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Sector Coverage

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Growth Minerals Review

US Potash Prices Harden in a Softer World

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Growth Minerals Sector

US Potash Prices Harden in a Softer World

- + **The global potash market is being labeled as a "softening" trend, while U.S. potash prices are indeed hardening**
- + **Sage Potash has more than doubled the total potash resources at Sage Plain**
- + **Altius Minerals wants to enhance its exposure to new potash royalties in the junior potash mining sector**
- + **Canadian Phosphate Ltd was included in the Canada Investment Summit Pitchbook and has made key announcements about the Wapiti Phosphate Project in BC**
- × **Volatility in the global fertilizer market from the beginning of this decade to today remains the lynchpin of food security trends around the world**
- × **The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) referenced fertilizers as the lynchpin to virtually everything affecting the world today**
- × **The lack of access to natural gas supplies and fertilizers from the Persian Gulf region are the top concern in this current fertilizer market**
- × **The Strait of Hormuz remains a fertilizer lifeline due to the ongoing export restriction raising concerns for China's urea and phosphate exports**
- × **Western Potash's Milestone potash project in Saskatchewan had been put into a court-supervised insolvency proceeding**

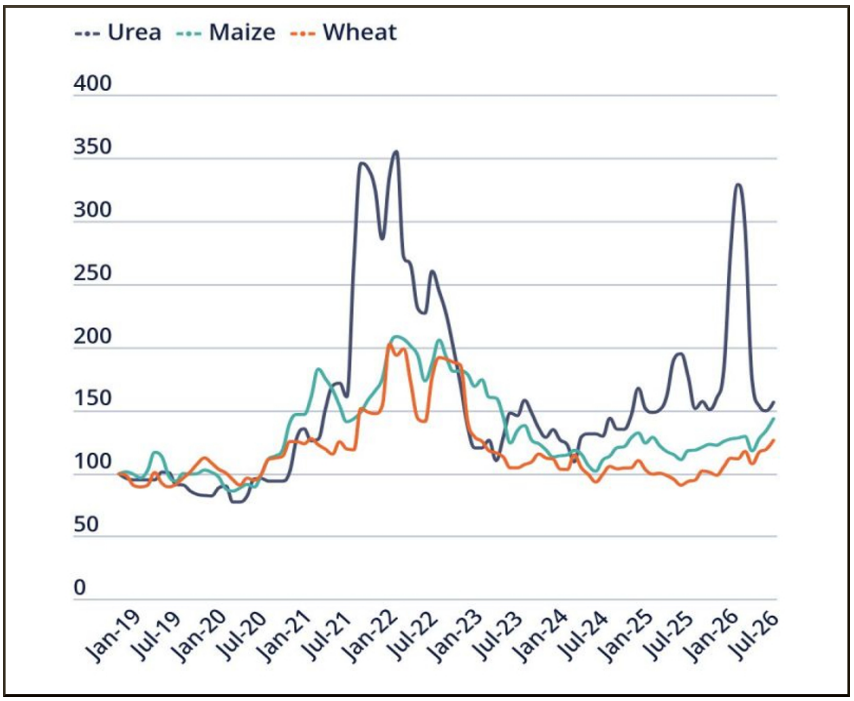
Military escalation and trade uncertainty are the names of the game for fertilizers

The global fertilizer market has constantly been in disruption since the beginning of this decade. It was only two years before the global pandemic that the merger between Agrium and Potash Corp of Saskatchewan (PCS) formed Nutrien Ltd, the world's largest fertilizer producer and exporter, in 2018. During the pandemic in 2020, fertilizer production plants from The Mosaic Company and CF Industries were shut down across the globe. Fertilizer producers in the U.S., Morocco, Russia and Belarus had their own issues with domestic food security and fertilizer production. All of this laid

the foundation for upward price movements across the nitrogen, phosphate and potash (NPK) fertilizer markets after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. It has been one hell of ride in volatility for the global fertilizer market from the beginning of this decade to today.

