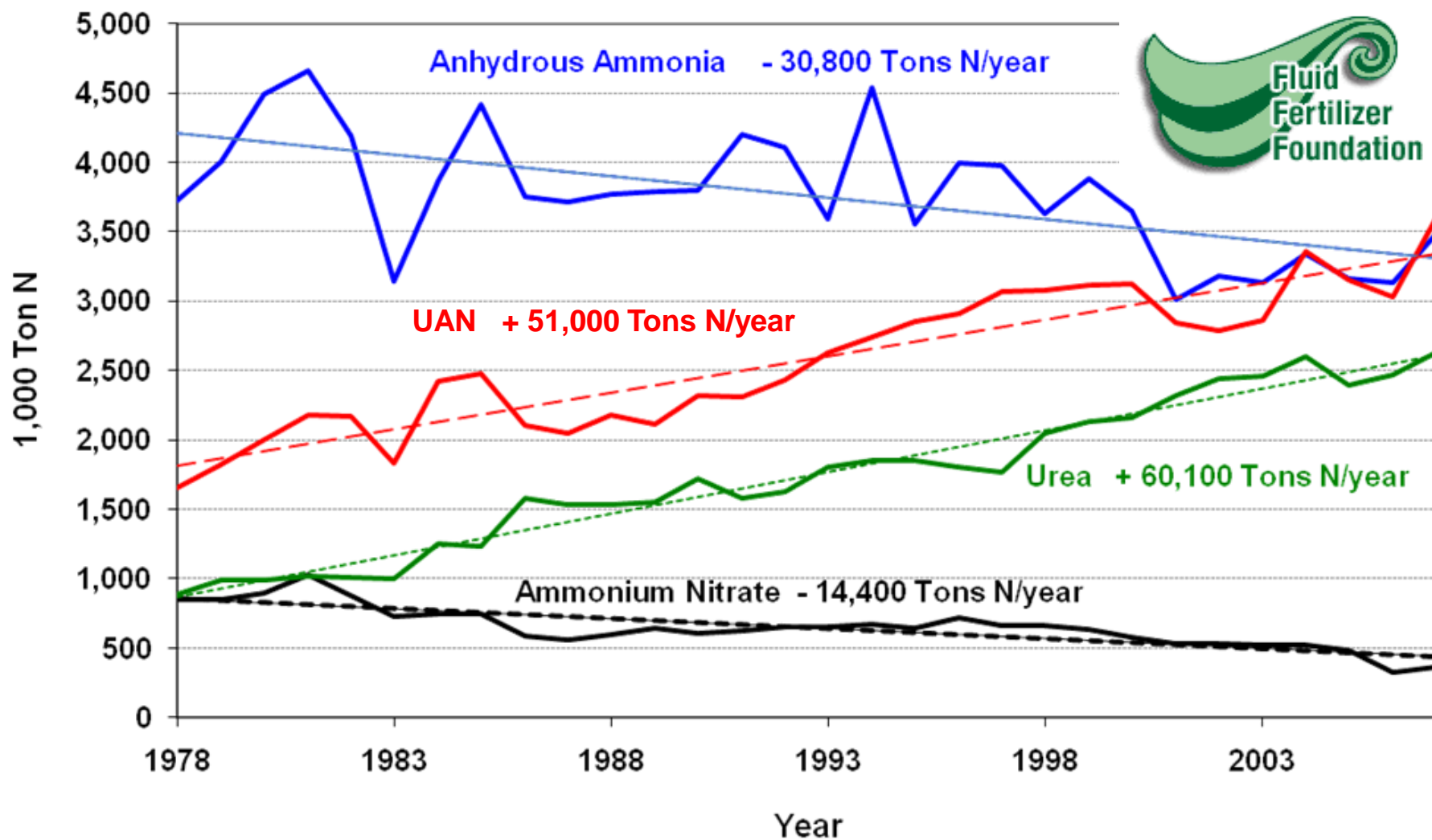
➤ Limitations

- ✓ Often higher purchase price than solid fertilizers **
- ✓ Salt-out and precipitate formation potential with certain products and blends

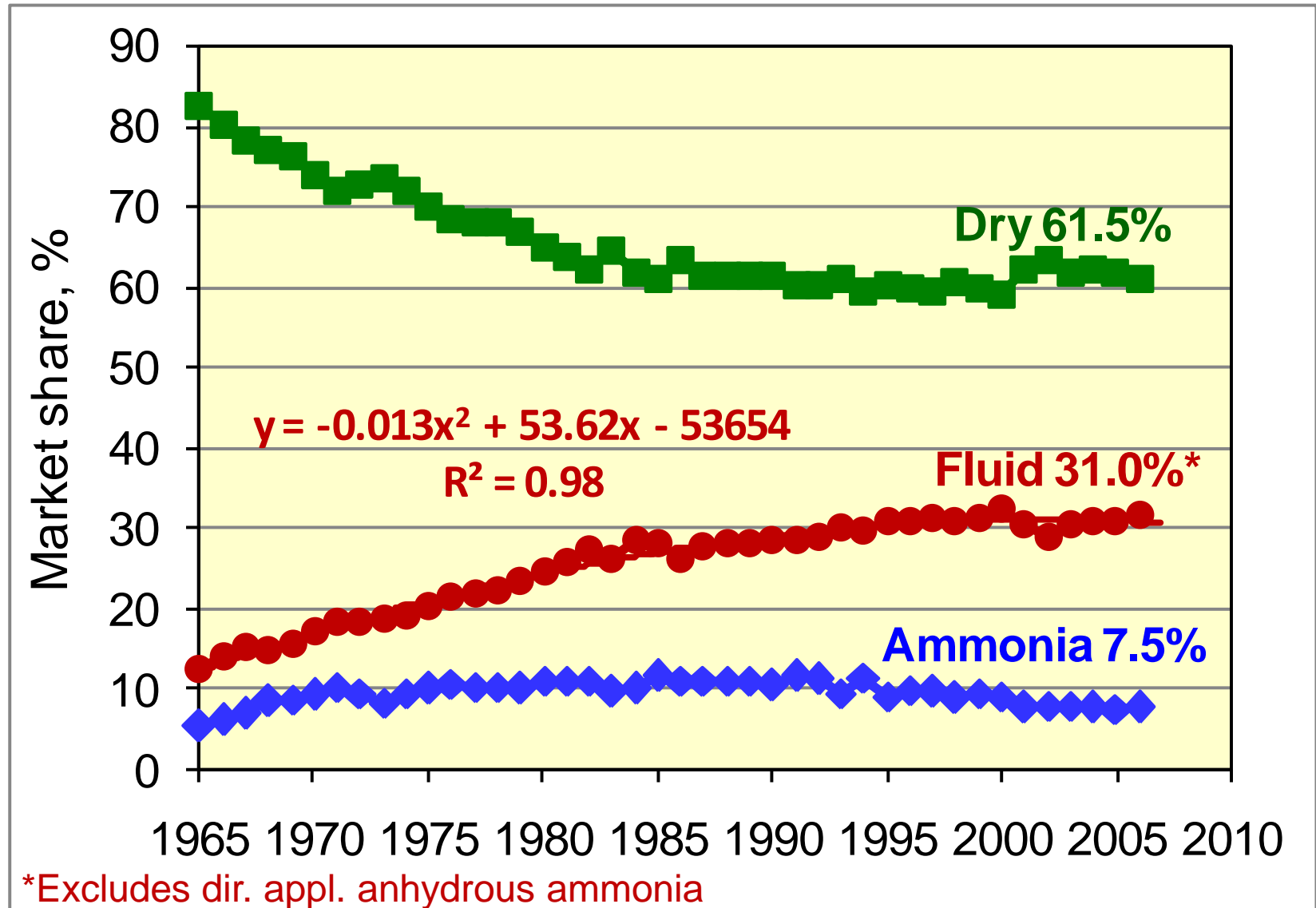


U.S. Nitrogen Fertilizer Consumption

Tons N/year



USA fertilizer market share by class.



Fluid Fertilizers

Terminology, Solubility, Density and N Solutions

Solution – All salts totally dissolved in water. No solids allowed!

Slurry – Fluid product containing water, dissolved salts and undissolved salts. Settles out quickly. Not Common.

Suspension – Fluid product containing water, dissolved salts, fine undissolved salt crystals and a suspending agent – normally attapulgite clay.

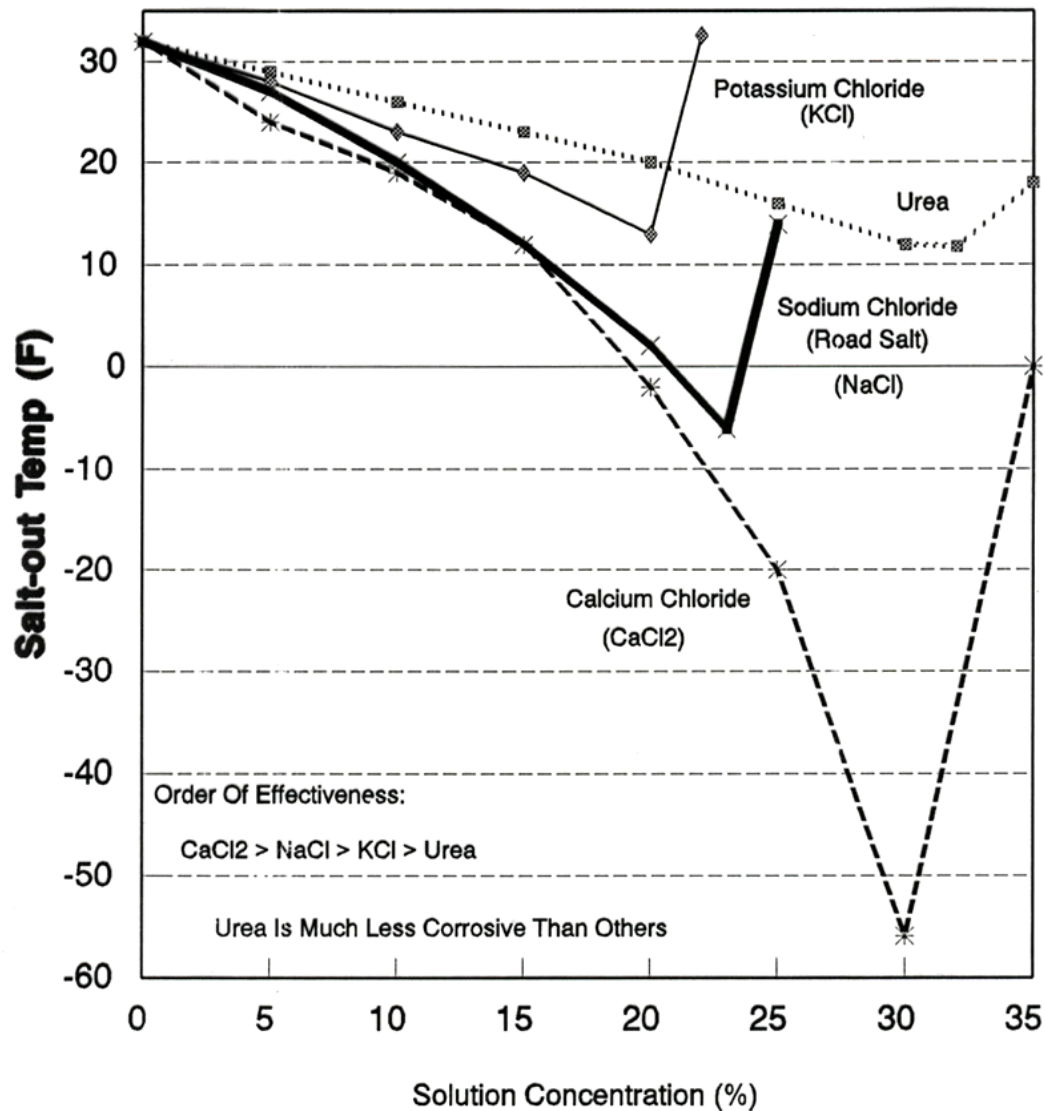
Muddy Water – Solutions with undissolved solids or suspensions containing too few undissolved salt crystals. Not a good range to try and operate in!!

