# **The Development and Implementation of The Virginia Agronomic Land Use Evaluation System (VALUES)**

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# **I. ABSTRACT**

There is currently a great deal of concern about the movement of nutrients from agricultural land to surface and groundwater. Eutrophication due to nutrient enrichment has been suggested as the major factor causing the decline of living resources in the Chesapeake Bay. Agricultural activities are thought to provide one of the major nonpoint sources of nutrients reaching the Bay. There is also increasing evidence that nitrate contamination from agricultural activities may pose a threat to groundwater resources.

The Virginia Agronomic Land Use Evaluation System (VALUES) restructures and reorients soil test recommendations to include the best currently available scientific technology on water quality oriented nutrient management. This system has been developed for corn, soybeans, wheat, barley, rye, cotton, canola, peanuts and forage crops. Nitrogen (N), a key nutrient plant required for optimum crop production, as well as a potential contaminant, has been given particular treatment with respect to both rate of application and time of application. Information on specific rates of phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) fertilizer to use, as well as N, is provided for all major soils in Virginia.

# **II. INTRODUCTION**

There is currently a great deal of concern about the movement of nutrients from agricultural land to surface and groundwater. Eutrophication due to nutrient enrichment has been suggested as the major factor causing the decline of living resources in the Chesapeake Bay. Agricultural activities are thought to provide one of the major nonpoint sources of nutrients reaching the Bay. There is also increasing evidence that nitrate contamination from agricultural activities may pose a threat to groundwater resources.

The Virginia Land Use Evaluation System (VALUES) restructures and reorients soil test recommendations to include the best currently available technology on water quality oriented nutrient management. This document explains the VALUES concept of preparing fertilizer recommendations.

# **III. SOIL PRODUCTIVITY**

It is a conviction of these authors that one of the major crop yield determining factors in Virginia on non-irrigated, well drained and moderately well drained soil is the ability of the soil to retain water that is accessible to plants, or in the case of somewhat poorly and poorly drained soil, the presence of an effective drainage system to remove excess water. As obvious as this may seem, we believe it is very often overlooked when crop yields are contemplated and management inputs are planned.

Quite often, strikingly different soil properties, either physical or chemical, can have essentially the same effect on yield potential. For example, the very shallow, shale derived soils of the Appalachian and Northern Piedmont regions such as the Berks and Penn and the deep sands of the Coastal Plains Region such as the Alaga and Lakeland have essentially the same yield potential for a given crop due to the extremely limited ability to retain water that is accessible to plants. Although this limitation comes from strikingly different soil properties, the resulting similarity in crop yields that are obtained permits placing these soils in a similar yield category or grouping, henceforth to be referred to as "Soil Productivity Group."

When the poorly drained Coastal Plains soils such as the Acredale, Bladen and Portsmouth have effective drainage systems, they are very productive for crops such as corn and soybeans. These soils can be placed in the same Soil Productivity Group with the deep, well drained silt loam soils of the Northern Piedmont such as Chester, Manassas and Purcellville because of the similarity in yields. However, the Acredale and Purcellville soils must be managed differently because of differences in drainage and profile textural and depth properties. Therefore, Soil Management Groups were developed to recognize similar crop management practices. Obviously, the Acredale and Purcellville soils were not placed in the same Soil Productivity Group for alfalfa. This again reflects the interaction of soil properties with the production of a specific crop.

In the overall development of Soil Productivity and Soil Management Groups, soils were first placed in Soil Management Groups based on their similarity in profile characteristics, which require specific soil and crop management practices. A description of each Soil Management Group is given in Appendix Table A1. Following development of the Soil Management Groups, as much yield data as possible was assembled for soils within each management group.

Secondly, Soil Management Groups were placed in larger groups of soils that had similar yields for a given crop. These groups are the Soil Productivity Groups and were used for the determination of fertilizer rates, primarily N, since it is highly mobile in soil. Soil Productivity Groups for selected crops are given in Tables 1 and 2.



