Welcome to Ground Work

Taters Tell the Tale

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A western potato grower who raises both organic and non-organic potatoes had an interesting experience at the end of this summer. As the crops neared the finish line, both the organic potatoes and the non-organic potatoes looked great. Both had plenty of green vines to finish bulking out tubers, so the grower "let up" and planned to coast to the finish line.

Letting up was a big mistake. Army worms and psyllids roared into the conventional fields and began defoliating the crop. The grower was forced to get quickly back to those conventional fields with insecticide.

Amazingly, though, the worms and psyllids did not touch his organic potatoes! (That organic crop was grown using compost, Drammatic fish, liquid nitrogen, Mycotrol, Pyganic, micronutrients, and AgriEnergy's **SP-1™**.)

Most of us have observed or heard that healthy crops have fewer insect and disease problems than do crops with poor mineral nutrition. But rarely do we come across an example of that principle as stark as this one. All of us would like to duplicate this potato grower's results every season. Fortunately there are principles, products, and practices, that when employed, will increase the frequency of healthy soils and healthy, pest-resistant crops.

Think of this process as being like building a model airplane or a model car. Hundreds of pieces must go together just right to achieve a desired result. Sometimes pieces need to be trimmed or modified to fit just right. Unfortunately a farming system's pieces are not all in a box nor are they clearly listed in an instruction manual. The grower, often with the help of vendors, consultants and friends, must determine what all should go in the box, then how all the pieces fit together and in what order.

Our potato grower, by virtue of having successfully grown conventional potatoes for years, already knew what needed to go into his organic potato production "box": minerals, wise tillage practices, timing, plant protection, etc. What he now knows is that organic and/or biological farming is not a snap-together model kit. It is a kit that requires glue. Living glue. By incorporating compost (could have been manure or green manure) with a strong biostimulant he created a model that stuck together to the end of the season and kept the bugs and disease out.