Falling Out Of Solution – No such thing.

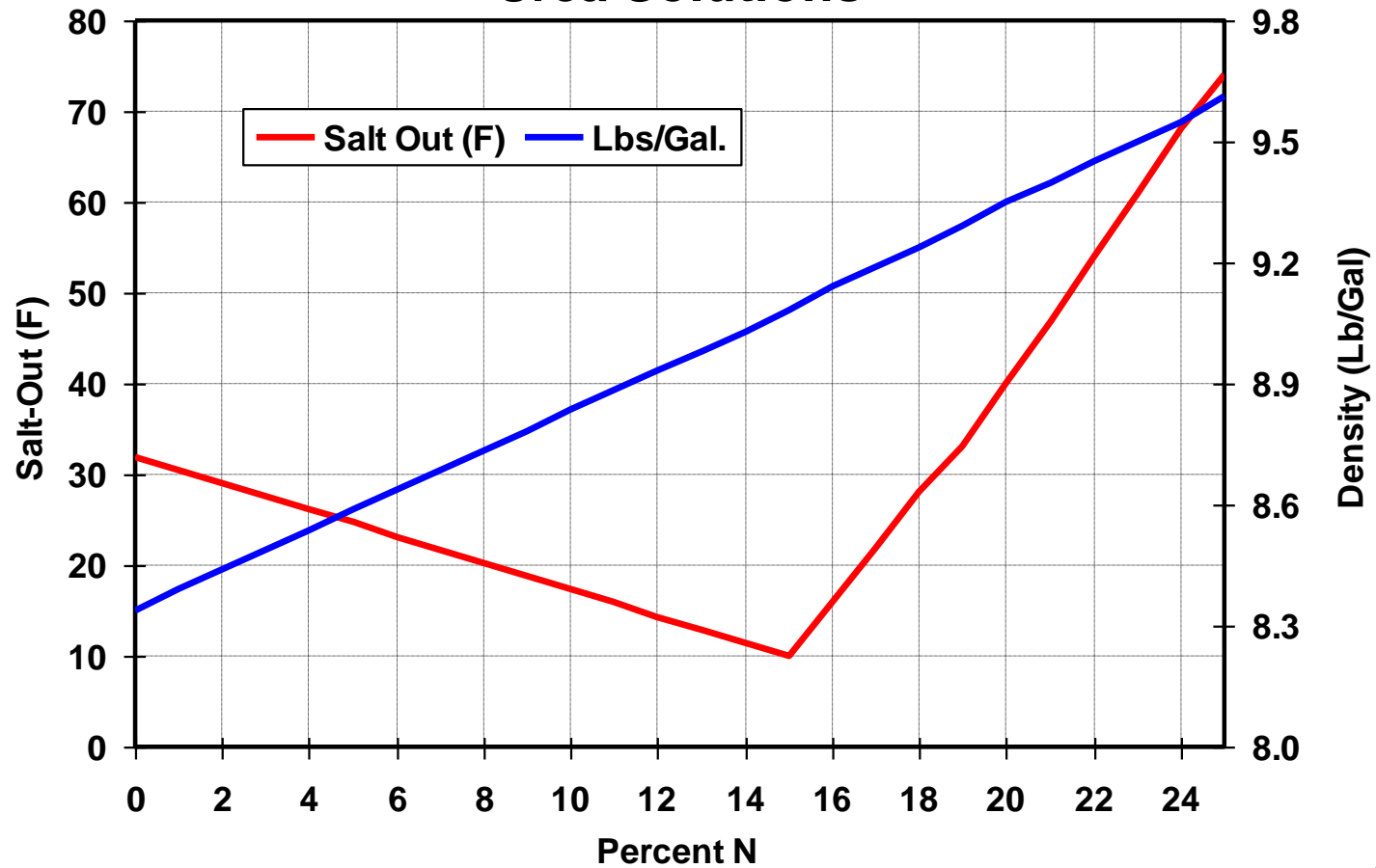
Salt-Out – Crystals form as solution cools; goes back in solution as product is warmed.
Example; UAN Solution.

Precipitate Formation – Non-crystalline mass forms which has much lower solubility than original ingredients in solution. Example;
Improperly stored fluid phosphates