Table 1. Soil Productivity Groups vs. Soil Management Groups for Corn Grain

### Table 2. Soil Productivity Groups vs. Soil Management Groups for Alfalfa and Alfalfa-Orchardgrass Hay



#### **IV. SELECTING REALISTIC (VALUES) CROP YIELDS**

Historically, yield goals have been and are used in conjunction with soil test results by some professionals as the basis for developing plant nutrient application rates. The difficulty with this approach is the implication that, even under non-irrigated conditions, one can continue to increase yields if additional amounts of production inputs such as plant nutrients are used. However, the best indication of the yield to expect and plan for in the coming year is **soil specific yields that have been obtained under good management in the past**.

It should be noted at this point that as new technologies are developed for crop management under non-irrigated conditions which make it possible to more effectively use limited soil moisture supplies, or if research in the biotechnology area is successful in developing plants that are more drought tolerant, yield expectations will need to be revised.

# **A. Characteristics of the Data**

The information collected for this project were the yields and management practices for corn, soybeans and small grains. They were obtained from Virginia and other states with similar soils, temperature regimes (mesic and thermic) and cropping systems.

Visits were made in person or over the telephone to university and experiment station researchers, extension agents, and farmers. The data received was from university variety trials, research plots (maximum yield), small research plots, test demonstrations (field size), five acre clubs, actual farmers, maximum yield clubs, seed companies, theses and dissertations. The magnitude of the database is extensive, with over 2,000 accepted entries (out of a total of 3206 entries evaluated) of corn, soybean and small grain yields (436 of corn, 1,421 of soybean and 148 of wheat). In this respect, the database is quite unique - few studies of this type have utilized such a large data set containing carefully compiled records. For each entry, the following information was requested: crop, cultivar, type of data, yield, year, county, state, planting and harvesting dates, rotation, pest problems, soil series, soil classification, surface texture, maturity group, pounds of nutrients applied and methods of application, soil and tissue test information, remarks. The majority of yield information that was not accepted was because of a lack of soils data or that the contact could not remember which field the crop was grown. This project stresses the importance of keeping thorough field records.

The yield data accepted for use in this study are data that:

1. Could be associated with a specific soil series. If no soils information was available, the soils were characterized by a soil scientist when the field location was known.

- 2. Were obtained under the use of high crop management practices.
- 3. Were non-irrigated.
- 4. In the case of a low yield, it was determined whether it could be attributed to the failure to

use good crop management. If so, the data were omitted. If not attributed to poor management, it was assumed that the poor yield was due to the actual interaction of the crop, the soil and the rainfall/temperature pattern for that growing season, and the data were included in the study.

5. Covered the twenty-one year period from 1969 through 1989. Wheat is the exception to that rule. Due to advancement in breeding and actual field management technologies, wheat data were only included during the period 1979-1989.

In using this data to calculate realistic yield expectations, it was assumed that the weather which occurred during that twenty year period is the best indication available for the next period of time in question and therefore, the variation in yield that occurred is the variation that can be expected.

Actual yield data used are given in the appendix. The data for Soil Management Group T will be used to illustrate both the variability in yields over time and the method used for determining a realistic yield expectation.



Table 3. Corn Yields Used in the Determination of a Realistic Yield Expectation for Soil Management Group T.

\*Median Yield = 109 bu/A.

Because the number of yield values for a given year varied, it was decided to use the average yield for each year.

#### **B. Nitrogen Application (Method Illustrated With Reference to Corn)**

The following assumptions were made relative to nitrogen applications for corn in developing realistic yield expectations.

1. Wherever appropriate, the total nitrogen application would be divided between two or more applications with the timing, rate and method for each application being designed to increase the efficiency of utilization by the crop and to minimize the potential for surface and groundwater pollution.

2. The amount of nitrogen needed to produce a given yield of corn is one pound per bushel.

3. There will be sufficient residual soil nitrogen present in any given situation to produce at least 20 bushels of corn per acre.

