



Nitrogen Source and Rate to Minimize Damage Caused by Free Ammonia

ISAAC MADSEN AND WILLIAM PAN
DEPT. OF CROP AND SOIL SCIENCES, WSU

When planning N fertilizer application, the source of the fertilizer should be considered in order to optimize nutrient availability as well as to avoid damaging seedling root systems. Canola root systems have been shown to be sensitive to urea banded below the seeds. The two primary considerations when choosing a safe source of N fertilizer are the salt toxicity and ammonia/ammonium toxicity. The conversion of ammonium to free ammonia is primarily controlled by the initial pH of the fertilizer reaction. A high pH will lead to more free ammonia than ammonium. Free ammonia has been shown to be extremely toxic to plant cells. Therefore fertilizers with a high pH would be expected to release more free ammonia and consequently have a higher level of toxicity. Urea, Anhydrous Ammonia, and Aqua Ammonia all have pH greater than 8 in solution. Fertilizers with a pH lower than 8 are Ammonium Sulfate, Mono-Ammonium Phosphate, and Di-Ammonium Phosphate. In this study we compared the application of ammonium sulfate (AS) (pH = 5-6, partial salt index = 3.52), urea (pH = 8.5-9.5, partial salt index = 1.61), and urea ammonium nitrate (UAN) (pH = 7, partial salt index = 2.22). In order to establish safe planting guidelines a root assay was conducted in a Palouse Silt Loam soil with N fertilizer sources banded 2" below the seed row at increasing rates. The gradients of the rates were used to model tap root survival and estimate the LD50s for tap root survival. The LD50 is the rate at which would expect 50% of the tap roots to die. The unconventional unit of mg/cm was used to make the applications and dose response because the actual amount of N which the root is exposed to depends heavily on the row spacing and the application rate (lbs N/A). In table 1 you can see a conversion between the LD50 (mg/cm) and field rates (lbs N/A) at different row spacings for all three sources. From this table you can see that UAN is a much safer source of N to apply than UAN and that closer row spacing will also decrease the potential for root death.

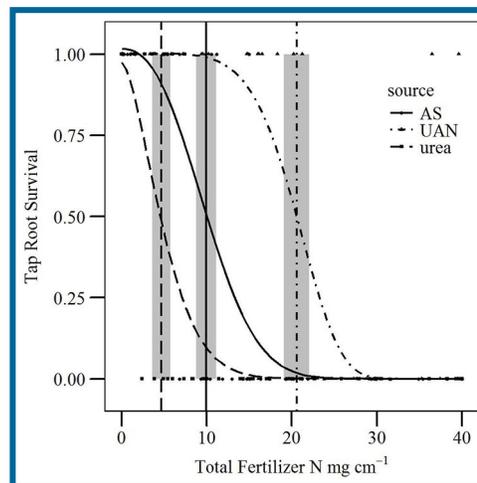


Figure 1. Modeled dose response and estimated LD50s for Ammonium Sulfate (AS), Urea Ammonium Nitrate (UAN), and Urea. LD50s can be converted to lbs N/A for each source by using Table 1.

Take away points: It was determined that canola roots are more sensitive to urea than ammonium sulfate or UAN. This is likely because urea would produce higher levels of free ammonia following dissolution.

Table 1. LD50s of canola tap root survival exposed urea, AS, and UAN.

Source	LD50 (mg N/cm)	Row Spacing (in)		
		6	12	18
		Rate (lbs N/A)		
urea	4.7	27	14	9
AS	9.7	57	28	19
UAN	20.6	120	60	40

Use of Transgenic and Agronomic Approaches to Improve Stand Establishment and Survival in Winter Canola



SHAHBAZ AHMED AND MICHAEL M. NEFF
DEPT. OF CROP AND SOIL SCIENCES, WSU

Expanding oilseed cultivation in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) is important not only for edible oil production for human consumption but also as a rotation crop with winter wheat. Both winter and spring canola are being grown in the PNW, but winter canola has more yield potential compared to spring canola in this region. Winter survival of canola depends on many factors including the planting date, seeding depth, seeding rate, stand establishment, plant stature, and cultivar genetics. In a recently