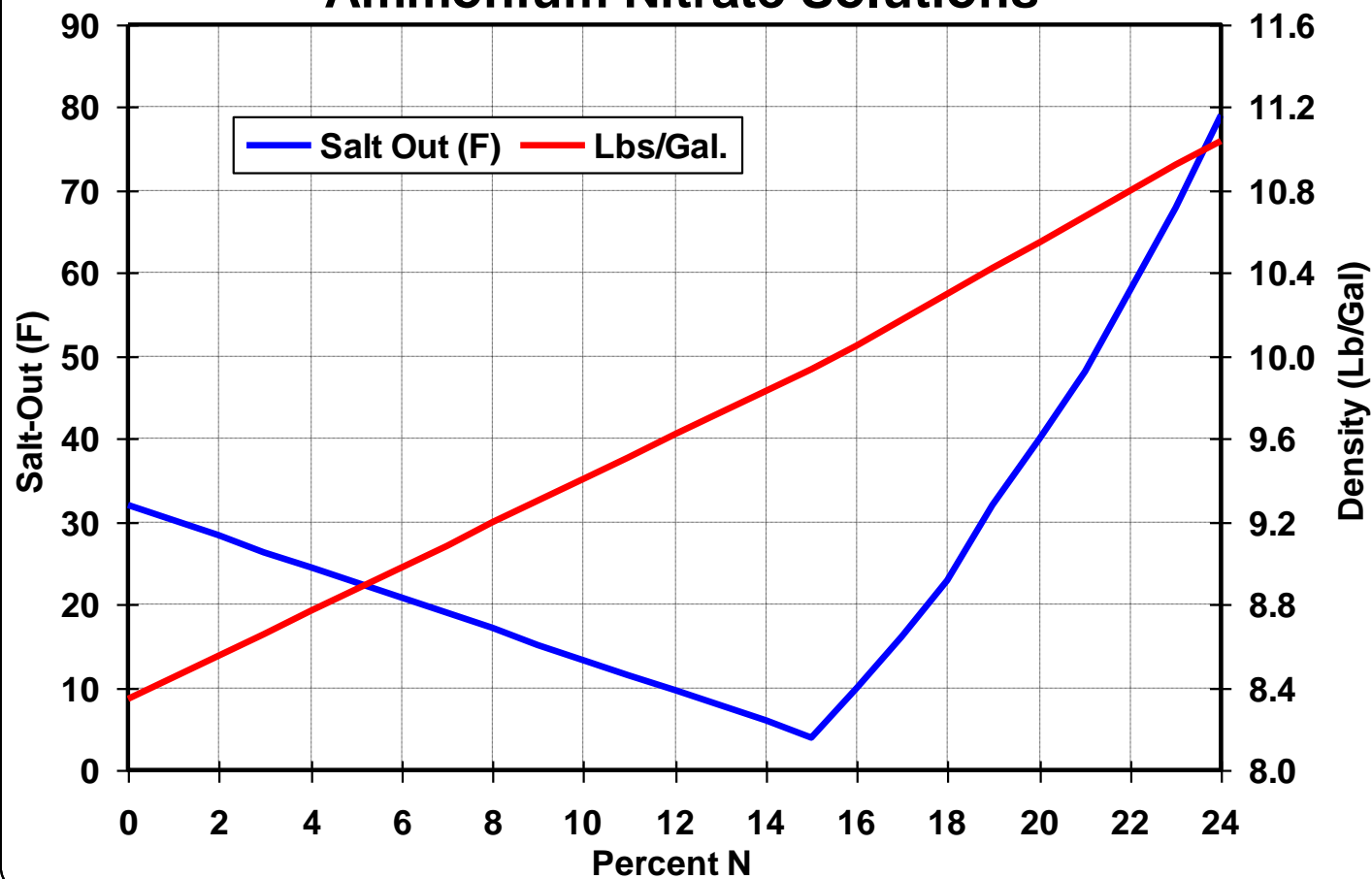
EFFECT OF SALTS ON FREEZING POINT



Urea Solutions

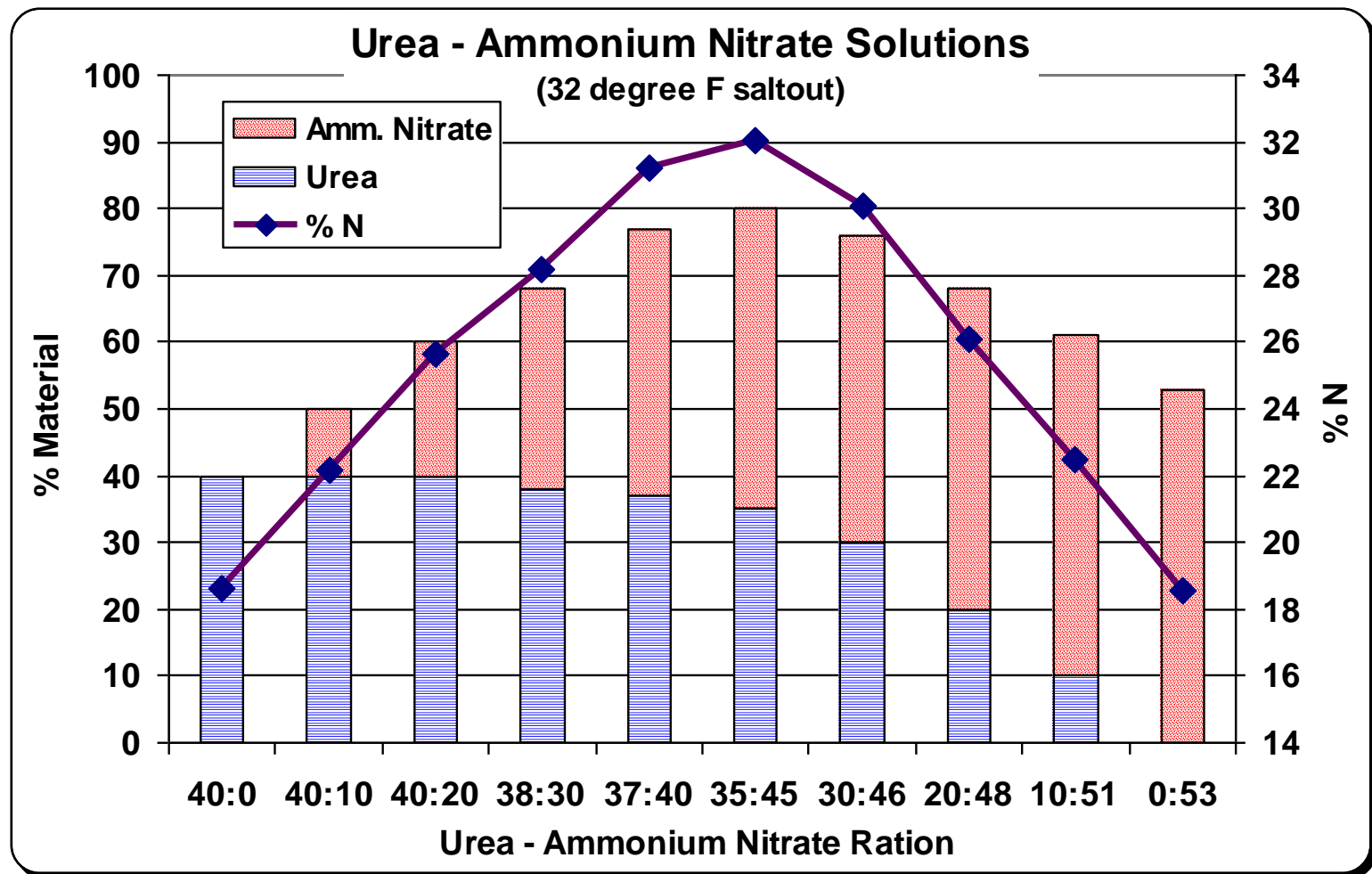


Ammonium Nitrate Solutions



To Make 32-0-0 UAN Solution - How Much Water Is Needed ?





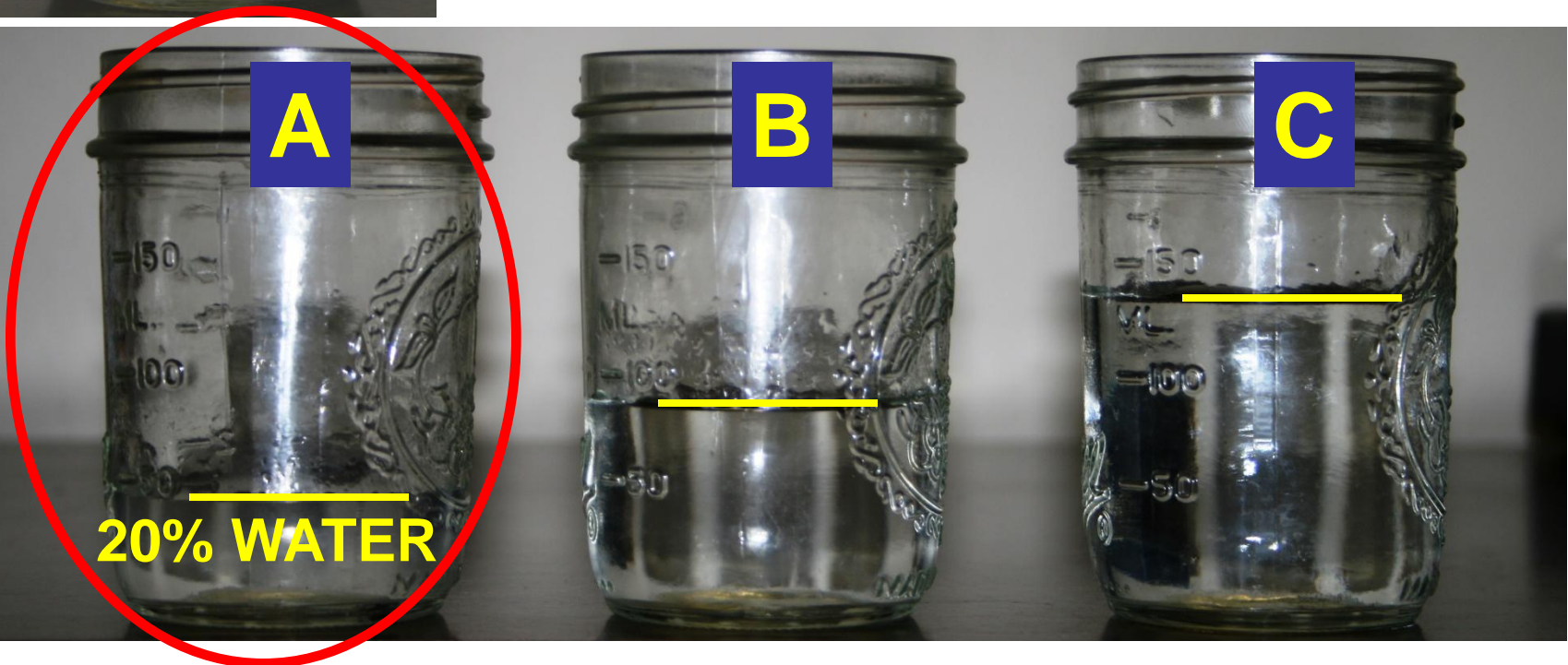
Eutectic Point – point of maximum solubility

32% UAN contains:

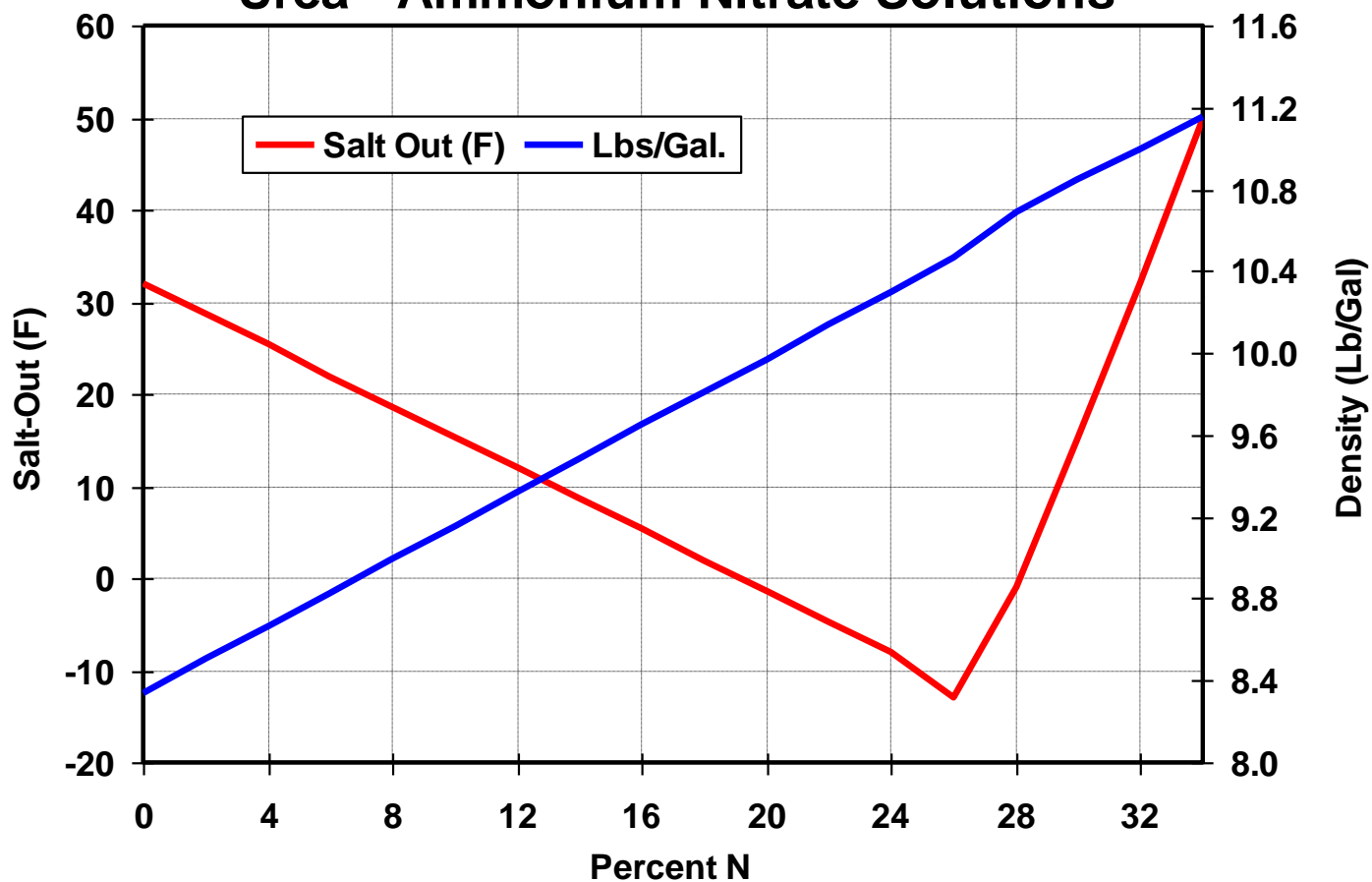
- approximately 35% ammonium nitrate, 45% urea and 20% water at eutectic point

