

THE BETTER CROP PROGRAM DEVELOPED FOR FARMERS AND GROWERS IN CHINA

Part 06 | How to Increase Quality and Yield for Potatoes

INTRODUCTION

The RLF Nutrition Education Centre has written a series of articles to not only help educate the staff Teams who go into the field, but in terms that clearly explain the principles of crop nutrition and fertiliser management for farmers and growers all across China. We are replicating some of these programs in this Series of articles because the message is such an important one.

Crop production is complex and comprehensive, and this article looks specifically at the issue of **achieving higher quality and greater yield for potato crops**. Whilst prepared with the potato growers of Inner Mongolia in mind, the lessons are nonetheless universal.

Inner Mongolia is located in the north of China. It has high altitude, cold climate, big temperature differences between day and night and longer sunlight hours each day than the rest of the country. This is conducive for growing potatoes.

With the increase in policy support for the potato industry, the local potato planting industry has developed rapidly. It has become one of the leading agricultural industries to promote regional economic development and increased farmer income.

In Inner Mongolia land concentration is high, and large-scale planting is common. However, the low yield and instability of potato have also become the main factors restricting the industry's development and growth.

The RLF Better Potato Program was therefore prepared with the aim of increasing productivity and improving quality. It has become a trusted crop nutrition management program for local farmers.



The RLF program not only provides the best choice for crop nutrition products, but also helps local farmers understand crop management and why they need to fertilise much better.

Scientifically based crop management effectively reduces the impact of adverse factors on crop yield – which is a very important measure in improving the potato crop's yield.

IMPORTANT CROP MANAGEMENT FACTORS FOR POTATO

1. The Prevention and Control of Diseases

The RLF Technical Team firstly, help farmers choose virus-free varieties supplemented by the selection of disease-resistant types. Further, they educate about the strict quarantine system needed for seed tubers, combined with an appreciation for the importance of implementing crop rotation and fertiliser management strategies.

2. Water and Fertiliser Management

The key factors are balanced nutrient input and rational irrigation, especially in the potato block expansion period because of increased above ground water transpiration. Because the underground part of the tuber growth is rapid, it has continual water needs. This means the soil should be kept moist.

3. During the Seedling and Early Flowering Stages

Drip irrigate with 3-5kg/mu **Plant Milk High-N** + a foliar spray with 800-1000 times dilution of **Broadacre Plus**. The foliar nutrients will promote luxuriant potato branches and foliage with dark green leaves. This is conducive for photosynthesis and nutrient accumulation, and effectively prevents crop deficiency.

4. During the Late Flowering and Tuber Bearing Stages

Drip irrigate with 3-5kg/mu **Plant Milk High-K**, applied 2-3 times. Potato is a potassium loving crop. Plant Milk's application with high potassium nutrient in the period of tuber growth and development can make the plant grow robust, have strong disease resistance, improve the proportion of tall and medium tubers, and enhance storage tolerance.

EXAMPLES OF GREAT POTATO GROWTH

Wulanchabu, referred to as 'China's Potato Capital' is one of the leading potato production areas in Inner Mongolia.

RLF's **Better Potato Program** has been widely used in the region for some years, and the potatoes produced by those growers who rely on the RLF program are uniform in size, regular in shape, and have good commercial properties.

Here are two stories of success.

Location	Agui Village, Siziwang Banner, Wulanchabu
Grower	Mr Qiao Xiu Wen
Potato Variety	Potato (226)





Mr Qiao Xiu Wen in his field



Mr Qiao visited the field with the RLF Tech Team, and he was delighted to see the potatoes dug up at the site. He said; "*This year the field was treated with no pesticides, only RLF's **Broadacre Plus** and **Plant Milks High N and High K**. Now you see, some plots around the rice seedlings are yellow, here in my plot the leaves are still oily green, there is no disease, the effect is surprising*".

In discussions with the Team, Mr Qiao said that he did not take much effort to manage this land this year, nor did he use agrochemicals. The total input, including planting potatoes, fertiliser and facility costs was only about 620 yuan per mu. But his output reached nearly 5000 yuan, and the quality was good. This is an excellent result.

Location	Luhong Road, Siziwang Banner
Grower	Ms Jia Liangui
Potato Variety	Potato (Large white flower)

When Ms Jia first contacted the RLF Technical Team for advice about products, she conducted experiments on two plots of her own. The experiments showed her that RLF's program had a noticeable fertiliser effect, and that the potatoes were more significant in size and of better quality.

Since that time Jia has been a big fan of the RLF Better Potato Program, and she has been using it now for six or seven years.

MORE IMAGES OF POTATO CROPS AND THEIR QUALITY





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