



## Nebraska On-Farm Research Network

# Pre-Sidedress Nitrate Test Recommendation $\pm$ 30 lbs

*Protocol developed by: Dr. Charles Wortmann, UNL Extension Nutrient Management Specialist  
Gary Zoubek and Keith Glewen, UNL Extension Educators*

**Objective:** Verify the pre-sidedress nitrate test N (PSNT – N) recommendation strategy by comparing it to  $\pm$ 30 lb N/acre.

**Rationale:** UNL research consistently confirms that when N is considered to be non-limiting to crop growth, each addition of N fertilizer results in less yield gain. This results in lower N use efficiency and lower net return. This is attributed, at least partly, to the high N use efficiency possible with crops that have healthy and well-developed root systems efficient in nutrient recovery and have plants that are efficient in converting nutrients and carbohydrates to yield (i.e. internal or physiological efficiency). The UNL N recommendation has been **validated** for maximizing profitability for high yielding environments (i.e. >240 bu/ac), as well as lower yield environments over diverse production situations. However, many producers feel that N in excess of the recommendations is needed; this results in reduced profitability and more N loss to the environment. Additionally, applying a portion of total N fertilizer during the growing season (sidedress) has been shown to improve nitrogen use efficiency (NUE).

**Procedure:** Sidedress application can be an especially efficient N management component if pre-plant application does not exceed 75 lb N/acre. This should supply adequate N until sidedress application while leaving a significant amount of N to be applied in-season. Nitrate-N in the surface 12" of soil is determined when corn is 12" tall. The PSNT-N rate is = (25 ppm – measured) \* 8. Therefore if PSNT-N is 15, then the rate = (25-15)\*8 = 80 lb N/acre. This rate is then compared to  $\pm$ 30 lb N.

The three treatments in these trials are:

Treatment 1: PSNT-N

Treatment 2: PSNT-N +30 lb/acre

Treatment 3: PSNT-N -30 lb/acre

\*\*This study may be simplified by eliminating treatment 3.

**Treatment Design:** The following is an example treatment design for this trial. A total of 5 replications should be implemented and harvested. The same hybrid and management practices (other than N) should be used across the entire study area.

### *Grower Requirements:*

1. Flag or **mark** GPS location of each treatment.
2. Provide all necessary **inputs** for crop production.
3. Complete a **background** agronomic form about site and practices.
4. Collect **yield data** and **grain moisture** with weigh wagon or yield monitor. If using yield monitor, please designate a separate "load" for each treatment and set up separate "products" names for each treatment harvested. Yield monitor must be **well calibrated**. Contact UNL Extension if assistance with this process is needed.
5. Collect stand counts at harvest. Each treatment in all replications should have a stand count recorded. It is recommended that at least 3 counts be averaged together for each reported stand count.

6. Submit harvest data to UNL Extension within 30 days of harvest or by Dec. 15 of the harvest year.
7. Allow UNL Extension to use submitted and collected data for research, educational, and informational purposes.

*Nebraska On-Farm Research Network will:*

1. Provide technical assistance in setting up replicated and randomized experimental design.
2. Provide assistance upon request with treatment implementation, flagging, stand counts, stalk rot tests, and recording yield.
3. Analyze raw data using statistical analysis and provide this information to the grower.

Replication	N Application	Harvest
Replication 1	Treatment 2: PSNT-N + 30 lb/acre	← Record Yield
	Treatment 1: PSNT-N	← Record Yield
	Treatment 3: PSNT-N – 30 lb/acre	← Record Yield
Replication 2	Treatment 1: PSNT-N	← Record Yield
	Treatment 2: PSNT-N + 30 lb/acre	← Record Yield
	Treatment 3: PSNT-N – 30 lb/acre	← Record Yield
Replication 3	Treatment 3: PSNT-N – 30 lb/acre	← Record Yield
	Treatment 2: PSNT-N + 30 lb/acre	← Record Yield
	Treatment 1: PSNT-N	← Record Yield
Replication 4	Treatment 2: PSNT-N + 30 lb/acre	← Record Yield
	Treatment 3: PSNT-N – 30 lb/acre	← Record Yield
	Treatment 1: PSNT-N	← Record Yield
Replication 5	Treatment 2: PSNT-N + 30 lb/acre	← Record Yield
	Treatment 3: PSNT-N – 30 lb/acre	← Record Yield
	Treatment 1: PSNT-N	← Record Yield

**For assistance with studies, please contact Laura Thompson: [laura.thompson@unl.edu](mailto:laura.thompson@unl.edu) or 402-245-2224  
Or your local educator**

**Disclaimer:** The Nebraska On-Farm Research Network does not endorse the use of products tested in on-farm replicated strip trials. While treatments are replicated within trials and may be replicated across multiple sites under various conditions, your individual results may vary.

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