28% UAN contains 30% water

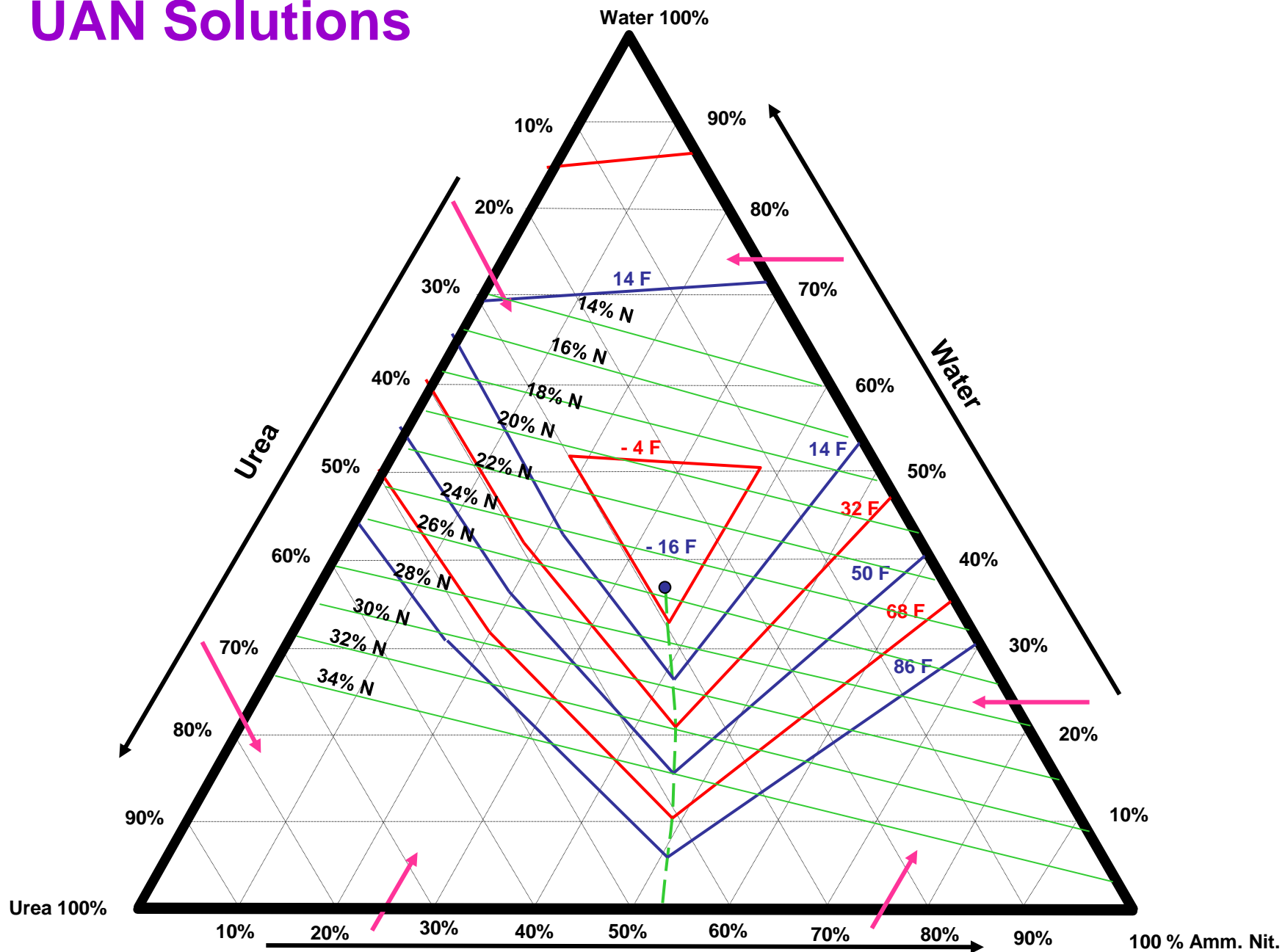
To Make 32-0-0 UAN Solution -
How Much Water Is Needed ?



Urea - Ammonium Nitrate Solutions



UAN Solutions



UAN Solution

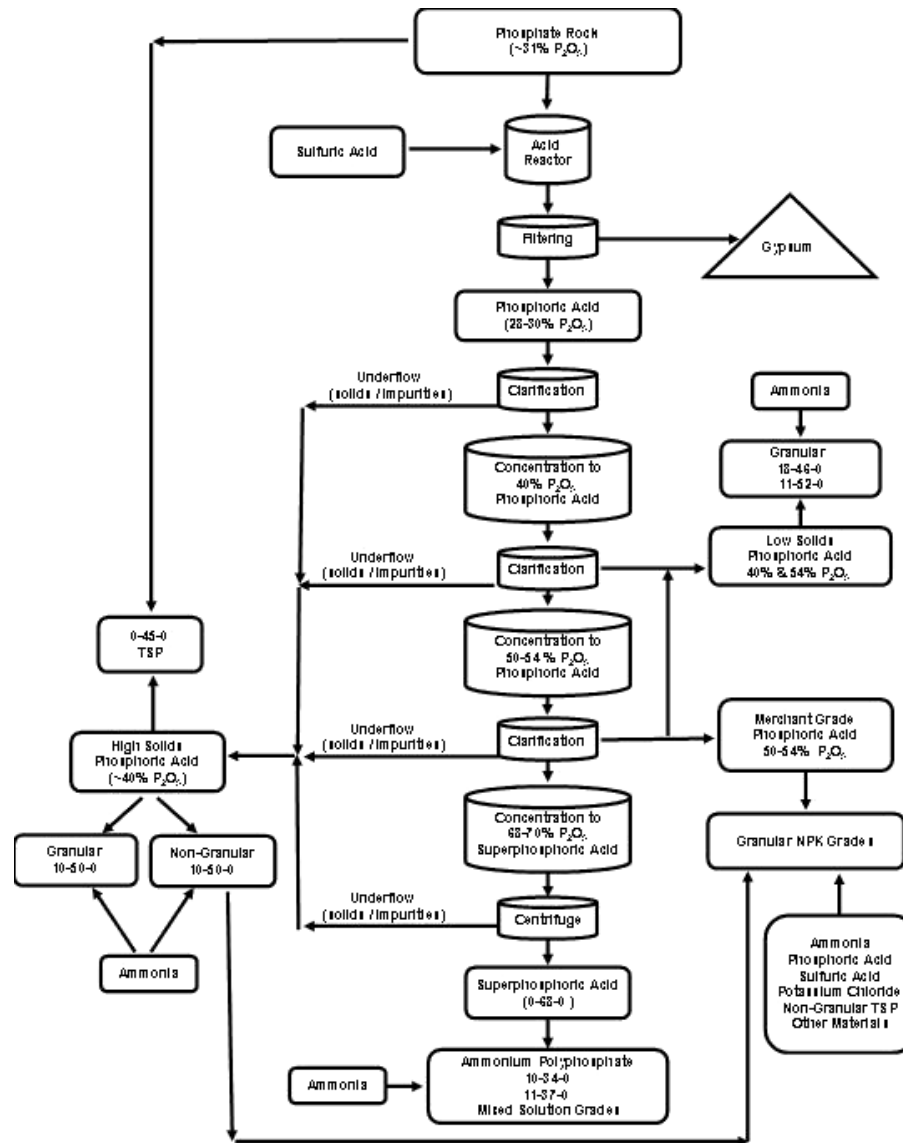
- Salt-out is an issue in many environments
 - ✓ There is very little water in UAN solution.
 - ✓ Warm water has ability to dissolve more salts than cold water
 - ✓ Salt-out occurs when salt content exceeds solubility at a given product temperature
 - ✓ Crystals form on tank walls as temperature cools
 - ✓ Eventually salts accumulate at tank bottom
 - ✓ Salts will re-dissolve with sufficient heat and recirculation

Lowering Water Freezing Temperature With UAN Solution

% N	Freezing Temperature F	28-0-0 32-0-0	
		gal per 100 gal water	
0	32	0	0
2	27	6.1	5.2
4	23	13.1	11.2
6	18	21.5	18.2
8	14	31.5	26.2
10	9	43.7	35.6
12	5	59.0	47.2
14	0	78.7	61.2

