Agrochemical Adjuvants Guide
Air Products provides a diverse portfolio of multifunctional surfactants that can be used in a variety of formulations as dynamic wetting agents, dispersants, emulsifiers and agricultural spray adjuvants.

Our flagship Surfynol® surfactants are especially noted for their ability to lower the dynamic surface tension of aqueous solutions and can improve the degree of surface coverage and penetration of a pesticide while providing defoaming at the same time. Our Dynol™ and EnviroGem® superwetters can improve foliar retention and penetration or adjust the tank mix properties to improve the overall effectiveness and efficacy of the pesticide.

Air Products offers a full range of specialty surfactants for the agrochemical industry. All the surfactants that we offer to this marketplace are solvent-free and allow for safe handling in the field. Table 1 highlights these products and the applications for which they are particularly useful.

Our offering to the agrochemical industry extends beyond the laboratory to the regulatory process. Recent successes following our involvement in the EPA joint task force and cluster support teams demonstrate our commitment and sense of responsibility to the agrochemical industry.

Features

- Nonionic surfactants based on proprietary Gemini surfactant architecture
- APE-free and HAPS-free
- Solvent-free
- pH stable from 4–11
- Broad approval under EPA 40CFR 180

Performance Advantages

- Efficient, effective and multifunctional tools
- Low use levels (0.05 wt % – 0.15 wt %)
- Adjuvants with a wide range of properties, including
  – Nonfoaming/dynamic wetting
  – Low foaming/wetting/emulsification
  – Superwetting
Table 1
Air Products Specialty Surfactants for Agrochemical Industry

<table>
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<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>•</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Carbowet DC01</td>
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<td>•</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>•</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Surfynol CT-221</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>EnviroGem 2010</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Surfynol 465</td>
<td>13–14</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Surfynol 485&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>•</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Grind Ads</td>
<td>EnviroGem 360</td>
<td>3–4</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<sup>a</sup>Available in different forms.

**Wetting-Defoaming**

**Product Description**

While conventional surfactants have a single, hydrophobic group (often referred to as a hydrocarbon tail) connected to a hydrophilic head, our acetylenic diol surfactants have two hydrophilic heads connected to two tails and are referred to as Gemini surfactants. The tremendous advantages seen with these additives lie in their unique chemistry. As a result of their chemical structure, our surfactants are typically more surface active than traditional hydrocarbon surfactants, making them efficient and effective for solving a variety of formulation problems in water-based systems. See Figure 1.

Utilizing our surface science expertise, we have designed a range of wetting agents with varying Hydrophilic Lipophilic Balance (HLB). The lower HLB materials exhibit a unique combination of dynamic wetting properties and defoaming. The higher HLB materials allow for a combination of wetting and emulsification performance.

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**Figure 1**

Structure of Gemini Surfactant

![Structure of Gemini Surfactant](image)

$R_1$ & $R_2$ = hydrophobic group

$R_3$ = hydrophilic group
Use and Applications

These products can be used as wetting agents or built-in adjuvants in agricultural formulations as well as for tank mix applications.

In agrochemical formulations, they can be used in soluble liquid (SL), suspension concentrate (SC), soluble powder (SP), soluble granule (SG) and wettable powders (WP) formulations. They allow efficacy of SL formulations, ease of addition of powders during the manufacture of SC formulations and improved dispersion in WP formulations.

As tank mix adjuvants, they can be added to a spray tank in the field to boost the functionality of pest control products. Listed below are their common functions in tank mix applications.

- Wetting Agents
- Penetrants
- Compatibility Agents

Table 2 shows Air Products’ dynamic wetting agents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Surfynol 104</th>
<th>Surfynol 420</th>
<th>Surfynol 82</th>
<th>Surfynol 440</th>
<th>Surfynol CT-211</th>
<th>Surfynol CT-221</th>
<th>EnviroGem 20101</th>
<th>Surfynol 465</th>
<th>Surfynol 485</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Gravity (@ 21 °C)</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Viscosity@ 20 °C, cps</td>
<td>Solid</td>
<td>Solid</td>
<td>Solid</td>
<td>&lt;200</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>&lt;200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pour Point (ASTM D97), °C</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–48</td>
<td>–10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flash Point (°C)</td>
<td>&gt;100</td>
<td>&gt;110</td>
<td>&gt;118</td>
<td>&gt;110</td>
<td>&gt;101</td>
<td>&gt;110</td>
<td>&gt;94</td>
<td>&gt;98</td>
<td>&gt;110</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLB</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPA Inert Ingredients Listing</td>
<td>40 CFR 180.910, 180.920, 180.930</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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</table>

1 All the components of these materials are listed in the Environmental Protection Agency’s regulation 40 CFR 180.910, 180.920 and 180.930. It is exempted from the requirements of tolerance when used in good agricultural practice as an inert ingredient in pesticide formulations applied to growing and harvested crops and to animals with the limitation that the concentration not exceed 2.5% of the pesticide formulation.