Don't just take our word for it. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) referenced fertilizers as the lynchpin to not only agricultural production and food security, but to virtually everything affecting the world today. Aylin Sekizkök, Director General for International Economic Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, noted in her opening speech at 2026 OECD Global Forum on Agriculture: "Food security has become not merely an agricultural issue. It has become economic security, geopolitical security, and human security."

Jared Greenville, Australia's First Assistant Secretary, Trade and International Division in the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, led the forum with the segway into what fertilizers mean for the entire world today: "The theme for today is agricultural resilience and food security in an interconnected world. Agriculture is currently operating through overlapping pressures. We have climate and production shocks, geopolitical conflict, disruption to trade and transport and volatility in energy and input markets. Fertilizer gives us a practical lens in which to examine those pressures."



Source: OECD at the 2026 OECD Global Forum on Agriculture

The pressures Greenville referred to are that agricultural production is on one side of the spectrum for food security policies. On the other side of the spectrum, fertilizers also create volatility in

energy markets, trade policy, shipping routes and the availability of feedstocks for gas and ammonia for energy security policies.

The lack of access to natural gas supplies and fertilizers from the Persian Gulf region are the top concern in this current fertilizer market. The Black Sea shipping wars targeting fertilizer and grain vessels going to and from Ukraine's port of Odessa have maintained a risk premium that fertilizer producers and traders have dealt with accordingly.

The constant disruption to the fertilizer trade has gone beyond maritime trade chokepoints by focusing on the politics of U.S. tariffs and sanctions. The Trump Administration wants to make deals with the Russian and Belarusian governments to affect the outcome of the Russia-Ukraine war, and First Lady Melania Trump's ceasefire deal, while exclusive to one area of Ukraine, is evidence of the ongoing negotiations between the U.S. and Russian governments about the war in Ukraine.

Nevertheless, the wars in the Middle East and the ongoing escalation of maritime attacks in the Black Sea will create more volatility in global fertilizer markets going into the rest of this decade.

Any fertilizer trade normalization and price stability depends on U.S.-Iran War

The war between the United States and Iran heated up on 22 October when seven oil tankers caught fire or were damaged in the Strait of Hormuz. The next day, on 23 October, a multilateral forum was held in Istanbul focusing on Iran's Strait of Hormuz blockade and Persian Gulf regional security.

The diplomats at the meeting shared concerns about a variety of security risks, particularly regarding food because the Persian Gulf region is a leading supplier of oil, natural gas, and fertilizers. Turkish representatives hosting the meeting put food and fertiliser security at the top of the agenda for the newly formed R4+E3: Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan (R4) and the United Kingdom, France, and Germany (E3). Germany Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Johann David Wadephul spoke about global security at the meeting and accused Yemen's Houthis and Iran of blackmailing world trade and continuing to stranglehold supplies of energy and fertilizer.

