

Soil Testing Clinic

Debunking the myths of soil testing and fertilizers

Public Value Statement

Soil fertility ensures a secure food supply. Managing the application of fertilizer has far reaching impacts on the availability and sustainability of food production.

The Situation

Fertilizer is needed by crop producers to grow high yielding and nutritious food. Fertilizers tend to be one of the highest input costs for crop producers.

Crop producers in the north central region of North Dakota spent between \$11.11/ac to \$71.81/ac (depending the crop) on their soil fertility (2017 Annual Report North Central North Dakota, North Dakota Farm and Ranch Business Management Education).

However, many crop producers report that they do not have a good understanding of soil testing and soil fertility. Too much or too little fertilizer can cause yield loss and decrease crop producers' bottom line.

Extension Response

A series of four to five hour workshops (Soil Testing Clinics) were held in McLean, Ward, Renville, Divide, and Pierce counties to educate crops producers and consultants on soil fertility.

Soil Testing Clinic topics included: which soil tests are needed for each specific crop grown in the region, how to interpret the soil test report, soil sample collection, and determining fertilizer applications, and soil fertility trends.

Several producers brought their own soil test results where NDSU Extension personnel coached the producers on fertilizer applications for their specific field.

This workshop series will continue in 2019, but in other counties.

Impacts

Fifty-two producers and agronomists attended the workshops.

A multiple choice (20 question) pre and post assessment was administered at each event. Soil Testing Clinic attendees' knowledge increased greatly as a result of their participation at the workshop. The average pre-assessment score was 43%. The average post-assessment score was 73%.

Feedback

Thank you for holding this workshop. This will make me money! – Soil Testing Clinic Attendee

I see I've been putting too much fertilizer down. – Soil Testing Clinic Attendee

Thanks for helping me with my soil tests. – Soil Testing Clinic Attendee

Primary Contact

Chris Augustin
 Extension Soil Health Specialist
 5400 Hwy. 83 S. Minot, ND 58701
 701-857-7682
 Chris.augustin@ndsu.edu

Collaborators

Calla Edwards
 Paige Brummund
 LoAyne Voigt
 Brandon Biber
 Yolanda Schmidt