TechTALK

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This month's edition of Netafim TechTALK focuses on Winterizing a Drip Irrigation System.

Winterizing a drip irrigation system is necessary in climates where water may freeze and expand, possibly damaging plastic and metal system components. This means that water from components and pipelines should be emptied, especially at lower ends of the field where water typically accumulates. Even in climates that do not freeze, it is still necessary to perform seasonal maintenance to ensure that your drip system lasts a long time.

- Repair minor leaks or breaks that were neglected during the year, inspect wire splices, broken components or brackets, paint exposed pipe and clear weeds and debris away from valve stations and flush valves.
- Inject chemicals to remove scale and organic matter from the system. Organic material may grow during long periods of inactivity or in sections of the system that do not normally have turbulent flow.
- Flush debris from mainlines, manifolds, and driplines. Flushing is effective only when the proper water velocity is achieved. For mainlines and manifolds your target velocity should be 5 ft/sec. For driplines the target should be at least 1 ft/sec.
- If plagued with rodents, a good time to inject Protec-T into the irrigation zones and driplines is after flushing, typically at rates of 1 gallon/acre (see product label for instructions and recommended application rates).
- Employ any other rodent management practice(s) to keep them away from your idle system.
- Drain the system by emptying filters (including the differential pressure switch and command filter), valve bonnets, solenoids, pilots, chemical injection equipment and pipelines. Build access points into the lower ends of the system where water typically accumulates so that it can be pumped out if necessary. Polyethylene driplines are not subject to damage from freezing since drippers provide drainage points and polyethylene is somewhat flexible.

Because all systems are different, we encourage you (the dealer) to develop your own checklist for you or your customers to maintain the drip system - accounting for the various components and practices relevant to you. In addition to the maintenance and operations guides for your specific equipment (i.e. valves, filters, etc.), Netafim has several resources on our website that can be used to help in this process (or click on the links below) and as always you can consult with your Netafim representative.

For additional questions, contact your Netafim representative or visit our website at www.netafimusa.com. Thank you.