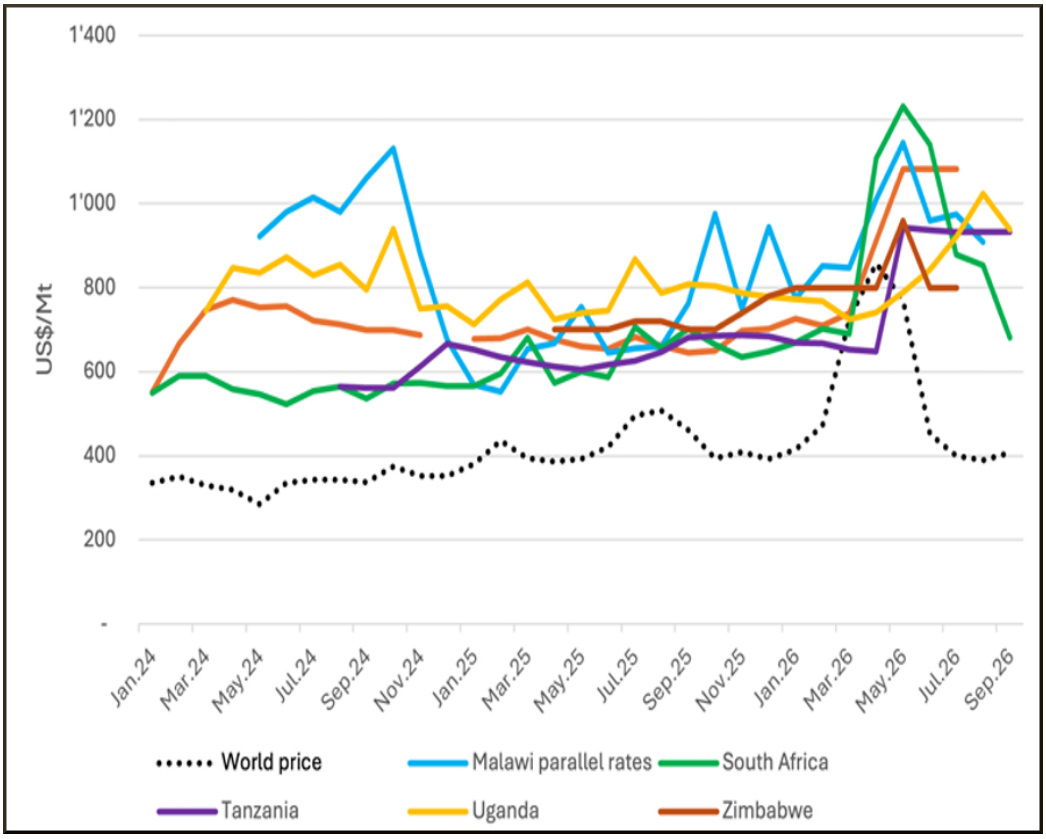
The fertilizer market has been risk-off ever since the U.S.-Iran war began, and urea fertilizer prices reflected such sentiment when the prices dropped dramatically on the news of a tenuous MoU between the U.S. and Iran signed in June—all the while knowing that a cease-fire wouldn't likely hold for the rest of the year.

The other critical topic for the market is the India fertilizer tender. From India's perspective, the Strait of Hormuz is a fertilizer lifeline due to the ongoing export restriction concerns for China's urea and phosphate exports. But the most important element of all this Strait of Hormuz is the disaster wrought by the lack of crude oil and natural gas supplies from the Persian Gulf. The latter is what will contribute to food security in the short term, while lack of access to fertilizers impedes

agriculture production in the long term.

Either way, importing countries will need to cautiously wait for price stability, as India has done with its latest fertilizer tender by pulling out from offers for the total amount after reaching a price floor of USD $350 per ton for some of the supplies. This pricing strategy appears to be the new norm in the India fertilizer tender and should be considered as a risk-off move by the Indian government to ensure price stability. Other importing countries should follow India's lead by coming up with new fertilizer supply risk assessments and pricing strategies.

The data below shows that urea fertilizer prices in Sub-Saharan Africa remain significantly higher than the average world price:



Source: AMO/World Bank, https://www.competition.org.za/africanmarketobservatory

U.S. potash market prices are hardening, not softening

One rationale for new fertilizer investments revolves around the U.S. potash market dilemma. This is happening in a current market where all the data and analytics firms are downplaying potash prices for "softening". Their conclusions about prices are based on two reasons: Brazil isn't buying potash and China has already locked in the MOP contract price at approximately USD $355 per ton. The latter problem doesn't consider that China has surpassed historical buying trends of MOP in