The mean and the median yields for the data in Table 3 are 100 and 109 bushels, respectively. Given assumptions 2 and 3 above, if one assigns a price to the nitrogen being applied and the corn yields, net returns to nitrogen application over the years in question can be calculated if one were to have fertilized in each of those years for a specified yield. For example, suppose one had fertilized for the average yield of 100 bushels per acre. The result is given in Table 4.



Table 4. The Net Return Over Time to Nitrogen Application When Fertilizing for an Average Yield of 100 Bushels per Acre. Soil Management Group T. Data from Table 3.

I Calculation for 124 bu/A yield: 124 bu/A - 120 bu/A (100+20=120) =

4 bu/A.  $4 \times $2.50/bu = $10.00$ .

In this example we assumed a cost of 25 cents per pound for nitrogen and a price of \$2.50 per bushel for corn. The rate of N application was 100 pounds per acre (1 lb N needed per bushel of yield and fertilizing for the average yield of 100 bushels per acre). Also, remember the assumption of sufficient residual N to produce 20 bushels per acre. Therefore, yield losses due to insufficient nitrogen application would have occurred only in those years in which rainfall was sufficient for yields greater than 120 bushels per acre. Over the 20 year period, the total cost of the excess N applied when yields were less than 100 bushels was \$50.50 per acre. However, the total value of the yield that would have been lost in those years when rainfall was sufficient to produce more than 120 bushels was \$155.00 per acre. The difference of \$104.50 per acre is a potential loss in net income over those years if corn had been fertilized at the rate of 100 lb N per acre. Therefore, fertilizing for the average yields carries a very severe economic penalty.

The optimum realistic yield for the data in Table 4 can be calculated by determining the yield at which the **difference** in cost between excess nitrogen applied and yield lost due to insufficient nitrogen is at a minimum, i.e., where the difference between column 2 and column 3 is at a minimum. For \$0.25 nitrogen and \$2.50/bu corn, **the realistic yield is 111 bushels/A**. This is described in Table 5.



Table 5. Summary of Calculations from Table 4 to Determine Optimum Realistic Yield.

H Realistic Yield

The data in Table 6 show the effect of changing nitrogen and corn prices on the yield for which one should fertilize. The nitrogen:corn price ratio over time remains fairly constant at about 10:1. Wide fluctuations in nitrogen and corn prices dictate only small changes in the optimum realistic yield of corn for which one should fertilize when grown on those soils in Soil Management Group T. This is also true for all of the Soil Management Groups that are suitable for use in corn production.

The procedure used to calculate a realistic yield expectation for corn when grown on soils in Soil Management Group T was used to calculate a realistic yield expectation for corn for all other Soil Management Groups. It should be noted that there is unavoidable natural variability inherent with this approach as with all other approaches used for calculating the most optimum N fertilizer rate

to use. In this study, large differences in yield from the mean were observed about two out of every ten years. Statistical treatment of the data for Soil Management Group T produced the following results: standard deviation - 35.5, standard error of the mean - 9.17, confidence interval estimates - 100∀16.1 bu (90%) and 100∀19.7 bu (95%). Variability in use of this approach is recognized and some flexibility should be given to the actual N fertilizer rate to use rather than promoting an individual N rate as a firm precise single number.



Table 6. The Effect of Changing Corn and Nitrogen Prices on the Realistic Yield Expectation for Soils in Soil Management Group T.

Regarding the other crops investigated for this study, i.e., soybeans, small grains and forage crops, the selection of optimum yields was based on factors other than the cost of N fertilizer. This is described in the individual sections pertaining to each crop beginning on page 11.