2 All the components of these materials are listed in the Environmental Protection Agency’s regulation 40 CFR 180.910, 180.920 and 180.930. It is exempted from the requirements of tolerance when used in good agricultural practice as an inert ingredient in pesticide formulations applied to growing and harvested crops and to animals with no limitation to concentration used in pesticide formulation.

3 All of the components of these materials are not listed in the Environmental Protection Agency’s regulation 40 CFR 180.
**Table 3**
Comparison of Surface Tension and Foamability for Selected Air Products Wetting Agents and Competitive Benchmark Surfactants (0.1% Concentration)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surfinol 104</th>
<th>Surfinol 420</th>
<th>Surfinol 82</th>
<th>Surfinol 440</th>
<th>Surfinol CT-211</th>
<th>Carbowet DC01</th>
<th>Surfinol CT-221</th>
<th>Enviromem 2010</th>
<th>Surfinol 465</th>
<th>Surfinol 485</th>
<th>Octylphenol + 10 EO</th>
<th>Sodium Lauryl Sulfate</th>
<th>Polyether Modified Silicone</th>
<th>Fluoro Surfactant</th>
<th>Dioctyl Sodium Sulfosuccinate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equilibrium Surface Tension</strong>&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt; at 0.1 wt %, (mN/m)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dynamic Surface Tension</strong>&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt; at 0.1 wt %, 6 b/s (mN/m)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Initial Ross-Miles Foam Height</strong>&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt; (cm)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final Ross-Miles Foam Height</strong>&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt; at 5 minutes (cm)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup>Measured using the Wilhelmy plate method at 25 °C.  
<sup>2</sup>Measured using the maximum bubble pressure method at 25 °C.  
<sup>3</sup>ASTM D 1173, 25 °C, 0.1 wt % surfactant in water.

### Performance Benefits

**Dynamic Surface Tension Reduction**

Surface tension reduction through the use of a surfactant allows a liquid solution to wet a low surface energy substrate. Reduction in static (equilibrium) surface tension can give an indication of a surfactant’s performance, but many agrochemical applications never reach equilibrium. Consequently, in systems where surfaces are quickly generated, such as spraying, the surfactants must rapidly migrate to the interface to wet difficult-to-wet foliar substrates. As shown in Table 3, Surfinol surfactants can effectively lower surface tension under conditions of rapid surface formation (increased bubble rate) due to their ability to quickly migrate to newly formed surfaces. Therefore, under dynamic conditions, these products can outperform a wide variety of conventional surfactants such as octylphenol ethoxylates, sodium lauryl sulfate, polyether silicones and fluoro surfactants.

**Unique Combination of Defoaming and Wetting**

Water-based systems have surface tensions that are too high to permit adequate coverage of many low-energy substrates. As a result, surfactants that function as wetting agents are required. However, most surfactants cause foam, and the subsequent use of defoamers can result in sub-optimal performance. The Surfinol series of surfactants can eliminate this problem by providing the necessary coverage with nonfoaming wetting agents such as Surfinol 104, 420, SE, 82, and 440 surfactants, or with low foaming products such as Carbowet DC01; Surfinol CT-211, CT-221, 465 and 485; and Enviromem 2010 surfactants (Table 3).

In glyphosate formulations, Surfinol 104 and Surfinol 420 surfactants are particularly useful since they can provide excellent defoaming while being homogeneously distributed in the formulation; in contrast, typical silicone based defoamers are insoluble and phase separate over time.
Modeling of the spray process has shown that the surface age of the droplets at leaf impact can be as little as 60 mS. A lower surface tension at this very fast time scale is an indicator of how well the droplet will wet and adhere to leaf surfaces; this is expected to translate into improved plant uptake. Figure 2 shows the comparison of dynamic surface tension profiles of selected Air Products wetting agents, Surfynol 104 and Surfynol 420 surfactants, with commercial benchmarks. This demonstrates that Surfynol 104 and Surfynol 420 surfactants can have the fastest dynamic wetting rates, even at 0.05% concentration, as compared to the commercial benchmark surfactants. In the case of alkylaryl polyoxyarylene glycols, the wetting performance is still not comparable, even at higher concentrations of 0.25%.

**Air Products Grind Aids Offering**

There are three stage involved in particle dispersion, 1) Wetting of Agglomerates: this step is critical in aqueous media because of high cohesive energy of water, 2) Reduction to Aggregates or Primary Particles: this is usually achieved by milling/grinding as a way to input energy and 3) Dispersion and Stabilization: once particle size is reduced, pigment particles must remain separated and suspended to prevent flocculation.

Air Products Grind Aids, Surfynol CT 211, Carbowet DC01, Surfynol CT-221 and EnviroGem 2010 can provide dynamic stabilization by enhanced wetting at faster time scales leading to faster milling with low foam. This can translate to ease of addition of powders in the manufacture of SC Formulations as well as improve dispersion in WP and WG/SG formulations.

