

feedback

Seasonal update from Neutrog Australia : Autumn/99

10 years growth



Neutrog's new pelletising system

Neutrog has come a long way since we formed the company in 1988.

In the first year we turned over \$70,000, somewhat less than our expenses. This year we are on track to turnover \$3.5 million.

There are many reasons why the company has achieved this outstanding growth over the past 10 years. The people involved are dedicated and work hard. Our manufacturing plant is state of the art and we believe our marketing in all aspects is well targeted.

However the real heroes are the products. We believe they are second to none. Rather than us talk about them, over the pages we have recorded some of our more high profile users and their testimonials on product effectiveness. People and organisations as professional as these do not use a product for any other reason than results and cost effectiveness.

The South African Connection

In 1994 South Africa's largest chicken producer Rainbow Chicken embarked on a world tour visiting countries to seek synergistic opportunities that would add value to the Poultry Industry.

On returning to South Africa the report submitted to the Rainbow board recommended it to sub-license Neutrog Australia's operation in South Africa.

Unfortunately shortly afterwards a severe economic downturn in Rainbow Chicken's operations caused all capital expansion programs to be put on hold.

Following their visit Mr Hugh Van Rooyen, Rainbow's Agribusiness Manager remained in touch with Neutrog. In late 1996 Mr Van Rooyen was offered the opportunity of a separation package from Rainbow and immediately contacted Neutrog.

In June 1997 an agreement to sub-license Neutrog's operation was struck. In October 1997 a factory was leased outside Durban at Cato Ridge. In February 1998 the factory began producing **Bounce Back**. Primarily a poultry manure pellet. It trades as Neutrog Africa.

The market is enormous

South Africa is among the world's largest horticultural producers in such areas as deciduous fruit, citrus, maize and viticulture. In and around Capetown there are some 120,000 hectares of vines. More than the entirety of Australia.

The Cato Ridge factory has already exported some 10 containers (200 tonnes) to Saudi Arabia and 5 containers (100 tonnes) to Asia. A further 100 containers (2000 tonnes) have recently been ordered by the Saudi Arabians.

Sales within South Africa have been excellent with many of the large maize, vine, potato, vegetable and tobacco growers reporting excellent results.

Whilst the product is primarily used as a supplement to chemical fertilisers it was recently used on a 500 acre organic tobacco crop (a contradiction in itself!) with yield doubling. At some \$12 per pound, a substantial return.

The product is now registered by the British Organic Food Federation.

Neutrog Africa is now looking at expanding its product range to include the very successful Australian product **Rapid Raiser**. Further factories are already being negotiated. It is likely the next factory will be located in Cape Town, the main wine producing area.



Angus Irwin (left) and Brian Smith of Neutrog with Hugh Van Rooyen (centre) of Neutrog Africa

this issue : why the experts choose Neutrog : new names
you need to know : Malcolm Campbell fertiliser facts

In the last four years Neutrog has instigated sponsorship arrangements with: *The Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, The Melbourne Royal Botanic Gardens and the Oakbank Racecourse.*

We consider they are significant because they differ from a standard sponsorship arrangement which is dependant on financial support. All of these organisations were using our product long before we entered into a sponsorship arrangement.

A major aspect of these sponsorships is the use of our range of fertilisers.

The Botanic Gardens of Adelaide and Melbourne are regarded as world class and a must visit for many tourists. It follows that the gardens staff would only use products that would enhance the presentation and their proud reputation.

Oakbank Racecourse is considered to be the finest picnic race track in Australia. They have been using our **Upsurge** for two years and say that the track has never been healthier. Of course it has a similar effect on home lawns. With judicious application a lawn can be kept lush and green all year round.

Melbourne Royal Botanic Gardens



The Melbourne Royal Botanic Gardens began using Neutrog fertilisers in 1996.