#### **C. Phosphorus and Potassium Application**

When determining the yield for which one should manage and the rate of phosphorus and potassium one should apply, two basic relationships are important. First of all, residual phosphorus and potassium levels in the soil are more readily increased through nutrient application and cropping sequence than is nitrogen, a much more mobile and leachable element. Secondly, the effect of the interaction between nutrient application rate and soil moisture availability on crop yield is much less pronounced for phosphorus and potassium than it is for nitrogen because nitrogen movement is principally by mass water flow, which causes major fluctuations in its availability. Therefore, the existing availability of phosphorus and potassium in the soil, measured by a soil test, becomes the major consideration for these two nutrients rather than the productive potential of the soil in question.

The availability of phosphorus and potassium in fields used for the production of the more important agronomic crops is given for each of the major physiographic regions in Table 7. In the soil test calibration used by the Soil Testing and Plant Analysis Laboratory at Virginia Tech, the break

between the Medium and High test levels is the soil test level above which a yield increase is not expected from a broadcast application of that nutrient. It should be noted that practically all of the Coastal Plains soils that have sandy surface textures but heavy sandy loam or heavier subsoil textures have large amounts of accumulated potassium in the upper part of the subsoil. If the subsoil in these soils is within 20 to 25 inches of the surface, this accumulated potassium must be taken into consideration if one expects to predict, with any degree of accuracy, whether or not a potassium application will increase crop yields.



Table 7. The Availability of Phosphorous and Potassium in Fields Used in the Production <u>of Selected Crops in Virginia.<sup>1</sup></u>

 $^{\text{1}}\;$  Fiscal year 1987 Virginia Soil Test Summary. Soil Testing and Plant Analysis Laboratory, Department of Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Mehlich 1 extractant used for P and K determination.

The purpose of this discussion on phosphorus and potassium is to show that in most cases the need for application is one of maintenance requiring relatively small applications. Therefore, soil productivity becomes less important than it is when determining rates of nitrogen application.

#### **D. Corn - Nitrogen Management**

It is recommended that the total nitrogen (N) application for corn be divided between an application made at planting and one when the corn is 12 to 18 inches tall. This recommendation is made for all soil management groups because they can be placed in one of three major groupings. One is those soils which, due to the sandy texture of the profile, have a high potential for nitrate leaching into groundwater.

A second group would be those soils in which drainage is impeded to the extent that denitrification losses are expected to be significant in most years. Delaying a part of the total N application until the crop is 12 to 18 inches tall should reduce denitrification and increase plant uptake of the applied N.

The third group would be those well drained soils in which profile characteristics are such that leaching of applied N below the rooting depth would not be expected in most cropping seasons. However, these soils are also the ones most likely to have significant amounts of nitrate N in them at sidedressing. The major sources of this nitrate are most likely to be the oxidation of previously applied animal manures, indigenous organic matter, and previously applied N fertilizers. A soil test of the top twelve inches for nitrate N in situations where large amounts of N have been applied may well indicate that none or only a portion of the planned application is needed. If one applies all of the N at planting, an opportunity may have been missed to make a significant and needed adjustment in total application rate and may have created a situation which will result in significant amounts of nitrate being left in the soil after the crop is harvested. This excess nitrogen may be leached below the crop rooting zone during the following winter and be eventually moved into groundwater. In situations where a large amount of residual N is suspected, a soil nitrate test may be of value.

#### **1. Nitrogen Application at Planting**

The method of application at planting will determine the amount of N that should be applied. Let us assume that the total amount of N to be applied is 125 lbs/A. If the N is to be broadcast

> at planting, 60 to 70 pounds per acre will be needed at that time. However, if fertilizer banding equipment is used, 30 pounds of N per acre applied in the starter fertilizer will be sufficient. The remainder of the total application for both methods would be applied as a sidedressing when the corn is 12 to 18 inches tall, which is when plant N uptake is much greater. Utilization of fertilizer banding equipment will most definitely reduce the **potential** for N runoff and gaseous N loss. The key to the rate of application at planting is not the amount applied per acre but the concentration of N in the immediate vicinity of the small root system of the young corn plants, i.e., the difference in the rate of application per acre is based on the method of application.

