Nitrogen Fertilizer Needs of Small Grains After Alfalfa

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Three main ideas

Return
On
Investment

Prediction: Bad ⊗
Good ⬤
Alfalfa Nitrogen Credits

“N credit”

1. Alfalfa residue
2. N deposition
3. Soil quality improvements
Literature

Lin and Putnam, 2013
Literature

- 2001, Kelling and Speth, Wisconsin - 50 lb N ac\(^{-1}\)
- 1989, Badaruddin and Meyer, North Carolina - 130 lb N ac\(^{-1}\)
- 1987, Bulman and Smith, Eastern Canada - 90 lb N ac\(^{-1}\)
2018

- 18 farms
- 13 forage - Green
- 9 grain - Blue
- Three 2nd year sites
- 15 1st year sites
Plot design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>30</th>
<th>120</th>
<th>120</th>
<th>150</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>90</td>
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Soil Sampling

[Image of a person taking soil samples]

[Image of a soil sampling tool with dimensions 12 inch and 6 inch]
Fertilizer application

AMMONIUM NITRATE
BASED FERTILIZER
34.4% N

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL NITROGEN (N)</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NITRIC NITROGEN (N)</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMMONIACAL NITROGEN (N)</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
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500 KG NET
Harvest
Forage yield results

Forage yield

Small grain forage yield (tons DM ac⁻¹)

N fertilizer rate (lb N ac⁻¹)

23%
Grain yield results

Grain Yield

Small grain yield (bu DM ac\(^{-1}\))

N fertilizer rate (lb N ac\(^{-1}\))

Farm 1
Farm 2
Farm 3
Farm 4
Farm 5
Farm 6
Farm 7
Farm 13
Farm 18

44%
Application timing
Is split N worth it?

Extra 30 lbs N in fall

![Graph showing small grain yield vs. spring fertilizer rate (lb N / acre)]
Is split N worth it?

Extra 30 lbs N in fall

No Benefit of fall N application

Small grain yield (bu/acre)

Spring fertilizer rate (lb N / acre)
Is late N application beneficial?

Grain yield (bu/acre)

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<tr>
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<th>4 Farms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late 60</td>
<td>A</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Predicting response to N
Soil nitrate levels (top 12 inch)

Optimum N rate (lb N ac\(^{-1}\))

Soil Nitrate in top 12 inch (ppm)
Soil nitrate levels (top 12 inch)

Optimum N rate (lb N ac$^{-1}$)

Soil Nitrate in top 12 inch (ppm)

58%

Needed N

Needed no N
Leaf Chlorophyll data

Optimum N rate (lb N ac⁻¹)

Percent difference in SPAD

- Grain
- Forage

Leaf Chlorophyll data
Optimum N rate (lb N ac$^{-1}$)

- **Leaf Chlorophyll data**

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**Percent difference in SPAD**

- **Grain**
- **Forage**

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**Optimum N rate (lb N ac$^{-1}$)**

**Needed N**

65%

**No N needed**

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Utah State University
Preliminary Conclusions

1st year
- Added Nitrogen

Soil Nitrate SPAD
- Limited accuracy
Additional analysis

Protein
Next step

- 15 fall sites set up for 2019
- At least 8 spring sites
- 2020
Thank you

Questions?