**Superwetters**

**Product Description**

Superwetters are surfactants with structures that allow them to efficiently adsorb and pack at interfaces, resulting in extremely low equilibrium surface tensions, fast wetting times and low contact angles on low surface energy substrates like foliar surfaces. Dynol 604, Dynol 607 and EnviroGem 360 superwetting surfactants are low-VOC, low-foam, nonionic wetting agents ideal for high performance waterborne agrochemical applications. These wetting agents have the ability to reduce both equilibrium and dynamic surface tension to a degree not found with other surfactants. This excellent balance of properties, generally not possible with fluoro or silicone surfactants, makes them excellent alternatives for difficult-to-wet substrates requiring good flow and leveling under diverse application conditions. Also, compared to many fluoro and silicone surfactants, the use of these Gemini surfactants reduces or eliminates issues such as increased foaminess or water sensitivity, often associated with traditional surfactants. Physical properties of our super-wetters are shown in Table 4.

These surfactants promote substrate wetting of waterborne systems by effectively lowering both the equilibrium (static) and the dynamic surface tension of aqueous systems. This is demonstrated by the very low surface tension values of a 0.1 wt % solution in water.

The values in Table 5 represent greatly improved surface tension reducing capabilities compared to those available in traditional surfactants. In a formulated system, these surfactants will rapidly migrate to the interface, providing excellent coverage over low-energy foliar surfaces. In addition, these surfactants, which have a Gemini structure, will have little or no impact on water sensitivity. These surfactants.

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**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material/Property</th>
<th>Dynol 604&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Dynol 607&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>EnviroGem 360&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Amber Liquid</td>
<td>Amber Liquid</td>
<td>Clear Liquid</td>
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<td>Specific Gravity @ 25 °C</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>~1</td>
<td>1.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flash Point, °C</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>175</td>
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<td>Activity %</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculated HLB (Water dispersibility)</td>
<td>3–4</td>
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<td>EPA Inert Ingredient Listing</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
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</table>

<sup>a</sup>All of the components of these materials are not listed in the Environmental Protection Agency’s regulation 40 CFR 180.
are also ideally suited for very low VOC applications. This combination of performance benefits makes these surfactants a suitable alternative to fluoro and silicone surfactants. However, compared to fluoro or silicone surfactants, these surfactants will typically not impart excessive foamingness, nor are they likely to cause incompatibilities in agrochemical formulations.

As mentioned earlier, the calculated surface age of the droplets at leaf impact can be as little as 60 mS.\(^2\) A lower surface tension at this very fast time scale is an indicator of how well the droplet will wet and adhere to leaf surfaces and is expected to translate into improved plant uptake. Figure 3 shows the comparison of dynamic surface tension profiles of Air Products’ superwetters with commercial benchmarks. Dynol 604, followed by Dynol 607 and EnviroGem 360 surfactants, even at 0.05% concentration, has significantly faster dynamic wetting rates as compared to the commercial benchmark surfactants. In the case of alkylaryl polyoxyarylene glycols, the wetting performance is still typically not comparable, even at higher concentrations of 0.25%.

**Figure 4** depicts the very low contact angles achieved with a 0.1 wt % solution of EnviroGem 360 surfactant compared to a typical conventional surfactant. On a low-energy substrate, the EnviroGem 360 surfactant provides a lower contact angle and superior wetting. The ability of EnviroGem 360 surfactant to provide low contact angles allows formulators to develop formulations that effectively wet out the most difficult-to-wet foliar substrates.
For More Information

If you would like additional information or technical assistance in preparing specific formulations, write or call Air Products at the following locations.

**Air Products and Chemicals, Inc.**
Performance Chemicals Division
7201 Hamilton Boulevard
Allentown, PA 18195-1501 U.S.A.
Tel 800-345-3148
(Outside the U.S. and Canada 610-481-6799)
Fax 610-481-4381
Email cheminfo@airproducts.com

**Latin America**
Air Products and Chemicals, Inc.
Latin American Region
7201 Hamilton Boulevard
Allentown, PA 18195-1501 U.S.A.
Tel 610-481-6907
Fax 610-481-8170

**Air Products Brazil Ltda.**
Av. Francisco Matarazzo, 1400
11º Andar - Cond. Edifício Milano
Água Branca
São Paulo, SP
Brazil
Tel 55 11 38561700
Fax 55 11 38561781

**Europe**
Air Products Chemicals Division Europe
Air Products Nederland B.V.
Kanaalweg 15, P.O. Box 3193
3502 GD Utrecht
Netherlands
Tel 31 30 2857100
Fax 31 30 2857111

**Asia**
Air Products and Chemicals, Inc.
East Wing, Floor 1
Building #88, Lane 887
Zu Chong Zhi Rd.
Zhangjiang High-Tech Park
Shanghai, 201203
China
Tel +86 21 38962000
Fax +86 21 50803333

Air Products Japan, Inc.
21F MUZA Kawasaki Central Tower
1310 Omiya-cho, Saiwai-ku
Kawasaki City, Kanagawa
212-8554
Japan
Tel +81 044 5421550
Fax +86 21 50803333

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