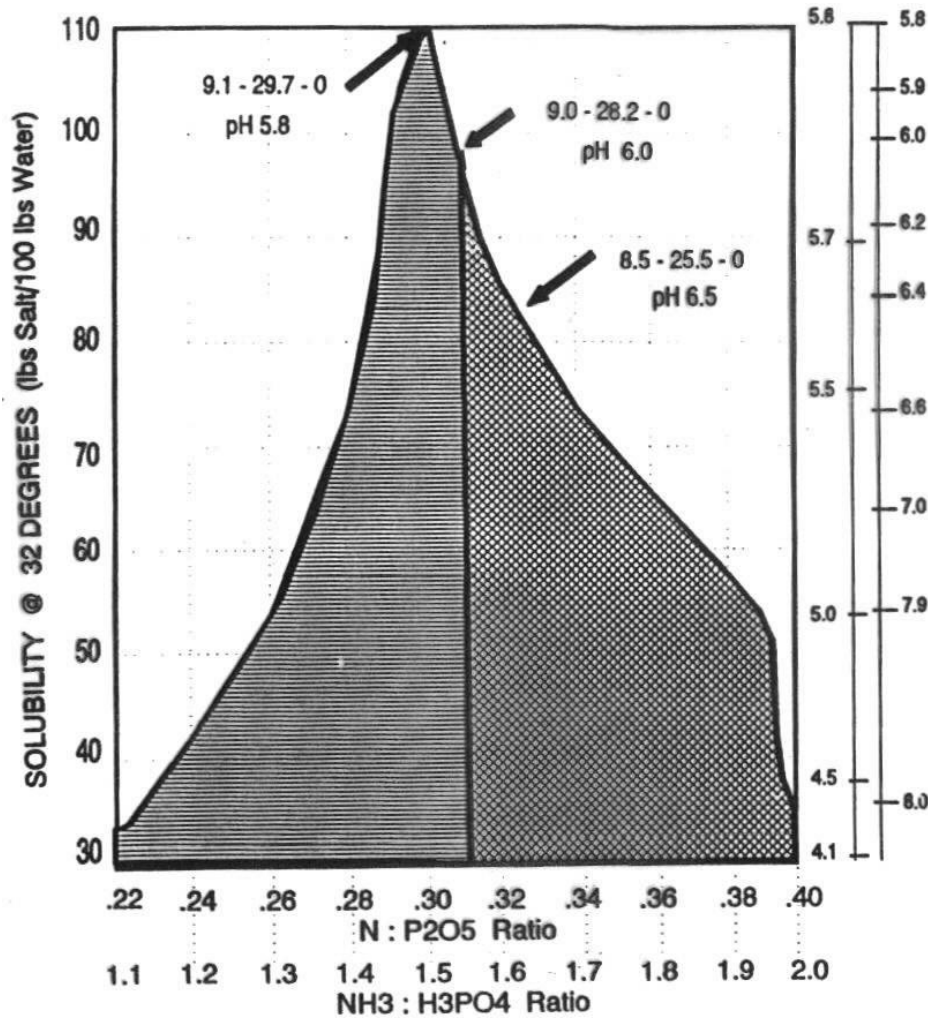
Liquid Phosphate Products

Fluid Phosphate Products and Characteristics

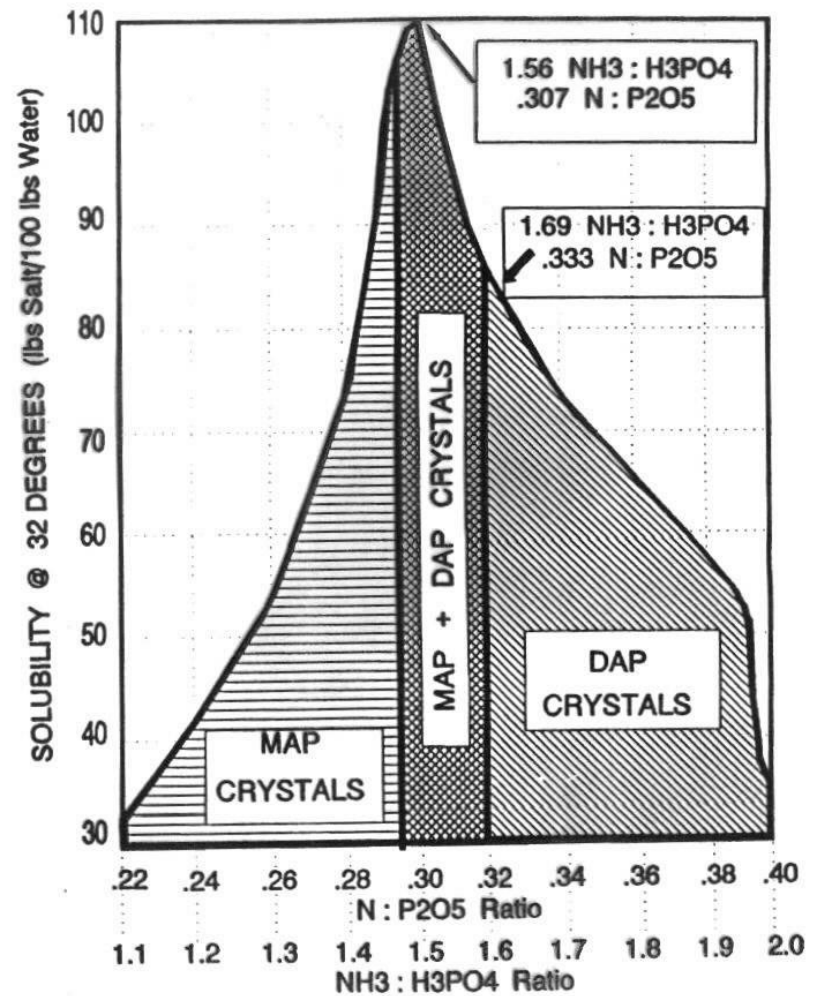


SOLUBILITY OF AMMONIUM PHOSPHATES

(ORTHO- SOLUTIONS)



(ORTHO- SUSPENSIONS)



Phosphoric Acid

Wet-Process Acid

- Black, brown, green (calcined)
- Contains many rock impurities
- Used in fertilizer industry

Furnace, food-grade acid

- Clear
- No impurities
- Food and industrial processes

Orthophosphoric Acid

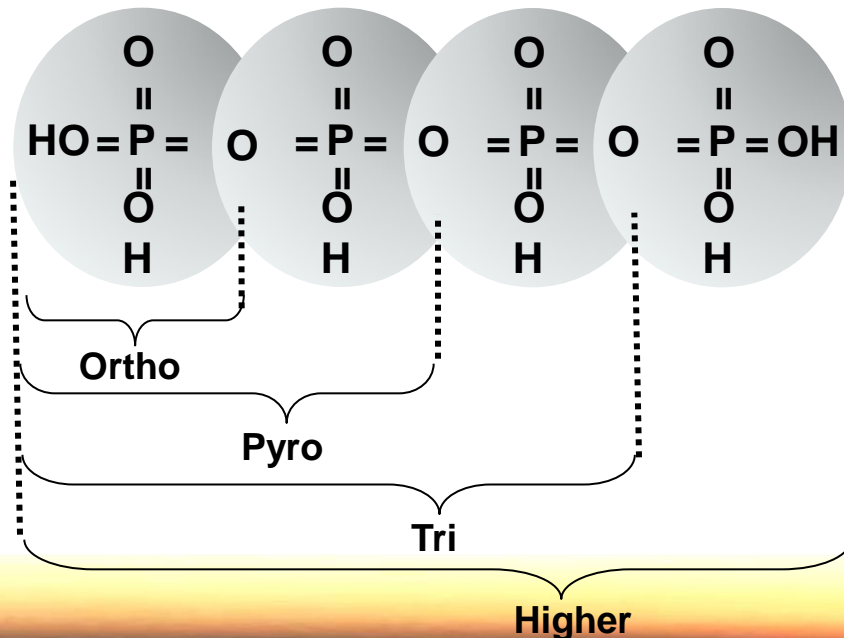
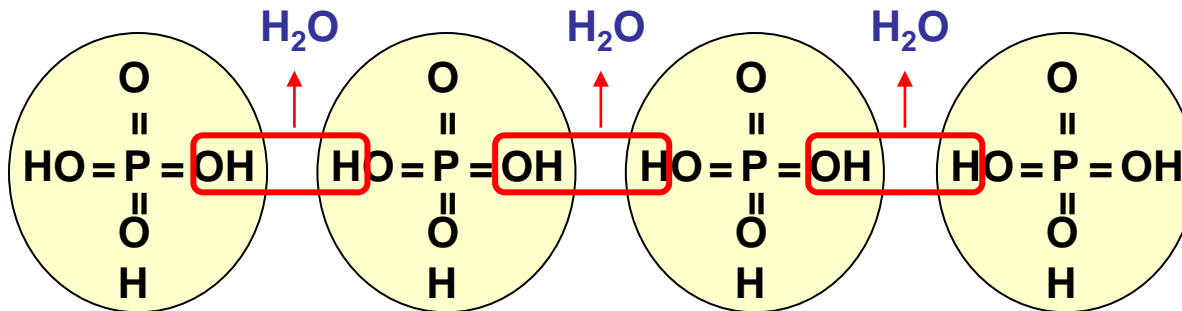
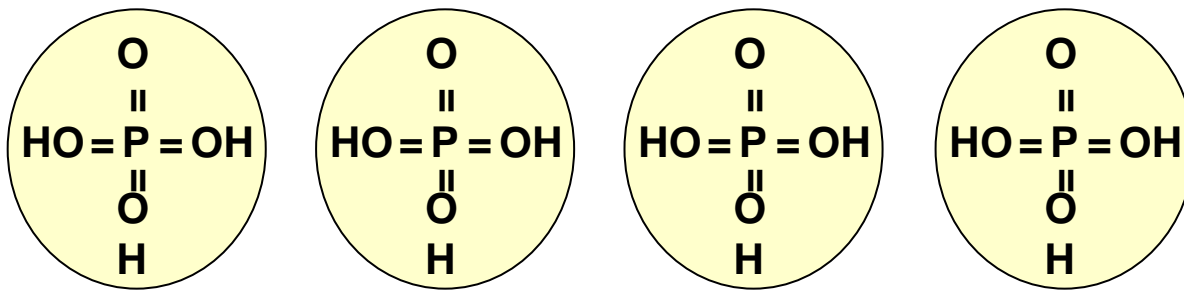
Examples

Source	Acid 1	Acid 2	Acid 3	Acid 4
P2O5	61	53.2	52.8	57
MgO	0.3	1.2	1.1	0.2
Fe2O3	0.35	0.5	1	0.32
Al2O3	0.18	0.4	0.5	0.16
F	0.3	0.4	2.1	0.1
Solids	0.5	0.1	0.1	Nil
Visc.@100F	40	90	100	27
P/F	89	58	46	248