#### **2. Method of Sidedressing Nitrogen**

An important fact relative to sidedressing N is that corn plant roots will have met in the center of the row by the time plants are about 24 inches tall. An exception to this would be the case where interrow traffic has compacted the soil to the point where root growth into the middle of the row is restricted. If something such as soil compaction has prevented roots from reaching the center of the row, obviously sidedressed N placed there will not be taken up. Whether or not this condition exists must be determined on a field by field basis and taken into consideration when selecting a method of sidedress application.

Nitrogen solution can be applied as a broadcast application using spray booms with drop nozzles equipped with fan tips. With this method, a contact herbicide can also be applied.

Nitrogen solution can be applied in a stream down the center of the row by placing plastic tubing over the nozzle on the spray boom and allowing the opposite end to run on the soil surface. One should give consideration to whether or not soil compaction will interfere with N uptake if the stream is placed in the center of the row. Placing the stream more closely to one side of each row would avoid any mid row soil compaction problems.

Nitrogen can also be applied in dry granular form broadcast over the top when corn is 12-18" high. Either granular urea or ammonium nitrate can be used. There will be less burn using urea. Do not apply when foliage is wet with dew.

Finally, N can be injected into the soil (if this equipment is available) which will reduce the possibility for N volatilization, particularly when using urea as the N source. Also, potential N surface runoff will be eliminated or greatly reduced.

#### **E. Soybeans**

Nitrogen applications have been found to increase soybean yields in two situations. One is the situation in which they are grown under very carefully controlled moisture regimes (i.e., soil moisture greater than 80% of field capacity at all times) and yields exceed 80 bu/A. Such yields required drip irrigation, very narrow rows, high populations and ample applications of phosphorus, potassium, secondary and trace elements. The other situation where N applications increase yields is when nitrogen fixation is seriously restricted for some reason. Under more normal conditions of soybean production, nitrogen has seldom been shown to increase yields and its application is not recommended.

Soybean response to phosphorus and potassium applications is quite similar to that of corn. Therefore, the same recommendations are used for both crops.

The yield data we have assembled show soybean yields to be as variable as those for corn. We believe this variability was also caused by the interaction of the crop, the soil and the rainfall/temperature pattern for each growing season. The yields approximate a normal distribution, and the standard deviation of mean yield for Soil Management Groups increases as the mean yield

for management groups decreases. This appears to be characteristic of crop yields obtained under evenly distributed average rainfall of three to four inches per month and on soils with a limited ability to retain water that is accessible to plants. The more restricted this ability becomes the more variable the crop yields will be over time and the lower the average yield will be. Selected yield data are given in Table 8.



Table 8. Mean Soybean Yields and Their Standard Deviations for Five Soil Management Groups.

The soils in Soil Management Group C developed under poorly drained conditions and are classified as being poorly drained. However, when an effective drainage system is installed to remove the excess water, some of the highest and least variable yields can be obtained.

Because nitrogen is applied to soybeans only under very special and unusual management conditions and phosphorus and potassium applications are based primarily on soil test levels, nutrient application rates were of less concern in arriving at realistic yield expectations. In developing the VALUES yield for each Soil Management Group, both the mean and modal yields were taken into consideration. When using these yields in farm planning, it will hopefully help keep one from being either too pessimistic or optimistic. Yield expectations for each management group are given in the appendix.

It should be pointed out that VALUES yield expectations do not take into consideration the comparative risk associated with crop production on soils in the various management groups. For example, one must cope with not only a lower average yield but also a much greater year-to-year variation in yield of soybeans grown on soils in Management Group X when compared to yields and their variability obtained on soils in Management Group C. This relationship between yield and the variability of that yield exist for all the crops for which data were collected. Clearly, this raises an interest in the application of risk management and game theory to decision making relative to crop production on these soils and might be an appropriate extension of this study.

