An interview with

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Firstly, what is and what is not a water-soluble fertilizer (WSF) in your company’s definition?

Fondin’s definition of the WSF is consistent with China national standards of macronutrients WSF (NY 1107-2010), such as N+P2O5+K2O ≥50%, TE between 0.2 percent to three percent, etc. But we take stricter standard for the insoluble content rate – the national standard is ≤five percent, and our standard is ≤0.1 percent. We conduct the same standard for our products sold in China and other countries. We don’t take the raw material fertilizers for fertigation or foliar spray into account, like industrial grade MKP, MAP.

Secondly, some general industry statistics for WSFs: What do you estimate as the approximate size (by volume) of the water-soluble market in China?

It is really hard to get the exact statistics about the WSF market in China, but we think that the product of WSF is estimated to be about two million tonnes in the China market, mainly the macronutrient WSF powder products. WSF with amino acid, or seaweed extract or humic acid not included in this figure.

How does Fondin break down the market by consumption, i.e. what percentage is greenhouse, horticulture, orchard, fields?

Out-of-season greenhouse vegetables, especially in Shangdong province, is the first and the most important market of Fondin WSF products. At one time, the greenhouse vegetable growers in Shangdong province usually used the conventional compound fertilizer; but after they tried our products, they found our WSF worked more effective, with more yield and better quality. After greenhouse vegetables, we entered the fruit tree and horticulture markets as well. In recent years, the row crop market is becoming another focus of ours. Nowadays, the greenhouse vegetable market makes up a relatively significant share of 55 percent, fruit tree about 30 percent, horticulture 10 percent and row crops five percent.
What provinces in China are the largest consumers of WSF?

Shangdong province is the largest consumer of WSF in China, especially for out-of-season greenhouse vegetables, followed by Yunnan and Guangdong provinces. Years ago, numerous fruit trees in Guangdong province were felled because of diseases. Hainan province, as the main producer of tropical fruits, is also an important consumer of WSF.

Please tell us about Fondin – how many production factories do you have? What WSF products do you make at them?

We have only one factory, located in Lin-gang Special Area of the Shanghai Pilot Free Trade Zone of Shanghai city. The factory has two workshops: one is for manufacturing the powder products with an annual production capacity of 100,000 tonnes; and the other is for liquid fertilizers with an annual production capacity of 50,000 tonnes. We just launched the new powder product manufacturing system – this system operates at about 40 percent of the full capacity for the production of powder WSF. Delivery of the raw materials into the preparation tank, automatic pre-processing, accurate formulating, intelligent mixing and packaging and stacking, anti-counterfeiting system, precise environmental control – all these production processes integrate perfectly in the new system. The liquid products workshop is for the production of liquid WSF, like the products of mineral nutrients, seaweed extracts, amino acid or humic acid.

To read this interview in full, see the JUNE/JULY 2020 issue of New Ag International, published at the beginning of June.