Source: Texas Gulf

Ammonium Polyphosphate

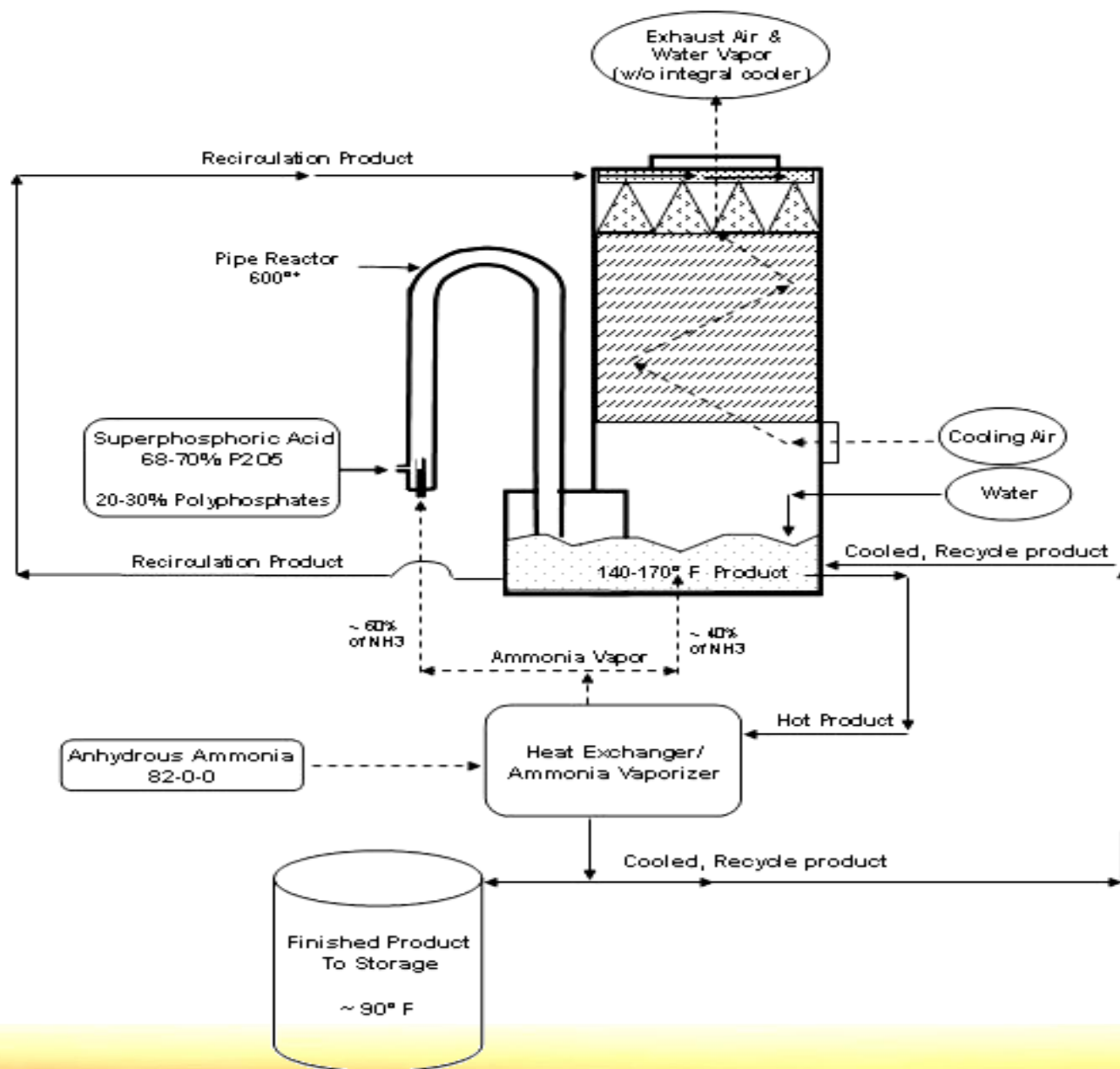
- Primary P source for much of fluid industry
- Many NPKS products made from APP
- Produced from ammonia, superphosphoric acid and water
- Generally equal agronomic performance as compared to solid fertilizers
 - ✓ If applied at equal P rates in similar manner
 - ✓ Potentially superior to solids if discontinuous bands result from with solid fertilizer band applications
- Contains most P as polyphosphate



Heat links phosphates
by removing
chemically bound
water

Heat comes from
chemical reaction of
reacting phosphoric
acid with ammonia

Flow Diagram For Ammonium Polyphosphate Production 10-34-0 & 11-37-0



Why Do We Want Polyphosphates ?

- Not necessarily for agronomic reasons
- Manage sludge problems in fluid P products
 - ✓ Polyphosphates sequester metal cation impurities in the product (especially Mg) to form relatively insoluble precipitates
 - ✓ Provides superior storage qualities
- Increased analysis compared to orthophosphate
- Provides ability to include higher amounts of micronutrients in product (not Ca or Mg)

Hydrolysis Of Polyphosphate To Orthophosphate

Soil Temperature

24 Hour Polyphosphate Hydrolysis (%)

41 F

30-40 %

68 F

50-60 %

95 F

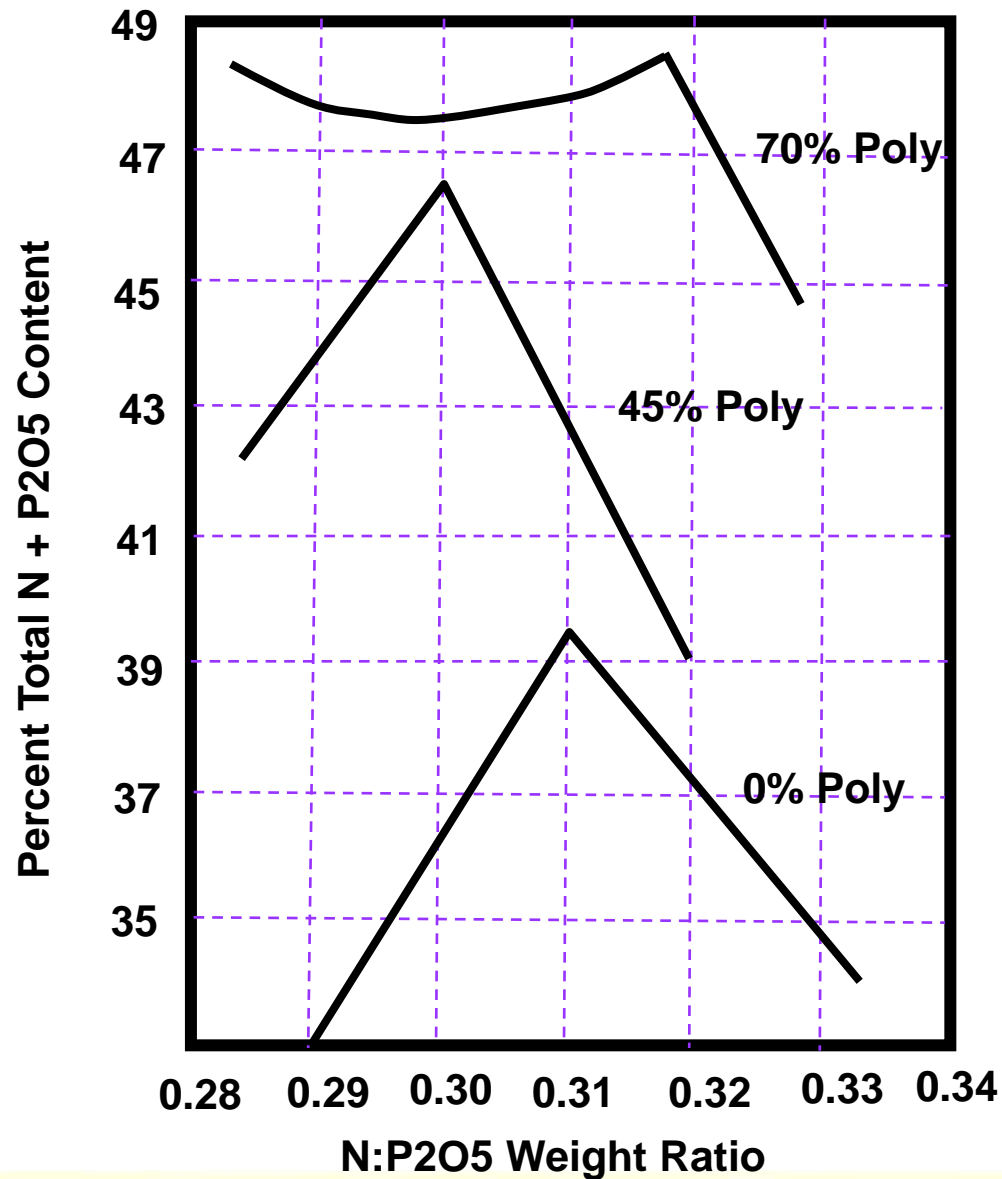
80-90 %

Chang and Racz, 1977

After application to soils, polyphosphate is quickly converted to orthophosphate by abundant soil enzymes

Plants utilize orthophosphates

Effect of Poly Content and N:P2O5 Ratio On Solubility



Why Do We Want Polyphosphates ?

- Not necessarily for agronomic reasons
- Manage sludge problems in fluid P products
 - ✓ Polyphosphates sequester metal cation impurities in the product (especially Mg) to form relatively insoluble precipitates
 - ✓ Provides superior storage qualities
- Increased analysis compared to orthophosphate
- Provides ability to include higher amounts of micronutrients in product (not Ca^{++} or Mg^{++})

