

Ohio News Watch

Gypsoil makes inroads

Key Points

- Gypsoil from BRM is the leading supplier of gypsum for agricultural use.
- The company draws product from scrubbers of coal-fired utility plants.
- Currently, most of the gypsum scrubbed by utilities goes to landfills.

By TIM WHITE

LIKE Ohio Certified Crop Adviser Joe Nester and Ohio State University researcher Warren Dick, Indiana agronomist Ron Chamberlain saw the advantages of gypsum for healthier, more productive soils many years ago. Chamberlain reported that soil became “softer and more friable, yet resisted compaction, crusting and ponding.”

In 2002, Chamberlain and his wife, Cheryl, started a business and sought permits to sell gypsum for agricultural purposes in Indiana. They established the brand Gypsoil in 2006 and began working with utilities as suppliers of the product. In 2009, Beneficial Reuse Management in Chicago acquired Gypsoil. Chamberlain continues as lead agronomist.

Robert Spoerri is CEO of BRM and head of the Gypsoil division. He says the company has outlets in 21 states and reports that sales of the product have been doubling every year for the last four years.

“We are thinking the trend is going to



COMMON SIGHT: Piles like this one in Illinois may be seen more frequently in Ohio as gypsum is gaining recognition for its soil-conditioning properties as well as potential to help reduce nutrient runoff.

continue,” he says. “Ohio is a hot spot right now. In Ohio, soils are particularly responsive to gypsum soil amendments, and additional positive data on water quality have gained a lot of attention for the use of gypsum as a tool for nutrient runoff.”

Regulatory hurdles

Gypsoil is the leading supplier of the product because it has gone through the necessary process to have the material approved by state environmental and agriculture departments, Spoerri says.

“We have the necessary footprint to market on a broad scale,” he says. “It has taken a number of years, but now we can



EASY SPREAD: Gypsum is the same product used in wallboard, and manufacturing standards also create a product that meets ag's specified and consistent standards.

What's next in weed control technology?

Pending regulatory approvals.
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