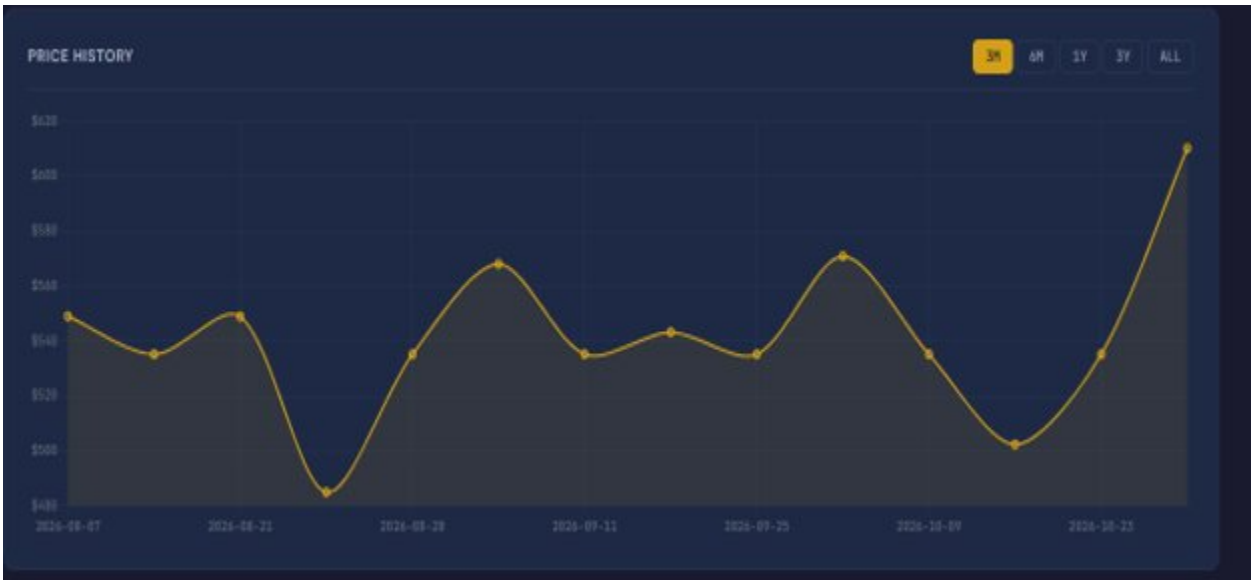
2026. All the potash supplies that went to China will influence global inventories and production strategies for potash mining. With a current global market average of around USD $385 per ton of MOP, according to the data and analytics firms, the potash market is being labeled as a “softening” trend.

On the contrary, U.S. potash market prices are going up!

In October, MOP fertilizer prices passed the USD $500 per ton threshold in U.S. retail markets for the second time this year. This is occurring while the rest of the global market contemplates what to do about potash in connection with higher nitrogen and phosphate fertilizer prices going into the 2026/2027 crop season.

Global potash prices are softening, that’s what the fertilizer community wants to believe, but clearly potash fertilizer prices are hardening in the U.S. market.

The price chart below shows that the average retail price for U.S. MOP hit a new 3-month high:



Source: FertilizerPrice.Com,

https://fertilizerprice.com/prices/potash-mop?period=3Y

That’s why we believe this is the right time to be a junior potash company in the U.S. market.

An Update on the MRE of Sage Potash (TSX-V: SAGE) at Sage Plain in Utah

Sage Potash (TSX-V: SAGE) reported an updated MRE based on new and expanded drilling results at the U.S.-based Sage Plain Potash Project in the Paradox Basin of Utah.

The key highlights are:

- Measured Potash Resource of 54.3 million tonnes grading 41.31% KCl.
- Indicated Potash Resource of 171.8 million tonnes grading 41.37% KCl
- Inferred Potash Resource of 545.4million tonnes grading 41.53% KCl

Sage Potash has more than doubled the potash resource at the potash project, boosting the M&I potash resources to a total of 226.1 million metric tons, at much higher grades than previously reported from the company's estimates. Find a snapshot of the full drill results including the updated MRE figures in the graphic below:

