Northern New York Agricultural Development Program News

PRESS RELEASE: May 13, 2013
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Adapt-N Award-Winning Farm Tool Has Northern NY Roots

The Adapt-N software named the Best New Product of the Year 2012 by AgProfessional magazine has its roots in Northern New York. The online tool helps farmers and cropping consultants know when the application of additional nitrogen to grow corn crops may not be needed and that saves farmers money.

Cornell University researchers developed the computational tool with the help of field trials underwritten in part by the farmer-driven Northern New York Agricultural Development Program (NNYADP) at the Cornell Willsboro Research Farm at Willsboro, NY, located along Lake Champlain.

“Eighteen years of field research on long-term no-till and plow-till corn production trial plots at the Cornell research farm in Willsboro in Northern New York sparked the idea for this new precision application tool that accommodates year-to-year and field-to-field variability,” says Cornell University Crop and Soil Sciences Professor Harold van Es.

It factors in the significant impact of weather on nitrogen availability, using high-resolution weather data for individual fields, plus the interactions of weather with soil type, tillage and crop rotation practices, the crop maturity class, planting date, and manure applications.

Adapt-N works with any device with Internet access. Users can receive daily updates by text or email with nitrogen application recommendation alerts based on changing weather or irrigation patterns.

In 2011 and 2012, the Adapt-N tool was tested on privately-owned farms in Northern NY and across New York State with funding provided by the New York Farm Viability Institute.

Lewis County Bernhard Gohlert of Lowville, NY, says, “I have seen upwards of $20,000 in savings from not using unnecessary nitrogen based on the Adapt-N recommendations.”

Gohlert tried the Adapt-N recommendations in 2012 based on the advice of his crop consultant Peg Cook, an avid student of the latest NNYADP research developments to

help her clients. Cook says, “With the Northern New York foundation of the Adapt-N research and the promise of substantial savings, it made sense to encourage farmers here to try it.”

The researchers reported that Adapt-N use increased corn profits by an average $26 per acre in 2011 trials and $32/acre in 2012 trials, with an increase in participating grower profit in 81 percent of the 56 trials to date. The savings and profit figures are calculated relative to farmers’ chosen nitrogen rates, which are sometimes considerably higher than standard Cornell-based recommendations.

The Cornell research team urges farmers to factor their own field experience into the use of Adapt-N recommendations.

Corn growers in Iowa began using Adapt-N after seeing its early application on New York farms. In June 2012, Cornell announced that Adapt-N had been expanded to include Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin in the MidWest. A beta-testing version of Adapt-N has recently been made available in other Corn Belt states.

Researchers continue to refine the Adapt-N online tool. Research trials funded by the Northern New York Agricultural Development Program for 2013 involve on-farm grain and silage corn strip trials in Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties.

Cornell posts updates to a users blog at http://blogs.cornell.edu/adaptn. The Adapt-N Users Manual, an in-depth Adapt-N webinar training, and additional information is online at http://adapt-n.cals.cornell.edu. User ID and passwords are available from adapt-n@cornell.edu .

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