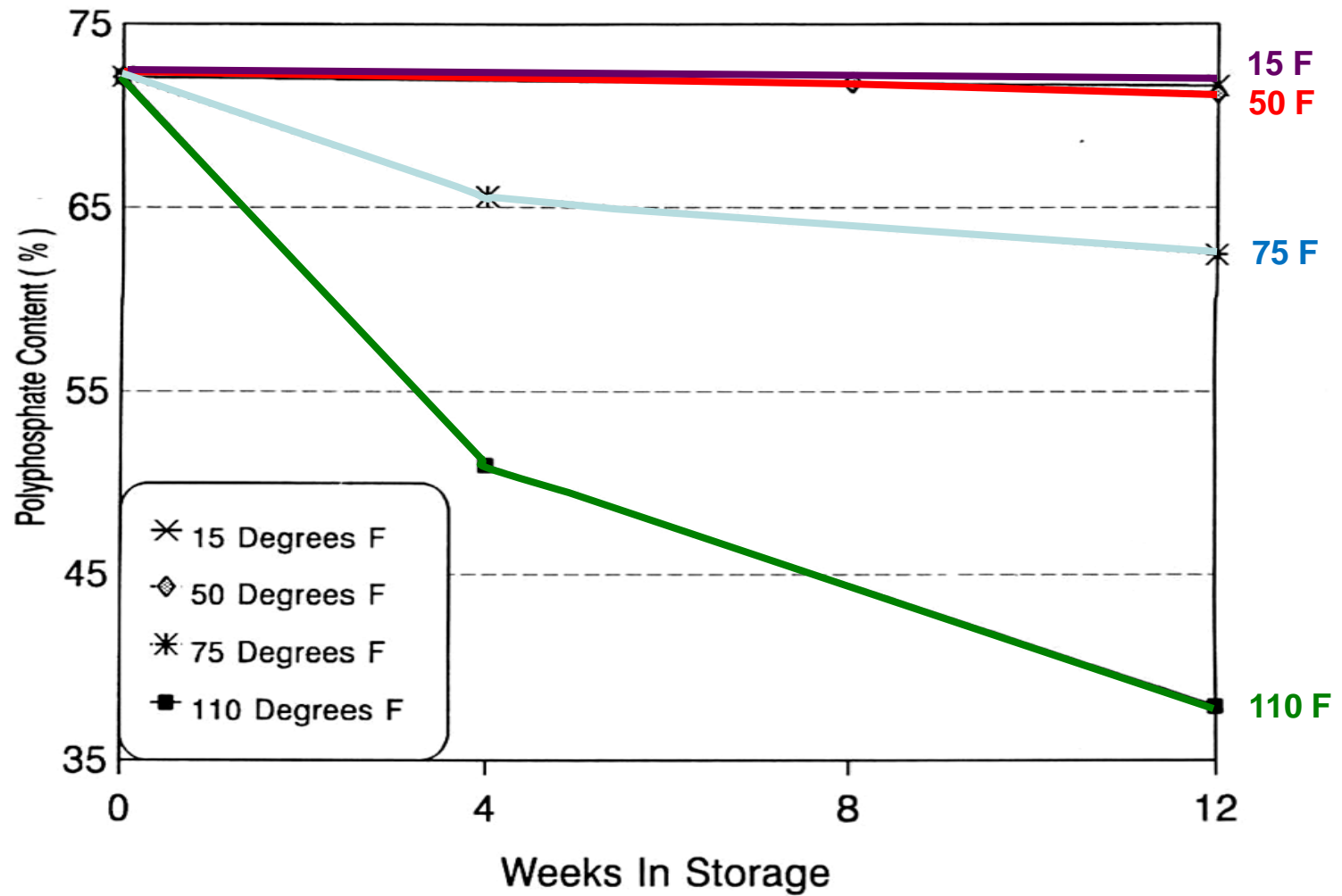
Zinc Sequestering By 10-34-0

Zinc Sources

<u>Original Zinc Source</u>	<u>% Zinc Remaining As Original Source</u>	<u>% Zinc Sequestered By Polyphosphate</u>
Zn EDTA	100	0
Zn Sulfate	4	96
Zn-NH3 Complex	8	92
Zn Phenolic Acid	11	89
Zn Citrate	8	92
Zn Nitrate + UAN	15	85
Zn HEIDA	19	81

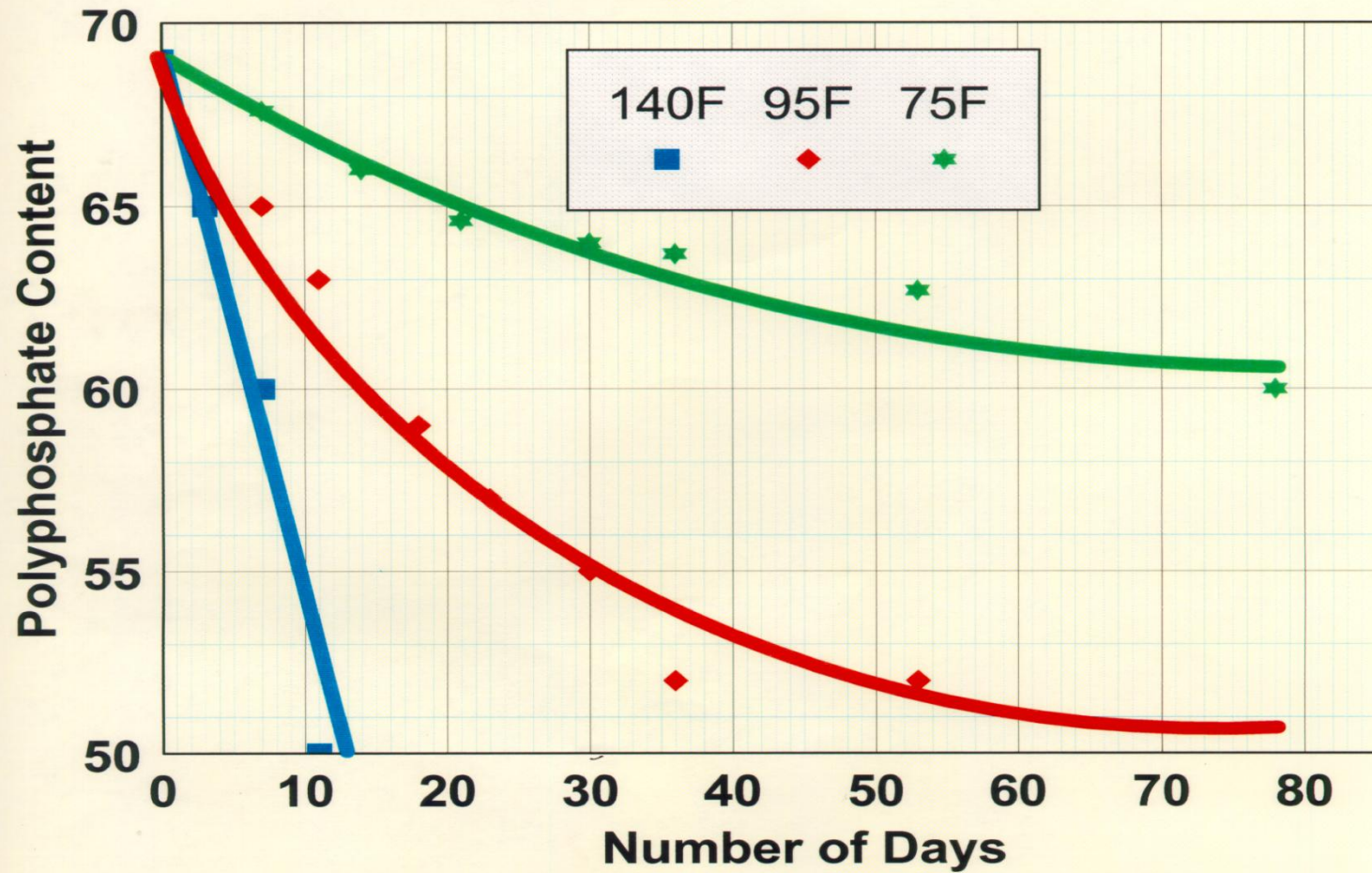
Values Are For 4 Minutes After Mixing - U of Neb.

Temperature Effect On 10-34-0 Quality



Source: Farmland Industries

Polyphosphate Loss vs. Temperatures Poly 11 - Geismar



Factors Impacting Precipitate Formation In Storage

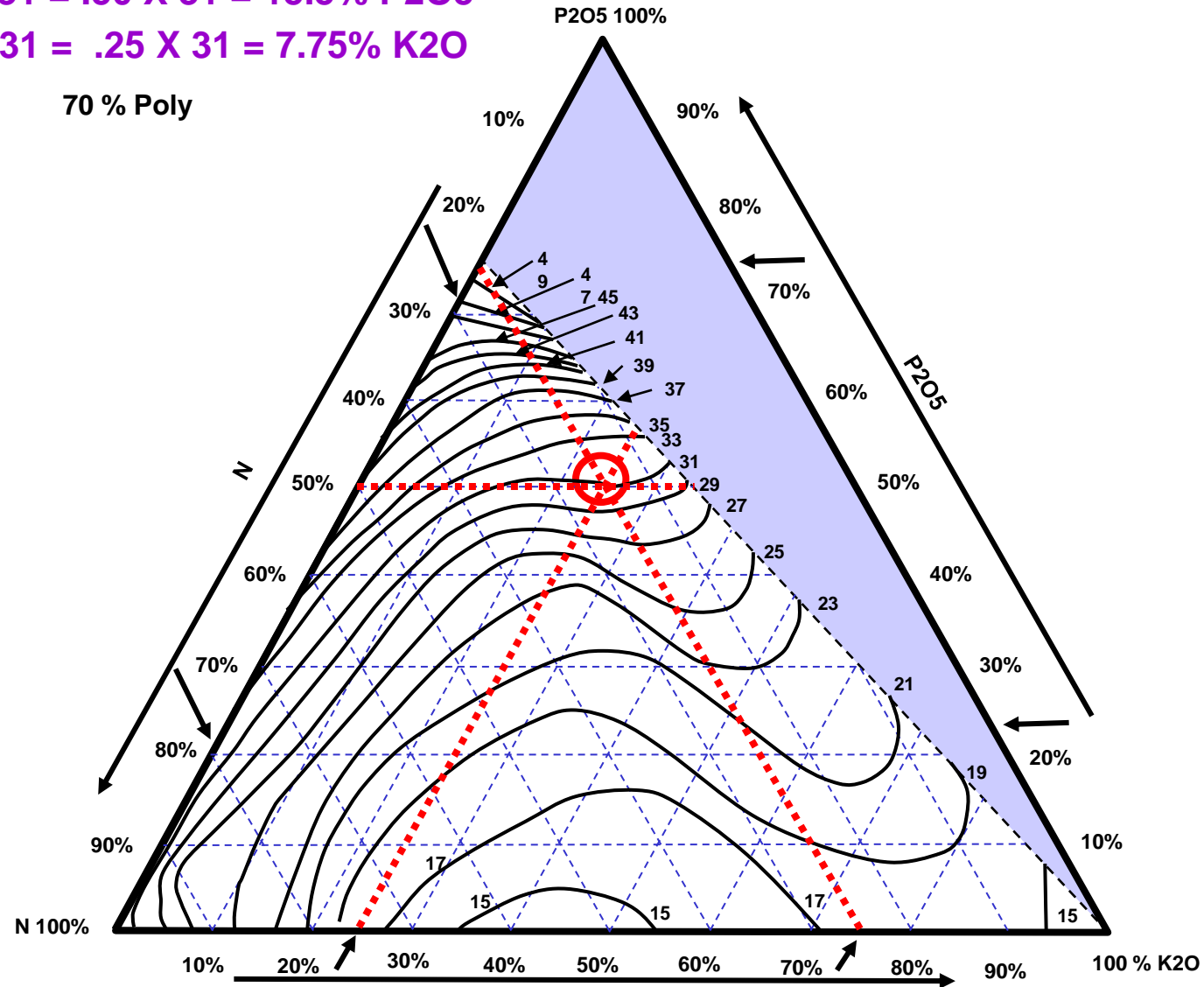
- Amount of polyphosphate initially present
- Amount of impurities in super-acid
- Other 'impurities' added to product
 - ✓ Zinc
 - ✓ Previous product sludge
- Temperature of stored product
- Length of time product stored

APP Storage and Housekeeping Suggestions

- Do not store longer than necessary
- Avoid storage in summer months
- Completely empty and clean tanks regularly
- Know the quality of remaining product before adding additional product to tanks
- Do not contaminate with products/impurities that may affect storage properties
- Never mingle any calcium or magnesium with product or mix plant
- Make sure that farmers and dealers lines, tanks and equipment are completely cleaned after use

- Final maximum grade May Contain 31 Total Plant Food Units.