Cycle 18 Member	Classification	Area (km^2)	Area with Exclusions (km^2)[8,9]	Thickness (m)	Average KCl Grade (%[11])	In-Place Sylvinite Tonnage (MMT)[1,2,3,4]	Average Carnallite Content (%)	Average Insoluble Content (%)
Upper 18	Measured	3.05	2.29	7.2	40.73	33.9	0.09	0.47
Lower 18	Measured	3.05	2.29	4.3	42.27	20.4	0.01	0.42
	Total Measured[5]					**54.3**		
Upper 18	Indicated	9.64	7.23	7.1	40.88	106.8	0.09	0.48
Lower 18	Indicated	9.64	7.23	4.3	42.17	65.0	0.01	0.42
	Total Indicated[6]					**171.8**		
	Total Measure and Indicated					**226.1**		
Upper 18	Inferred	30.56	22.92	7.1	41.17	336.9	0.09	0.48
Lower 18	Inferred	30.56	22.92	4.4	42.11	208.5	0.01	0.42
	Total Inferred[7,10]					**545.4**		
	Total Resource					**771.5**		

The updated MRE for the Sage Plain project put total potash resources at about 771.5 million metric tons, up from 298.1 million metric tons from the previous estimate. Measured and indicated resources account for 226.1 million metric tons, grading at an average of 41.36 % potassium chloride (KCl). The remaining 545.4 million metric tons are in the inferred resources category.

Sage Potash has declared that it is targeting an initial production of 150,000-300,000 metric tons in the first phase of Sage Plain Potash Project in the Paradox Basin. The company still needs to do permitting work on environmental studies as well as engineering studies for an expanded throughput design that requires a large mine operation (LMO) permit. The latter regulatory outcomes will be the next key steps for the company to attract more investors in the future, since the LMO permit would allow the company to expand on the mineral resources and production timeline.



The company will file an NI 43-101 technical report before the end of 2026. We are NEUTRAL until further clarifications are made on the permitting side.

Altius Minerals (TSX-V: ALS) and its Royalty Agreement with Buffalo Potash TSX:V: BUFF)

Altius Minerals is the largest holder of potash royalties in Saskatchewan, Canada. Through its controlling interest in the Potash Royalty Limited Partnership, Altius earns potash royalty revenues from six long-life producing potash mines operated by two of the world's largest potash producers: Nutrien Ltd and The Mosaic Company.

Now, the tide has turned for Altius Minerals. The royalty company wants to enhance its exposure to new potash royalties in the junior potash mining sector.

Buffalo Potash has set its first production for mid-2027. While we are closely watching whether Buffalo Potash will become the only junior potash producer in Canada to reach a production target in 2027, BUFF's stock price is floundering with the rest of the junior Canadian potash companies at present. Even the news of the Altius Minerals deal did not show positive results for the stock price, which we believe should have been a tailwind for a junior potash mining company that has ambitious production targets in the near term.

Thus, we remain **NEUTRAL** on Buffalo Potash.



Western Potash Meets Destiny with Insolvency

On 1 September 2026, Western Potash announced that the company's Milestone potash project in Saskatchewan had been put into a court-supervised insolvency proceeding. This occurred after the junior Canadian potash developer, a subsidiary of Western Resources, defaulted on more than USD $108.2 million in debt incurred over the life of the development project. Western Potash's senior lender for the Milestone project is Appian Capital Advisory. The Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act was filed on 21 August 2026 in British Columbia's Supreme Court.

The Milestone potash project, located in southeast Saskatchewan, is Western Potash's main asset. It had previously secured over USD $240 million in capital investment from Appian to put the project through its development phases, until construction was suspended in May 2024. Capital investors supported the growth of Western Potash based on the strong fundamentals at Milestone. It was a muriate-of-potash (MOP) asset with annual production potential of 146,000 tons over 40 years. Western Potash also had a standalone potash deal with Archer Daniels Midland (ADM).

The former CEO of Western Potash was Patricio Varas who led the company in its earliest days from 2007 to 2016. He is now the CEO for another Canadian-listed potash developer, Sage Potash. After 2016, Western Potash changed its financing strategy with another CEO, Bill Xue, who led the company through more capital raises during Milestone's pre-construction phase, including a six-year term loan facility of USD $85 million and a 1.5% royalty agreement with Appian.