# **F. Small Grains**

In Virginia, rainfall will normally equal evapotranspiration, i.e., the loss of soil water through surface evaporation plus that lost through plant transpiration, during the fall and spring periods. It exceeds evapotranspiration during the winter. Small grains are produced during that period when soil moisture is usually adequate or excessive. Therefore, the ability of the soil to retain plant available water is far less of a yield determining factor for small grains than it is for summer annual and perennial crops. Soil productivity potential is likewise of less concern in planning nutrient applications for production of these crops.

Water quality and profitability concerns that relate to nutrient applications for small grains production are to avoid excessive applications of phosphorous and potassium based on soil tests and to avoid excessive applications of nitrogen based on soil tests, plant tissue analysis, and crop conditions such as tiller counts and leaf color observed at a specific stage of crop development. These concerns also necessitate the timing of nitrogen application so as to coincide with periods of maximum plant uptake. Timing of nitrogen applications is particularly important on those soils with leaching indices of 10 or greater. All of these practices will help to minimize nutrient movement into ground and surface waters and to maximize plant utilization.

Phosphorus and potassium applications based on soil tests are standard and well established. The use of a nitrate soil test as a basis for determining application rates is less well defined. However, current recommendations on use of the nitrate soil test plus plant tissue nitrogen concentration and crop growth conditions in determining rate and time of nitrogen application are given in the section which contains the details of the recommendations.

# **G. Hay and Forage Crops**

Yields for forage crops were not obtained in the survey of information sources in the mid-Atlantic Region. However, yields and nutrient recommendations for these crops were revised and updated by evaluating the available research data on yields vs. crop fertilization from Virginia as well as neighboring universities in the region. This information plus the addition of new soil series and the development of the Soil Management Groups were used in preparing realistic yield expectations and nutrient recommendations. These are given for each of these crops in the appendix.

# **V. VALUES - HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS**

The following information will be requested on the Soil Sample Information Sheet:

- A. Crop to be grown
- B. Soil Map Units identifying soils in field
- C. Farmer Yield Estimate
- D. Drained/not drained
- E. Will/has manure/sludge been used in this field in the past
- F. Previous crop

The format for requesting information and use of information are discussed in the following sections:

#### **A. Crop to be Grown:**

**1. Format for requesting information:**

Crop to be grown

# **2. Use of Information:**

Each crop has its own nutrient requirement. This is taken into consideration when making the recommendation.

# **B. Soil Map Units :**

Soil Map Unit symbol requested rather than soil name because it will give soil series and type, slope phase and degree of erosion, all of which influence projected yield. A short discussion of Soil Map Units will be placed on the back of the Soil Sample Information Sheet which will accompany each soil sample.

#### **1. Format for requesting information:**



Largest area 2<sup>nd</sup> largest area  $3<sup>rd</sup>$  largest area

- Include only those areas that make up at least 20% of the field.
- \*\* May be obtained from the SCS Conservation Plan for your farm or the County Soil Survey Report.

# **2. Use of information:**

#### **a. Calculating yield for field.**

(1) If no soils information or farmer yield estimate is given, default to group IVa for corn, IV for small grains and soybeans, III for alfalfa, IIIb for red clover-grass, IV for pasture, orchardgrass/fescue hay production, and III for canola. Put comment on Soil Test Report that reads, "Soil Survey map unit information was not provided. As a result only generalized fertilizer and lime recommendations could be made. Field specific and more scientifically based recommendations can be provided if soil map unit information is included in the future. Contact your extension agent to learn how to obtain available soil survey information for your farm."

- (2) If only 1 Soil Map Unit given, select appropriate yield from Soil Productivity Group table.
- (3) If 2-3 Soil Map Units given, calculate weighted mean to determine VALUES yield.

For example:



Note: if a soil occupying <30% is strongly contrasting [>20% yield difference from dominant soil (soil occupying greatest percent or highest yielding if more than one have same percent of total area)], then do not use it in determining realistic yield expectation for the sampled area.

