Drip tape application

Drip irrigation is the predominant method to efficiently deliver water and/or soluble fertilizer to plant rows. Other irrigation methods may not be as effective but can be used if related equipment is already available.

Drip tape is typically applied with plastic mulch and buried an inch or two to keep it in place. A few operators may place tape between soil and plastic but the tape doesn't stay in place, snaking side-to-side with expansion and contraction between day and night temperatures.

On raised beds, mounting the tape applicator on the bed shaper is recommended to smooth bed top as tape is applied. If forming beds in two passes, apply tape on the second pass. Also cultivate stale beds with tape lines in the soil.

Without plastic mulch, tape can be placed deeper - 3 to 5 inches - to stay away from cultivators. Be diligent with weed control to simplify tape removal.

Opinions vary regarding the use of one or two tape lines per bed. The lateral movement of moisture for one tape line to water two rows of transplants shouldn't be under-valued. For each row to have it's own tape line may have purpose for research, but not a given for general crop production. Two tape lines would be needed for three or four crop rows for even water distribution across all rows. Direct seeding likely requires a drip line for each row, which is easy to do for cucurbits but otherwise rarely needed.

2" lay-flat header

Common 5/8" garden hoses are sufficient to connect headers

Though not essential, drip tape can be re-used with proper cleaning and care. Remove, store on spools and re-apply OR leave tape in the soil with permanent beds for more than one season. Tillage and/or raised beds can be maintained with tape in the ground.

Smaller drip irrigation grids can often be connected to a household water system. Divide the grid into plots or sections to best manage water use.

Fertilizer application

We offer mounting kits for allied fertilizer applicator products to band granule materials as beds are formed. Electric drive is recommended. Variations in bulky organic fertilizer is a challenge but a basic solution include a bulk hopper with spinning spreader wheel with a simple shield around it for material to drop for a banding effect. The merit of combining this with the bed shaper can depend on the material.