



DATCP Announces Commercial Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program Grant Recipients

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) announced that nine projects are receiving grant funding for the 2025 Commercial Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP). These grants aim to refine and enhance the understanding of new methods that optimize commercial nitrogen applied to agricultural fields, helping to protect vital soil and water resources.

“Thanks to the Governor and legislature’s leadership, the NOPP program staff, and the ongoing work of producers around the state, important research continues to be conducted on the use of nitrogen in agriculture,” said DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski. “The research being carried out through this program is supporting Wisconsin farmers as they develop best practices for applying commercial nitrogen to their fields and helps Wisconsin remain a leader in sustainability.”

The NOPP was designed to encourage agricultural producers to develop innovative approaches to optimize the application of commercial nitrogen for a duration of at least two growing seasons. The selected producers must collaborate with a University of Wisconsin (UW) System institution, which will monitor the grant project on-site and conduct commercial nitrogen optimization field studies.

The grant structure allowed agricultural producers to work together and apply under a single application, with each individual producer eligible to receive a maximum award of up to \$40,000. In addition, the UW System will receive up to 20% of the total amount awarded to producers for monitoring and research assistance. The application period for the program closed on January 17, 2025.

DATCP received 13 funding applications totaling more than \$1.15 million in requests. The grant recipients and their planned projects, totaling \$800,000, are:

Joe Ailts | \$14,441

Explore the impact of seed applied mycorrhizal fungi on corn nitrogen use efficiency.
Number of producers on project: 1

Cranberry Creek Farms/Nicole Hansen | \$40,000

Conduct a nitrogen application timing study in Wisconsin cranberry marshes.
Number of producers on project: 1

Farmers for Tomorrow River Watershed | \$64,357

Complete a field-scale corn nitrogen-rate study on irrigated and non-irrigated loamy sands in Portage County.
Number of producers on project: 3

Jim Hebbe | \$28,726

Evaluate maximum return to nitrogen (MRTN) rates for corn grain after manure application.
Number of producers on project: 1

InDepth Agronomy/Ted Hoffman | \$79,972

Complete corn nitrogen rate validation for eastern Wisconsin soils.

Number of producers on project: 2

Michael Fields Agriculture Institute | \$280,945

Quantify nitrogen credits of legume-dominated cover crop mixtures.

Number of producers on project: 11

Tom Novak | \$131,595

Evaluate MRTN rates (low and medium) vs. high yield environments.

Number of producers on project: 4

Red Cedar Conservation Farmers | \$80,000

Analyze landscape position effect on optimum nitrogen rates.

Number of producers on project: 2

James Stute | \$79,964

Determine if "priming" rye with applied nitrogen will change the optimum nitrogen rate of no-till corn.

Number of producers on project: 2

Additional information on the Commercial Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Grant Program is available on DATCP's website at

<https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/CommercialNitrogenOptimizationPilotGrantProgram.aspx>.

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