Criteria guiding the selection of garden fertilisers included:

- **Organic basis:** Slow release, Soil improvement through addition of organic matter
- **NPK rating:** medium amounts of N & K; (low P to suit the requirements of *Proteaceae*, *Ericaceae* and *Caprifoliaceae*). It was also essential to minimise the Phosphorous leachate to the Ornamental Lake System
- **Cost effective**
- **Packaging:** ease of manual handling

The Neutrog products were chosen because of their overall suitability.

In 1997, some further changes were made to the formulation upon request, to suit the requirements of plants within the living collection of the Gardens.

Additionally the weight of the bags was reduced to further improve manual handling.

Up to three tonnes was purchased twice a year to fertilise the living collections and general landscape.

Due to the generous sponsorship provided by Neutrog, the RBG will be able to further improve the landscape quality and overall health of the living collections and we look forward to further developing the partnership in the future.

Peter Symes
Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne

Ross Roses



Andrew Ross

Ross Roses is based in the beautiful Southern Vales region of SA.

Established 96 years ago they sell at retail 50,000 roses each year. They are one of the largest retail rose growers in Australia.

"We started using Neutrog **Rapid Raiser** 4-5 years ago. Prior to that we used Complete D and a mineral mix.

We made the change because of good reports from other growers. We were also aware that **The Botanic Gardens of Adelaide** were using **Rapid Raiser** with good results.

It is hard to quantify the difference Neutrog has made. However I do believe there has been a noticeable improvement in the size and quantity of our plants.

The other factor is the gradual enrichment of soil quality. This becomes more noticeable with each year.

We have given **Rapid Raiser** a thorough trial and we now intend to sell the range through our own retail operation. We would not consider doing that unless we had carried out that testing and developed a strong belief in the effectiveness of **Rapid Raiser**."

Andrew Ross, Ross Roses

Daryl Marston



Daryl Marston. Joint proprietor of Reedy Creek Vineyard, McLaren Vale SA and consultant to 20 other vineyards in the Southern Vales premium wine region of South Australia.

At Reedy Creek we have 80 acres under vines with immediate plans to establish another 145 acres.

Prior to using Neutrog **Bounce Back**, we used fowl litter. We found the litter inconsistent in its makeup and not easy to spread.

The most damning aspect was the introduction via the litter, of noxious

weeds such as deadly nightshade and other thorny species.

Bounce Back on the other hand, carries no weed seeds or other unwanted vegetative material. We understand this is due to the composting and steaming process used during manufacture.

We found with **Bounce Back** we eliminated weeds under the vines. We now spread right over, not just under the vines, and that includes new plantings. The rate of application is 1,000kg per hectare which makes the cost comparable to alternative products. **Bounce Back** is a slow controlled release product and therefore does not lose nitrogen into the air.

We have also noted a marked increase in worm activity when Bounce Back is applied. We have not tested for worm increase, but certainly it is obvious that they thrive on the pellets. The most ringing endorsement I can give to Neutrog **Bounce Back** is that not only do we use them at Reedy Creek, but I have also introduced the product to the other 20 vineyards I consult to as well.

Daryl Marston, Reedy Creek Vineyard

Victoria State Rose Garden

The Victoria State Rose Garden began some 15 years ago as part of the promotion of Victoria as the 'Garden State', and was opened to the public in 1986. It is regarded as the premier rose garden of its type in Australia and is proudly managed by Parks Victoria.

There are over 4000 rose bushes laid out to a Tudor-rose design. There is a recent addition of a heritage rose border featuring roses of historical significance and a worldwide selection of species roses.



Tudor Rose Garden, Victoria

As one of those responsible for the maintenance of the garden, Len Broadstock was concerned that the fertilising with blood and bone, sulphate of potash, and stable straw and manure as a mulch was unbalanced and inadequate. Bruce **Brundrett of Brundrett roses recommended "Rapid Raiser"** and applied it to a new bed which he has generously donated. Len said "The growth and vigour of this bed in comparison to other new beds was obvious and impressive".

A fertilising program using **Rapid Raiser** was drawn up for the current season. Len reports that although it is early days there is already a noticeable improvement on previous years at the same stage.