Today, the news stories about Western Potash have revealed a different kind of headline: a stalled and debt-burdened Western Potash seized in legal proceedings during a potential flashpoint in the US-Canada trade war. All tariff wars aside, it is unfortunate to see one of Saskatchewan's new MOP projects shut down—even after having secured a 100% offtake deal with one of the ABCDs.

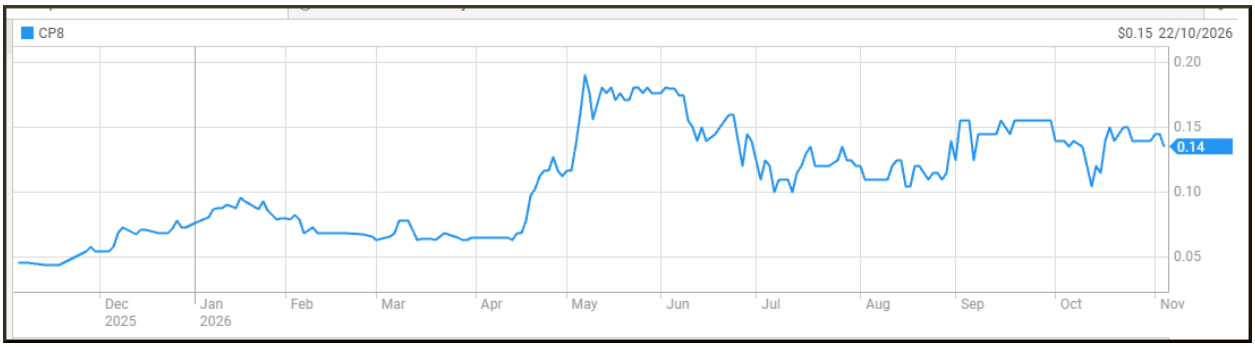
Canadian Phosphate Ltd pitches a sulphur advantage to the distressed phosphate market

Canadian Phosphate Ltd (ASX: CP8) was included in the Canada Investment Summit Pitchbook in September. The Canadian government's current policy objective is to align food security needs with a new phosphate fertilizer procurement strategy. The inclusion of CP8 into pitchbook indicates the broader interest among both government stakeholders and the investor community in Canada to solve problems related to food security in Canada.

The company has its Wapiti Phosphate Project in British Columbia, where it began prospecting the sedimentary phosphate deposit at the end of September to validate historical drill holes and intersections within the strike zone of the phosphate mineralization trend. Phosphate mineral assays are currently awaiting lan results. The phosphate drilling program will be expanded in 2027 with some in-fill drilling to expand on the M&I resource estimate at Wapiti, which is 100%-owned by Canadian Phosphate Ltd.

The company's mine-to-market strategy is to gain access to sulphur in Alberta, Canada. The Wapiti phosphate project's proximity to regional sulphur sources in Western Canada, together with access to highly cost-effective natural gas, hydroelectricity and rail infrastructure, has been pitched as one of the company's comparative advantages in the junior potash developer space.

Canadian Phosphate also has plans to import single superphosphate (SSP) for trials in the near term to evaluate potential offtake agreement and distribution partners across Western Canada. SSP is in high demand in Australia and New Zealand, so this could give the company an advantageous export opportunity for SSP.



Inspiration Strikes – Yet another Phosphate Project in Québec

We learned about a new Quebec phosphate property acquisition this month. Canadian-listed Inspiration Mining Corp. (CSE: ISP) announced an agreement with Beauce Gold Fields Inc. (TSXV:

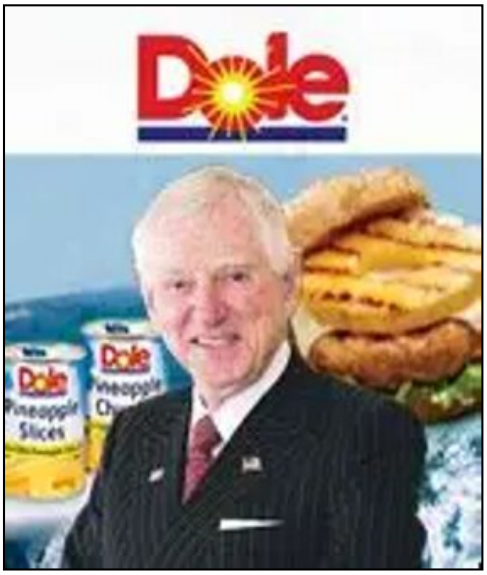
BGF) to acquire a 100% interest in the CH-98 phosphate property in the Lac-Saint-Jean region of Québec, subject to necessary regulatory approvals.

Some General Musings on Juniors

There should be more investments in junior potash explorers and developers, as well as phosphate explorers and developers, which will be necessary to boost potash supply during times of war and geopolitical tensions. In today's world, new potash supplies shouldn't be at risk when food security is being used as political leverage. The world needs more diverse ways to grow food, and even more importantly, the world needs access to fertilizers to grow higher amounts of food.

A personal connection to Global Fertilizer Day and Dole

Every 13 October, Global Fertilizer Day is a celebration of the Haber-Bosch process discovered by Fritz Haber. There are a variety of supplemental educational tools for spreading international awareness about fertilizers and their importance to agriculture provided by the international food and fertilizer community on this day. For this year, we would like to give a spotlight to previous Dole owner and CEO David Murdock who completed the sale of his 45% equity stake in Dole Food Company to Total Produce, a company based in Dublin, Ireland, back in 2018. A standout fact about Murdock is that he was born with dyslexia, and due to his condition, he dropped out of grade school as a kid. Given the author of the Growth Minerals Review has a personal connection to people with dyslexia, this is worth sharing about a once world-renowned billionaire who led multinational food giant Dole from 1985 to 2021 through some dramatic changes in the global agriculture and fertilizer markets.



David Murdock passed away in 2025. Since 2022, the Ireland-based global food company has pushed deeper into Latin America where the company can source its products for both conventional and organic production methods. Dole's strategy to be the largest vegetable and fruit producer in the world means that the company is making necessary changes, such as limiting the company's exposure to commodities exposed to climate and production issues. For example, Dole announced in October that it will sell its coffee business in Hawaii, while deepening the companys' presence in Latin American and Asia-Pacific markets.

The Dole company was originally founded in the 19th century as a leading pineapple producer and seller, but now the company is expanding the total production portfolio into Latin America. The company has banana and pineapple operations across Central America including Costa Rica and Honduras, with more banana production and export centers in Ecuador and Guatemala. Dole owns and operates a port in Ecuador. In recent years, the new management team has expanded the

company footprint in Latin America by diversifying its production profile in Chile, Peru, Brazil and Mexico. Dole also operates its own cold storage facilities and packaging plants in Chile and Argentina.

Some Closing Thoughts on Fertilizers from LME Week

Even while the strategic metals and critical minerals were top of mind at LME Week in London, we were caught off guard when one attendee mentioned potash as one of the most "overhyped metals".

It was more curious that this attendee even said the word potash in a discussion about metals, never mind the fact that potash isn't even a metal. Underground potassium seams are evaporites embedded in rock salts that have formed over millennia. Those underground seams converge with potassium chloride (KCl) and sodium chloride (NaCl) from underground deposits of halite intertwined with carnallite and/or sylvinite. There isn't even a discussion about separating heavy metals such as the case with underground sedimentary phosphate deposits.

There's more to say about Latin America's relevance to global potash and phosphate mining projects from LME Week in London.

Back in 2016, Vale's Taquari-Vassouras was the only potash mine in Brazil, and the only producing potash mine outside of Chile in Latin America. Today, the investment case for potash revolves around a regional investment framework for Brazil, Argentina and Chile, with Bolivia and Peru playing influential roles in nitrogen and phosphate fertilizer projects.

