COMMERCIAL NITROGEN OPTIMIZATION PILOT PROGRAM

For information: datcpnopp@wisconsin.gov
Website: NOP.wi.gov

GRANT PROGRAM

DATCP offers a maximum award of $40,000 to agricultural producers to conduct 2-year on-farm research projects, working in collaboration with University of Wisconsin System scientists, to enhance understanding of and refine new methods that optimize commercial nitrogen applied to agricultural fields. DATCP and UW work in partnership, with UW receiving additional funds as the data manager of the program. Data collection requirements are set by UW and assistance will be provided, with collections being completed by the applicant(s).

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Agricultural producers who own an eligible farm can apply individually or as part of a group, and may collaborate with producer-led groups, agricultural commodity associations or agricultural service providers.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- Soil and tissue analysis
- Labor costs for soil and tissue sampling
- Incentive payments for participation in study
- Consultant costs for project coordination
- Materials and supplies directly associated with the project
- Equipment purchase and rental costs within limit with preapproval

PROGRAM GOALS

Answer producer-specific nitrogen research questions

Increase commercial nitrogen management efficiency across Wisconsin

Reduce nitrate in surface- and groundwater

Improve producer bottom-line

>>> 2023 PROJECT SPOTLIGHT <<<

In 2023, 20 projects were selected to receive NOPP grants totaling $1.58 million to investigate nitrogen optimization. Projects have begun this growing season, here is what some participants have to say.

>>> INVESTIGATING NITROGEN APPLICATION TIMING IN WI CRANBERRY MARSHES

Nicole Hansen with Cranberry Creek is a NOPP grant recipient investigating nitrogen application timing in Wisconsin cranberry marshes. Nicole is working closely with Extension on her NOPP project. When asked about the implications of on-farm research for cranberries, Allison Jonjak, Cranberry Outreach Specialist with UW-Madison, Division of Extension (pictured here) had this to say: “University research on nitrogen fertilizer timing in cranberries is difficult because application logistics are hard to replicate in a lab, and nitrogen timing is very reliant on a grower’s logistics capabilities. The provision of funds for field-scale, on-marsh research using cranberry growers’ actual application equipment is the first opportunity we have had to research nitrogen application timing in a way that will help growers become even better stewards of their businesses, vines, land, and water.”

NITROGEN CREDITING TO CORN FROM COVER CROP MIXES <<<

Grant recipient Dean Weichmann is exploring nitrogen crediting to corn from two different cover crop mixes. In response to why he chose to conduct on-farm research, Dean insightfully says “We need to continually update research, without data it's like driving in the dark and turning out the lights. Climate is changing, agronomy is changing. Our needs change. Costs, including what we recognize as the cost of runoff and pollution change as well.” Crop consultant Tom Novak collaborates on Dean’s project and notes that “Historically we have had reliable UW-generated data on N credits from alfalfa and frost-seeded red clover in wheat. What's missing is how much N can we generate from seeding high-legume mixes in late July after wheat grain and straw are harvested? NOPP Trials such as Dean's will move us from testimonials of what we think happens to knowing what happens.”