



Gypsum improves soil structure by increasing water infiltration and reducing ponding, expanding the root zone, and decreasing erosion and nutrient loss. Non-pelleted gypsum products are very fine and can be different than other bulk materials that growers have experience applying. It can require some learning on how to handle, store, and apply gypsum to your fields, but once you learn a few basic steps, gypsum is not difficult to use. The tips below will help you successfully apply gypsum to your fields and avoid common problems that you may encounter along the way.

#### **How to Apply**

Gypsum can be applied with a fertilizer, lime, or litter spreader. For best results, a spreader equipped with a stainless-steel box with slick, steep sides, twin spinners and a wide delivery chain or belt should be used. Ideally, sides should slope at a 45-degree angle and the exposed portion of the belt or chain should measure at least 20 inches in width. In absence of a stainless-steel box, graphite film coating or plastic liners can be used to assure that the gypsum powder slides easily onto the belt. It is recommended that non-essential interior gates, partitions, and braces be removed.

Because particle size is small, gypsum can bridge if equipment isn't set properly. Raise the rear gate no more than 3 to 5 inches. Adjust spinners for the best pattern. Calibrate the spreader by loading the spreader 1/3 full before first spreading. Check the application rate, flow and pattern and adjust belts and spinners as needed. Increase load size as you are comfortable with the pattern.

#### **Loading**

When loading gypsum, feather on to the bed rather than dumping it all in the center. Try to avoid piling against the rear gate.

#### **Storing**

Ideally, gypsum should be stored under cover to avoid moisture if rainfall occurs before application. However, it can also be stored in the open on a turn-row or open lot, if dry conditions are expected.

If gypsum is stored in an open area, it is best to place it on bare, scraped ground at least 200 feet from a stream or drainage ditch. As will all farming materials, keep away from livestock, pets, and children.

#### **When to Apply**

Gypsum can be applied at any time that is appropriate for field conditions, avoiding physical damage to the field or crops with application equipment. Ideal application periods include before planting and after summer or fall harvest.