- N = 25% of 31 = $.25 \times 31 = 7.75\%$ N
- P_2O_5 = 50% of 31 = $.50 \times 31 = 15.5\%$ P_2O_5
- K_2O = 25% of 31 = $.25 \times 31 = 7.75\%$ K_2O



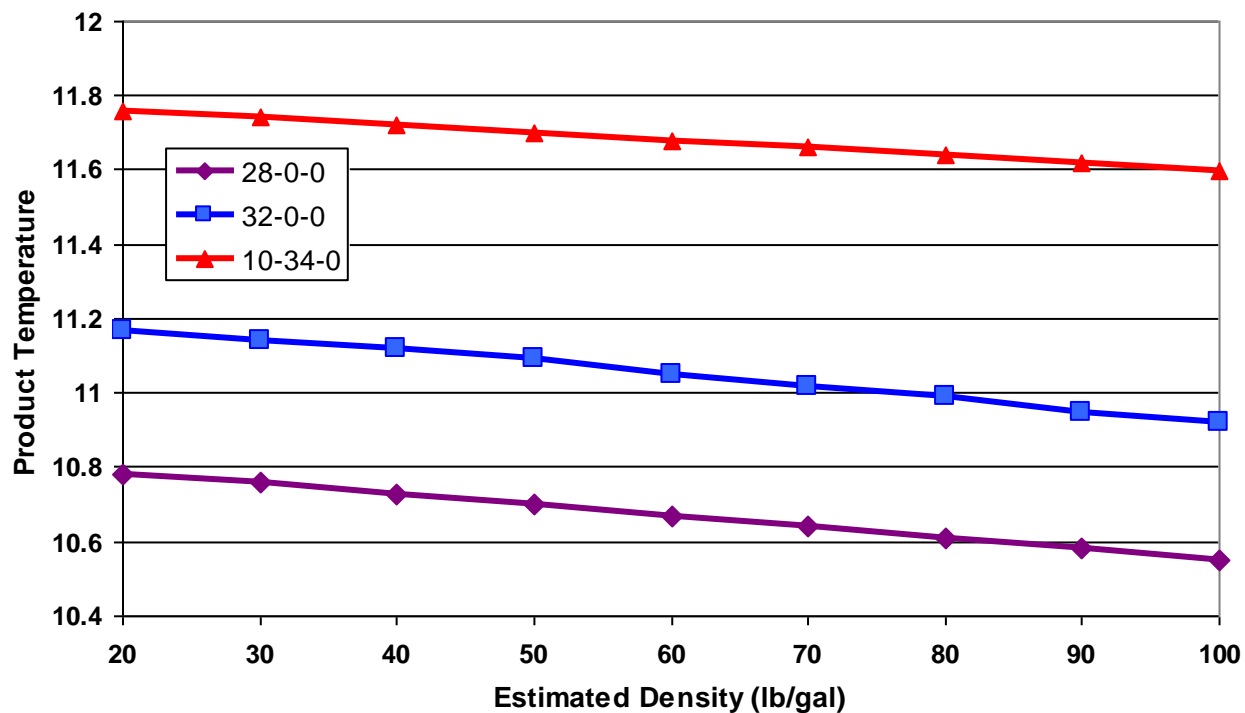
Solution Grades For UAN Solution (28-32% N), Potassium Chloride (0-0-62) and Ammonium Polyphosphate (10-34-0, 11-37-0) System

N:P ₂ O ₅ :K ₂ O Ratio	Solution Analysis (32 F Saltout)	N:P ₂ O ₅ :K ₂ O Ratio	Solution Analysis (32 F Saltout)
1-0-1	7-0-7	3-0-1	13.5-0-4.5
1-0-2	5.5-0-11	3-0-2	8.4-0-5.6
1-0-3	4.3-0-12.9	3-0-4	6.6-0-8.8
1-1-0	19.5-19.5-0	3-1-0	24.6-8.2-0
1-1-1	7.3-7.3-7.3	3-1-1	12.6-4.2-4.2
1-1-2	5.3-5.3-10.6	3-1-2	8.7-2.9-5.8
1-1-3	4.2-4.2-12.6	3-1-3	6.9-2.3-6.9
1-1-4	3.5-3.5-14	3-1-4	6-2-8
1-1-5	2.9-2.9-14.5		
1-2-0	15.3-30.6-0	3-2-0	21.6-14.4-0
1-2-1	7.7-15.4-7.7	3-2-1	12-8-4
1-2-2	5.1-10.2-10.2	3-2-2	8.7-5.8-5.8
1-2-3	3.8-7.6-11.4	3-2-3	6.9-4.6-6.9
1-2-4	3.2-6.4-12.8	3-2-4	6.3-4.2-8.4
1-2-5	2.7-5.4-13.5	3-2-5	5.7-3.8-9.5
1-2-6	2.3-4.6-13.8		
1-3-0	12.5-37.5-0	3-3-1	11.7-11.7-3.9
1-3-1	7.4-22.2-7.4	3-3-2	8.4-8.4-5.6
1-3-2	4.7-14.1-9.4	3-3-4	6.3-6.3-8.4
1-3-3	3.5-10.5-10.5	3-3-5	5.7-5.7-9.5
1-3-4	2.9-8.7-11.6		
1-3-5	2.5-7.5-12.5	3-4-1	11.4-15.2-3.8
1-3-6	2.2-6.6-13.2	3-4-2	9-12-6

Typical Characteristics Of Several Fluid Fertilizer Products

Source	Analysis	Density	Salt-Out	General Comments
	<i>N-P₂O₅-K₂O</i>	<i>Lbs/gal</i>	<i>° F</i>	
UAN	28-0-0	10.67	0	~ 30% water
UAN	32-0-0	11.06	28 - 32	~ 20% water
ATS	12-0-0-26S	11.04	<20	Fluid S Source of Choice
APP	10-34-0	11.65	<10	11-37-0 grade also

Temperature Effect On Fluid Fertilizers Density



Estimated Density Of Fluid Products

Product Temperature	28-0-0	32-0-0	10-34-0
	- - - lb / gal - - -		
20	10.78	11.17	11.76
30	10.76	11.14	11.74
40	10.73	11.12	11.72
50	10.7	11.09	11.7
60	10.67	11.05	11.68
70	10.64	11.02	11.66
80	10.61	10.99	11.64
90	10.58	10.95	11.62
100	10.55	10.92	11.6

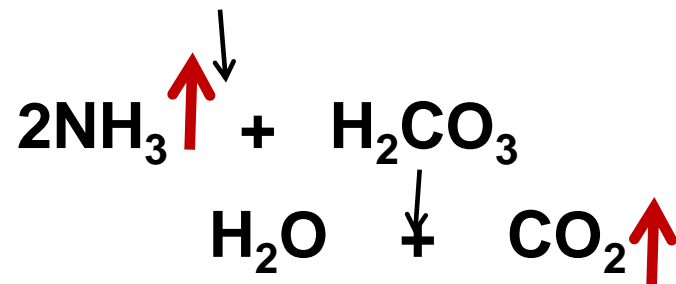
Salt-out – Crystals form as solution cools; goes back in solution as product is warmed. Example; UAN Solution.

Precipitate formation – Non-crystalline mass forms which has much lower solubility than original ingredients in solution.

Example; Improperly stored fluid phosphates

Heat generator – Generates chemical heat when producing solutions. Examples; ammonia + phosphoric acid; dilution of sulfuric acid)

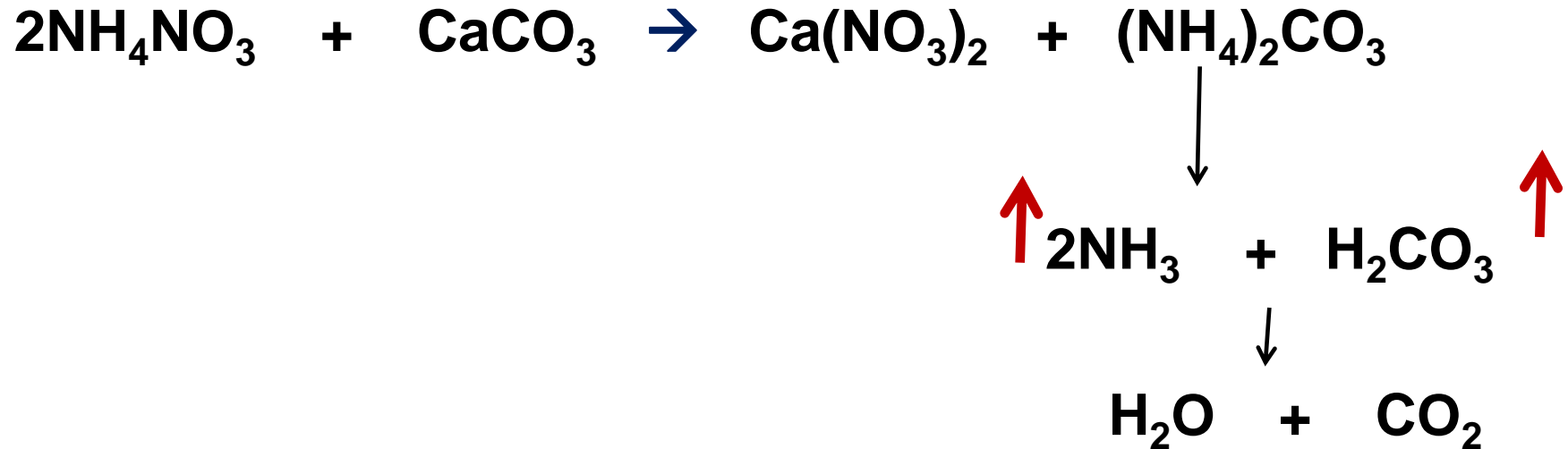
Fume generator – Generates fumes which can be safety hazard. Example; UAN solution + Potassium carbonate → ammonia fumes.



UAN in Irrigation Water ?

UAN in Irrigation Water ?

Urea N Volatilization ?





Thank You And Enjoy The Roundup

Dale F. Leikam

Fluid Fertilizer Foundation

www.FluidFertilizer.com

Dale.Leikam@sbcglobal.net

785-776-0273

785-770-0009