*Len Broadstock
Victoria State Rose Garden*

A Perspective from Sam Hristofis



Sam Hristofis

Sam is best known to the SA dining public as the congenial host at Sam's Restaurant on the Norwood Parade.

From a horticultural background, Sam has been in business for 18 years.

Sam bought his property Samrea Estate on Yundi Road, willunga in 1944 and now has 40 acres under olives, and plans to have a total of 120 acres.

At Samrea they use Neutrog **Rapid Raiser** in the nursery and in the grove.

He originally used Osmocote after a brief bad experience with chicken manure. "It burns really badly.

I guarantee if you put chicken manure around your new plantings in a few days they will be dead." He began using Neutrog **Rapid Raiser** after his uncle said "It beats all the others."

"When we are planting out we mix some sand and 250g of Rapid Raiser and put it in the hole. We then apply another 250g on top. In this way we cover 80 trees with one bag."

According to Sam there is a noticeable difference with the quality, quantity and colour of the new growth.

He says there are two crucial factors in establishing and maintaining a quality olive grove. Use plenty of high quality water throughout the life of the trees, not just when establishing and continue to use Neutrog **Rapid Raiser**. Production increase over dry grown olive groves is about double.

Samrea Estate also offers a service on contract establishment of olive groves. Cost is approximately \$3,500-\$4,000 per acre fully established. "We supply everything including cuttings, posts, irrigation system - the lot.

"One thing I will certainly be offering clients is Neutrog **Rapid Raiser**."

for best results fertilise 4 to 5 times a year

Perfect time for pellets

Malcolm Campbell
Talkback Gardening presenter to
ABC Radio 891 and SA presenter to
national television's "Gardening
Australia" program.

One of the great myths of the garden is that organic pellets for your garden are a summer additive, when plants are in the active state of growth. However by the time you see your roses breaking with growth their roots have already been on the move for a few weeks.

Given the poor water quality in Adelaide and Mildura's reticulated water, one of the best reasons to add organic pellets to your garden would be to act as an organic buffer to your plants reducing the effects of salt toxicity. The brown leaf burn plants get in late summer can be largely reduced by enough organic material in your soil to act as a buffer for nutrient exchange.

Adding organic material in summer is fine, because it breaks down rapidly and is quickly available to your plants but the slow growth in spring is equally important and too many gardeners only add the organic material when it is already too late to have much effect on that season's flowers.

If you seek to incorporate your pellets into the soil of your garden, do it with a light scarifying action rather than dig it deeply. That way the nutrient leaches to the root zone and not past it. Also if you add superphosphate for root development, sprinkle on the surface for root vegetables and only add small quantities at planting time for conifers.

Malcolm Campbell

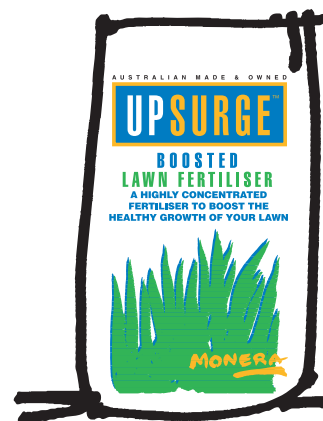
Hot Tip

Our new product "Sudden Impact" is currently being trialled at Morphettville Racecourse, with results looking very encouraging. It looks like being a winner.

Whatsitsname?

Our successful Neutrog Organic Fertiliser is now known as **Bounce Back** and Neutrog Organic Lawn has become **Blade Runner**.

Our reasons for the name changes were to avoid confusion and to give the products identities that more appropriately described their use and benefits.



A new product to Jump Start your plants

Jump Start Planting Tablets are the perfect solution for concentrated, direct fertilising of new plantings.

Easy and safe to use tablets are placed just below root depth.

1 tablet for seedlings and 4-5 tablets for larger trees. Due to the formula of natural ingredients, they are safe to use on all plants, will not burn and you cannot over fertilise with them.



Available in handy tubes of 5 and 22, buckets of 1000 and bags of 2,500.

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