

5-25-2017

A New Late-Spring Soil Nitrate Test Publication Now Available

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Recommended Citation

Sawyer, John and Mallarino, Antonio, "A New Late-Spring Soil Nitrate Test Publication Now Available" (2017). *Integrated Crop Management News*. 2449.

<https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cropnews/2449>

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A New Late-Spring Soil Nitrate Test Publication Now Available

Abstract

The publication provides an overview of the test, research on correlation and calibration, specific procedures for using the test, and interpretation of test results. The basics and interpretation of the test are generally the same as the past. Guidelines are now specific for interpretation in manure-applied fields and corn following alfalfa, and an additional soil test category was added for those interpretations.

Disciplines

Agricultural Science | Agriculture

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Integrated Crop Management

A New Late-Spring Soil Nitrate Test Publication Now Available

May 25, 2017

A new ISU Extension and Outreach publication, [Use of the Late-Spring Soil Nitrate Test in Iowa Corn Production](#) (CROP 3140), has replaced the previous publication (PM 1714). The publication is available from the [ISU Extension Store](#).

Publication update

The publication provides an overview of the test, research on correlation and calibration, specific procedures for using the test, and interpretation of test results. The basics and interpretation of the test are generally the same as the past. Guidelines are now specific for interpretation in manure-applied fields and corn following alfalfa, and an additional soil test category was added for those interpretations.

Figures have been included to display research on correlation and calibration of the test over time. Also, additional information was added providing more detail explaining various aspects of the test and soil test reliability and precautions on use.

A major change was removal of nitrogen rate guidelines for corn (non-test based) as those are now in the [Nitrogen use in Iowa Corn Production](#) (CROP 3073) and the [Corn Nitrogen Rate Calculator](#). The publication focus is now just on the late-spring soil nitrate testing.

Considerations for use in the spring of 2017

The late-spring soil nitrate test sampling time is when corn is six to twelve inches tall (measured from the ground to the center of the whorl). That timing is usually late May to early June. With some of the corn planted late this year, and the cool spring periods slowing corn growth, consider collecting soil samples in early June even if the corn is not to the suggested height. This sample timing caveat is described in the time and depth of sampling section of the publication.

There have been some areas of the state with greater than normal rainfall this spring. Therefore, consider using the adjusted soil test critical value of 20-22 ppm instead of 25 ppm if there has been more than 20 percent above normal precipitation since April 1 the growing area. This adjustment is explained in the test result interpretation section.

Resources for nitrogen rate decisions

[Corn Nitrogen Rate Calculator](#)

[ISU Extension and Outreach Soil Fertility Web Site](#)

[Nitrogen use in Iowa Corn Production \(CROP 3073\)](#)

[Concepts and Rationale for Regional Nitrogen Rate Guidelines for Corn \(PM 2015\)](#)

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Category: [Soil Fertility](#)

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[Corn](#)

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