

Corn Growers Seek More Funding

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Corn growers want to protect and improve water quality. But government nonpoint source pollution programs should allow for management measures that are technically and economically viable on the farm, said Pete Wenstrand, an Essex, Iowa, corn grower and vice president of the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA).

Wenstrand spoke here before a subcommittee of the House Committee on Public Works and Transportation as it met to consider rewriting the current Clean Water Act. Wenstrand testified on behalf of NCGA, the National Cotton

Council, the National Association of Wheat Growers, the American Soybean Association, the National Barley Growers Association, and the U.S. Rice Producers Group.

"Farmers favor adequate protection for our nation's water quality," Wenstrand said. "We can improve water quality without burdensome regulation or taxation of inputs through reasonably funded programs that encourage farmers to carry on a legacy of stewardship while maintaining their economic ability to produce food and fiber for a world market."

Wenstrand encouraged the committee not to cast aside

Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, which gives states authority to set up federally-funded nonpoint source pollution programs, in favor of a cumbersome regulatory approach.

The Iowa corn grower than suggested ways Congress could strengthen water quality initiatives. "First among our core principles is that the federal government should allocate additional resources to states to assist them in better identifying water quality problems and activating effective management strategies," he said.

"Second," Wenstrand said, "greater financial commitment should be directed to research, monitoring and assessment

programs and enable effective and cost-efficient responses to water quality problems.

"And finally, where prob-

lems are identified, landowners should be encouraged to adopt voluntary, site-specific water

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Corn Talk News

RESEARCH UPDATE



CORN TALK NEWS

PENNSYLVANIA MASTER CORN GROWERS ASSOC., INC.

EFFECT OF STARTER FERTILIZER ON CORN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Greg Roth

In high fertility soils, it is common to see a visual response to starter fertilizer in the spring that is not accompanied by a yield response.

A recent University of Illinois study examined the growth patterns of corn planted with and without a starter fertilizer to try to explain why enhanced early season growth does not result in a yield response. The results of the study, conducted by Donald Bullock and his colleagues, was published recently in Crop Science.

In this study, corn was planted in a high phosphorous (P) testing soil in both 1990 and 1991. One half of the plots received 11.5 gallons/acre of an ammonium polyphosphate that supplied 13-47-0/acre. The other plots received no starter fertilizer. The hybrid used in this study was Pioneer brand 3379. The authors sampled the corn plants in each treatment 18-20 times each year to monitor growth and development.

Corn in the starter fertilized plots showed a 16-20 percent increase in plant dry weight early in the season compared to the corn where no starter was used. Plant dry weight at harvest and grain yield were not affected by the starter fertilizer in either year, however. Leaf area measurements showed that the starter fertilizer plots had higher leaf area until silking.

Shortly after silking, however, the leaf area of the non-starter plots surpassed the starter plots. It was also noted that the starter fertilizer treated plants reached silking and black layer about 2 to 3 days before the untreated plants and were about 1 percent lower in moisture at harvest.

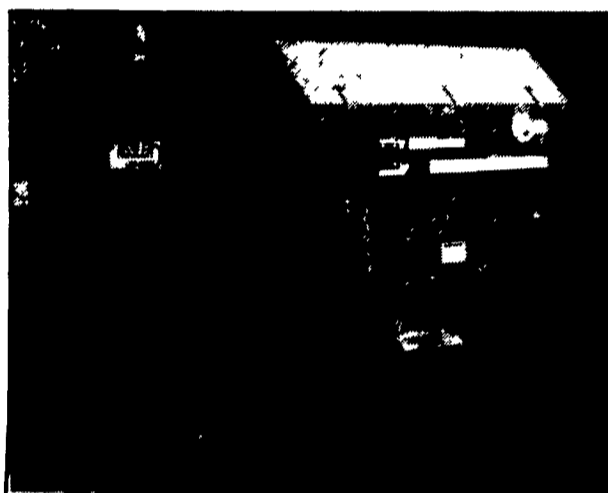
The authors conclude that starter fertilizer-treated plants developed faster early in the season but that this did not result in larger leaf area during the grain fill period. The starter fertilizer apparently hastened the plants' development and maturity enough to offset the advantage from the faster early season growth.

These results appear to be consistent with observations from studies in Pennsylvania. On high P testing soils, we frequently see a visual response to starter and sometimes a reduction in grain moisture, but often no yield benefit. On low to optimum P soils, however, starter shows a fairly consistent yield response, particularly on early planted corn. The maturity effect of starter fertilizer is also important in our short season areas where crop maturity can be a problem.

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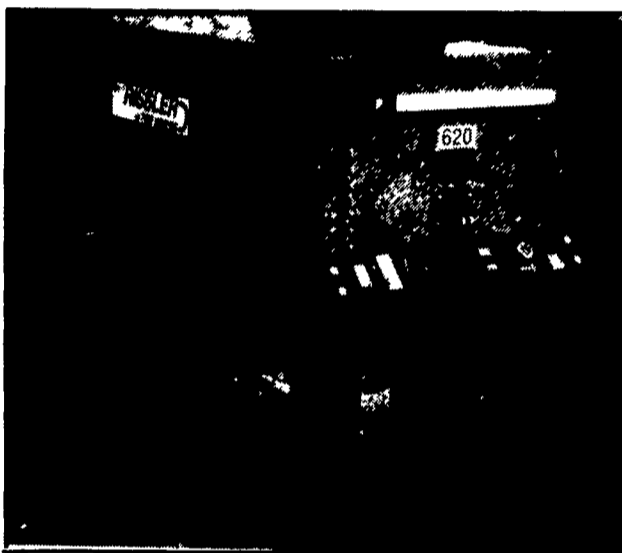
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