



# Holmes Agro-Nomic Newsletter

March • 2026

## The role of Potassium in Plants: Are your crops oh-K?

Potassium plays a unique and essential role in crop development, functioning not as a structural component of plant tissues but as a highly active ion that supports water regulation, stomatal function, ATP synthesis, and overall cellular balance. Often called the “quality nutrient,” potassium is vital for enhancing seed size, vigor, and uniformity; while also strengthening crops against water stress, disease pressure, and insect feeding. Compared to nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P), plants take up more potassium early in the season, and crops like corn silage and wheat (when straw is removed) have very high nutrient removal rates. Potassium (K) exists in three forms in Ontario soils: (1) unavailable, in mineral form, (2) plant available, but trapped between layers of clay, and (3), plant available in solution or held via CEC. Because potassium is mobile within the plant, deficiencies typically appear first on lower leaves as scorched margins, weak roots, or stalks, premature leaf drop, or increased winterkill in perennials. Strategic management is key because while environmental risks from overapplication are low, economic losses can occur on low-CEC soils prone to leaching, and excessive potassium can interfere with magnesium uptake or cause seedling toxicity when placed too close to the seed. Thoughtful placement, such as banded applications, and attention to base saturation ratios helps ensure potassium remains available when crops need it most.

## Salford Air boom

We at Holmes Agro always want to maximize our efficiency in the field so, as we update our application fleet, we are moving up from 70ft spread to 90ft spread widths with the new Salford AB320 series airflow boxes mounted on both JD and AGCO Chassis. With the switch from 70ft to 90ft, our spreading efficiency will increase by 22% per pass!



Since they come standard with twin bin configuration, we can safely apply two different blends at two different rates at the same time, reducing the passes required on VR and standard rate applications. Another noticeable feature with the Salford air box is the boom itself. While working in the field, the four active boom height sensors will help maintain a level boom across the wide variation of terrain that we experience. With a level boom, it will ensure 100% coverage while applying and getting the fertilizer where it needs to be. Keep an eye out for these machines this coming spring!

## Making the Most of Water for Spray Applications

Water quantity and quality both play a critical role in efficacy of pesticide applications. While certain classes of chemistry like glyphosate perform well at lower water volumes like 10 gpa, most do operate better at higher water volumes especially chemistries like glufosinate (Liberty) and diquat (Reglone) at 15-20 gpa. Without adequate coverage the efficacy of the product will suffer leaving you disappointed with the results. Fungicides and insecticides are generally broken into two categories, contact based or systemic types. Contact based products don't move very well once they hit their target and thus require those higher water volumes to ensure coverage of the plants particularly as they get larger and harder to kill (weeds) or harder to protect from disease. Systemic products can be either locally systemic where they move within the same leaf (ie top to bottom), or fully systemic where they can travel from one leaf through the stem/petiole to another. Obviously the more systemic a product is the potentially less water volume you might need although be sure to still take into account the size of your target. What often doesn't get talked about as much as it should is water quality. pH is often a good indicator of water quality with ideal pH values of spray water being slightly acidic (6.0-6.5) which mimics natural rainwater. Hard water (pH of 7.5 or higher) often affects the efficacy of the product you are spraying but also tends to “bead” on the target and not spread properly ensuring adequate coverage. If water testing, also monitor bicarbonate levels in your water which act to tie up efficacy as well and strip essential nutrients away from the crop. Growers with irrigation often target bicarbonate levels of less than 150 ppm which should be the same for spray water as well. Simple practices like proper water volumes and good water quality can go a long way in achieving strong performance and maximizing product value. [www.sprayers.com](http://www.sprayers.com) is a great resource for growers and industry people to review information on all things sprayer related. Talk to your Holmes rep about getting the best bang for your buck on product efficacy in 2026.

Herbicide Group (mode of action)	Example of Active Ingredients	Water Volume (US gpa)	Water Volume (L/ha)	Spray Quality
1	clodinafop, pinoxaden, clethodim, fenoxaprop	7 – 10	70 – 100	Medium – Coarse
2	thifensulfuron, tribenuron, imazethapyr, imazamox, thiencarbazone-methyl	6 – 10	60 – 100	Coarse – Very coarse
4	2,4-D, MCPA, dicamba, clopyralid, fluroxypyr	7 – 10	60 – 100	Ultra-Coarse
5	atrazine, metribuzin	8 – 10	80 – 100	Medium – Coarse
6	bromoxynil	7 – 10	70 – 100	Medium – Coarse
9	glyphosate	3 – 5	30 – 50	Coarse
10	glufosinate	10 – 12	100 – 120	Medium – Coarse
14	carfentrazone, saflufenacil	8 – 10	80 – 100	Medium – Coarse
15	metolachlor, pyroxasulfone	10	100	Coarse – Very coarse
22	diquat	10 – 15	100 – 150	Medium – Coarse
27	pyrasulfotole, tembotrione	7 – 10	70 – 100	Medium – Coarse
*For tank mixes, always default to the highest tank mix water volume				

