

ADVOCATE PROFILE



Jones Potato Farm Inc. is a 2,800-acre potato, green bean, citrus and cattle farm.

Grower: Alan Jones (left)
Location: Parrish, Florida
Retail Facility: Crop Production Services
Crop Advisor: Dennis Coleman (right)
Retailer Location: Parrish, Florida

What Alan says about the 4Rs: “4R program ideals have been at the core of my fertility program for years. Adapting my fertilizer programs based on crop needs, weather and raw material prices has enabled Jones Potato Farm to maximize production while keeping costs in check.”

What Dennis says about the 4Rs: “So many times we get stuck in a rut and repeat the same programs year after year. The 4R Program spurs us into really thinking about fertility programs and to reevaluate how we are managing them. As a result, growers may just end up becoming a little more profitable and an even better steward of the land.”

CROPPING SYSTEM OBJECTIVES:

Be a conscientious custodian of the land while producing high quality and high-yielding crops and to harvest those crops in a safe and clean environment.

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BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED ON THE FARM:

- Use multiple nutrient sources in blends rather than relying on single forms of nutrients. For example, applying both muriate of potash and potassium sulfate because one takes longer to release than the other.
- Fine-tune application rates through split applications to reduce leaching and to provide nutrients in time with the crop's needs
- Use a starter application at planting followed by a dry sidedress application after emergence, and then a liquid fertilizer later in the season
- Place fertilizer where the plant can use it best by applying starter fertilizer in the bed, the dry sidedress over the bed, and dribbling the liquid into the shoulders of the bed
- Plant a cover crop after every crop to prevent erosion and increase organic matter for the next crop
- Evaluate compiled soil data across all fields to determine trends in nutrient management over time

FORMS OF NUTRIENTS APPLIED:

All farms are soil sampled in a 10-acre grid. Results are reviewed and amendments are applied accordingly to achieve optimum productivity. Fertilizer blends are adjusted annually based upon crop needs and raw material cost. The primary sources of raw materials are UAN, ammonium sulfate, triple superphosphate, muriate of potash, diammonium phosphate (DAP), potassium sulfate, gypsum, dolomite and humates.

NUTRIENT USE EFFICIENCY: Unlike other growing areas that enjoy 14-16 hour growing days, winter production in Florida deals with only 8-10 hours of sunlight. Short days do not allow crops to recuperate from adverse conditions. With this being the case, it is imperative to maintain optimum fertility. Florida has sandy soils with low Cation Exchange Capacities, coupling this with intense irrigation practices makes for a complex crop management system.

Average Yield for Each Crop:

Potato 230 cwt/acre

Citrus 400 boxes/acre

Snap beans 250 bushels/acre

Economic Measure of Savings: It is difficult to establish a definitive figure of savings because my historical fertility plan is the 4R program. Today's marketplace is tough. Customers demand much more than a product that just meets specifications. Expectations of environmental stewardship and sustainable practices go hand in hand with competitive pricing. By implementing the 4Rs and various other best management practices, Jones Potato Farm, Inc. has answered the call.