At LME Week, we heard the investment case for this regional fertilizer investment, with Argentina's resource potential and Chile's established mining ecosystem leading the way for an integrated Southern Cone and Andean proposition for both mining and fertilizer projects. The regional opportunity provides the global fertilizer market with high-quality natural resources, new mining production and processing capacities and global supply chain stability, all of which are essential to lowering prices for NPKs on a long-term basis.

A Note on Keras Resources (LSE: KRS):

We have dropped this company from our table, as from this month, as they seem to have gone *off-piste* in search of copper in Namibia.

A note on Kropz (AIM:KRPZ)

The price for Kropz PLC is no longer available after the phosphate producer announced an urgent operational review and restructuring at its Elandsfontein operation in South Africa. This mine produced 150,246 tonnes of phosphate rock in the first five months of the current financial year,

with sales of 149,907 tonnes. The company said that no further phosphate rock production was currently planned at Elandsfontein in South Africa.

The company cited sustained financial pressure linked to the conflict in the Middle East, which has disrupted fertiliser inputs and depressed phosphate rock prices. It explained that r ising fuel, chemical and freight costs had also significantly affected operating costs at the Elandsfontein operation.

GROWTH MINERALS STOCKS

	Security	Ticker	Rating	Currency	Market Cap. mns	Status	Country
Potash	Kore Potash	LSE: KP2	Neutral	GBP	183	Developer	Congo Brazzaville
	Millennial Potash	TSX-V: MLP	LONG	CAD	218	Developer	Gabon
	Brazil Potash	NYSE: GRO	LONG	USD	105	Developer	Brazil
	Nutrien	NTR.to, NYSE: NTR	Neutral	CAD	46,328	Producer	Canada
	Altamin	ASX: AZI	Neutral	ASX	19.93	Explorer	Italy
	Intrepid Potash	NYSE: IPI	Neutral	USD	413.8	Producer	USA
	Ethiopotash B.V.		Neutral	Private		Developer	Ethiopia
	Verde Agritech	NPK.to	Neutral	CAD	37.80	Producer	Brazil
	Sage Potash	SAGE.v	Neutral	CAD	17.11	Developer	USA
	Peak Minerals		Neutral	Private		Developer	USA
	Buffalo Potash	TSX-V: BUFF	Neutral	CAD	75.66	Developer	Canada
	Karnalyte Resources	KRN.to	Neutral	CAD	15.45	Developer	Canada
	K2O Potash		Neutral	Private		Explorer	Poland
	American Critical	CSE: KCLI	Neutral	CAD	12.9	Explorer	USA
	Gensource Potash	TSX-V: GSP	Neutral	CAD	64.577	Developer	Canada
	The Mosaic Company	NYSE: MOS	Neutral	USD	5,857	Producer	Canada/USA
	Emmerson	LSE: EML	Neutral	GBP	13.23	Developer	Morocco
	Acron	MOEX: AKRN	Neutral	RUB	17,605	Producer	Russia

GROWTH MINERALS STOCKS

	Security	Ticker	Rating	Currency	Market Cap. mns	Status	Country
Phosphate	First Phosphate	CSE: PHOS	LONG	CAD	$301.0	Developer	Canada
	Nevada Organic	CSE:NOP	Neutral	CAD	$14.5	Explorer	USA
	Kropz	LSE: KRPZ	n/a	GBP	n/a	Producer	South Africa
	ItaFos	TSX-V: IFOS	Neutral	CAD	$383.7	Developer	Guinea-Bissau/Brazil
	PhosCo	PHO.ax	Neutral	AUD	$73.0	Developer	Tunisia
	Arianne Phosphate	DAN.v	AVOID	CAD	$56.6	Explorer	Canada
	Minbos	MNB.ax	LONG	AUD	$22.1	Developer	Angola
	Inspiration Mining	CSE: ISP	Neutral	CAD	$2.68	Explorer	Canada
	Canadian Phosphate	CP8.ax	Neutral	AUD	$53.3	Developer	BC/Utah/Mexico
	Bifox		Neutral	Private		Developer	Chile/Peru

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