\*\*\*\*\* Check the website [holmesagro.com](http://holmesagro.com) for general information and upcoming important dates \*\*\*\*\*

## Grower Pesticide Renewal

In person dates are set in for Grower Pesticide Safety Courses, please have a look at your existing cards and make plans for renewal. The course is also offered online with multiple dates currently listed on the website. Bookings can be made online at [www.opep.ca](http://www.opep.ca) or by calling 1-800-652-8573. Payments must be made ahead of time as course instructors no longer accept payment. Books are available at our offices for pick up anytime. Please make sure you have this in place before the upcoming season!

**Refresh and Renew:** Thursday March 5th – St. Patrick's Parish Hall, Stayner  
**Full Course:** Friday March 27th– Holmes Agro, Orangeville

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## Seed Deliveries

The first day of spring is just over a month away! Our office team will be calling to schedule delivery times for your seed orders this month. Please let us know if you can take an early delivery.

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## #WatchUsGrow – We're Hiring

Holmes Agro is hiring seasonal AZ/DZ Drivers for the growing season. We're looking to grow our team of dedicated and reliable individuals who provide excellent customer service and represent Holmes Agro. In this role, you'll not only drive but also serve as an ambassador for Holmes Agro, ensuring great service for our valued customers. The position offers flexibility, making it ideal for those combining it with other seasonal work. Explore exciting career opportunities at [www.holmesagro.com/careers](http://www.holmesagro.com/careers) or submit your resume to [WatchUsGrow@holmesagro.com](mailto:WatchUsGrow@holmesagro.com).

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## Custom Application Etiquette

In preparation for the upcoming spring, we would like to remind growers of the impact they have on the efficiency of the Holmes Agro custom application equipment. Operators and drivers work long hours during the peak season to ensure the product is being applied as accurately and efficiently as possible. Even with advancements in machinery and application technology, completing a few key tasks before equipment arrives can significantly reduce downtime and improve job accuracy.

1. **Ensure fields are easily accessible** - Sprayers and Terragators require 15 ft of height and 14 ft of width to enter safely. Make sure overhanging branches are trimmed and obstacles are removed.
2. **Open all gates ahead of time** - This prevents operators from waiting for keys or codes, speeding up field entry.
3. **Update changed acre counts** - Allows operators to be prepared with sufficient product to complete the field and reduces downtime waiting on additional product.
4. **Communication is key** - Understanding the hybrid & variety placement for custom spraying applications allows spray applications to be bundled based on herbicide trait packages.

The Holmes Agro team continues to pride ourselves on providing positive customer experiences for all of our growers! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at (519) 941-0450 or talk to your Holmes Agro agronomist.

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## Enhancing your Spring Starter

Holmes Agro strives to offer our customers products customized to best suit your needs for your operation. To enhance your starter blend we have a few products:

**YaraVita PROCOTE BMZ** - a liquid micronutrient coating that evenly covers granular fertilizers, ensuring every granule delivers a uniform boron, manganese and zinc supply. This coating improves handling, enhances spreading performance, and provides plants across the entire field with consistent micronutrient availability for better uptake and performance.

**PowerCoat** - a biological fertilizer enhancer made with proven strains of Plant Growth Promoting Rhizobacteria (PGPR). These Bacillus strains release organic acids and enzymes that help dissolve dry fertilizer into plant-available forms, improving nutrient availability, uptake, and overall utilization. Ultimately boosting plant growth, vigor, and return on fertilizer investment.

As we head into another busy spring season, our goal is to support your operation with the products, services, and expertise that help you start strong. If you have questions about choosing or customizing a starter blend, our team is here to help you find the right fit for your fields.

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## 2027 Calendar Pictures

It's never too early to send in pictures for next year's 2027 Holmes Agro calendar. We want to see your winter and spring scenes! Get your pictures submitted to be featured in next year's calendar. Every year we are proud to be able to provide a calendar of grower pictures, all thanks to your great submissions. Send your calendar picture submissions to [calendar@holmesagro.com](mailto:calendar@holmesagro.com).

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\*\*\*\*\* [Please email media@holmesagro.com to sign up for our e-newsletter](mailto:media@holmesagro.com) \*\*\*\*\*

Jeff    Bill    James    Taylor    Greg    Liz    Scott    Marc    Lydia    Brooklyn    Claire