If strongly contrasting soil occupies ∃30%, use weighted mean for all soil listed to determine VALUES yield.

For fields greater that 20 acres in size with ∃30% of a soil that is strongly contrasting with the dominant soil, write "This field contains significant areas of soils with strongly contrasting yield expectations. These soils should be managed separately, if they lay such that it is possible. Soil map unit has a realistic yield expectation of and soil map unit(s)  $\equiv$  (and  $\equiv$ ) has (have) a realistic yield expectation of  $\equiv$ . The fertilizer recommendation that follows is based on average conditions. Sampling and management should be done separately in the future."

#### **b. Utilizing leaching index information.**

Each Soil Map Unit has leaching index information associated with it. If the leaching index is 10-15, the following comments will be printed on the Soil Test Report:

(1)All small grain - "Soils in this field have a very high nitrogen leaching potential. It is important that the total nitrogen topdressing be split between an application at Feeks growth state 25 (February) and one at Feeks growth stage 30 (March). The application rate at Feeks growth stage 30 should be based on a plant tissue analysis for nitrogen."

(2) Canola - "Soils in this field have a moderately high nitrogen leaching potential. The total nitrogen topdressing should be split between an application in February and one made in March."

(3)Corn - "Soils in this field have a high nitrogen leaching potential. It is important that the total nitrogen be split between time of planting and a sidedressing application."

If leaching index is greater than 15, the following comments will be printed:

(1)All small grain - "Soils in this field have a very high nitrogen leaching potential. It is extremely important that the total nitrogen topdressing be split between an application at Feeks growth stage 25 (February) and one at Feeks growth stage 30 (March). The

application rate at Feeks growth stage 30 should be based on a plant tissue analysis for nitrogen."

- (2)Canola "Soils in this field have a very high nitrogen leaching potential. It is extremely important that the total nitrogen topdressing should be split between an application in February and one made in March."
- (3)Corn "Soils in this field have a very high nitrogen leaching potential. It is extremely important that the total nitrogen be split between time of planting and a sidedressing application."

#### **c. Utilizing Erosion/Slope information.**

Soil mapping units provide information on severity of erosion as well as slope yield information. If multiple yield reductions occur in a field, for example, a rocky soil (10% yield reduction) with severe erosion (30% yield reduction) on a class D slope in the ridge and valley physiographic region (25% yield reduction), the most limiting reduction would be used (30%) as opposed to an additive factor (65%).

(1) Yield Adjustment According to Erosion:



(2) Yield Adjustment According to Slope:



\* A and B are equal and are the class standard.

 $\mathrm{``A, B}$  and C are equal and are the class standard.

(3) Yield Adjustment According to Coarse Textures: Exclude group GG since coarse textures are part of its series criteria.

1. Fine gravelly, gravelly (gritty), cherty - 10% yield reduction

2. Cobbly, angular cobbly, channery, flaggy, slaty, shaly - 15% yield reduction

3. Very gravelly, extremely gravelly, very cherty - 20% yield reduction

4. Very cobbly, extremely cobbly, very channery, very flaggy - 25% yield reduction (4) Yield Adjustment According to Rock Outcrop:

Rocky - 10% yield reduction

Bouldery, very bouldery, very rocky, stony, very stony - 25% yield reduction for pasture, not suited to row crops

Extremely bouldery, extremely rocky, extremely stony (rubbly) and all complexes with rock outcrop - 50% yield reduction for pasture, not suited to row crops

Karst - no row crops, avoid use of pesticides, extreme caution in use of fertilizers or organic nutrient sources

# **C. Farmer Yield Records:**

Request for farmer's yield estimate is included to permit those farmers who keep careful field records to provide his own yield information upon which the fertilizer recommendation can be based. A short discussion on keeping/providing accurate yield records will be placed on the back of the Soil Sample Information Sheet.

#### **1. Format for requesting information:**

Your proven yield for this field  $(Bu/A, Tons/A.$  Circle one).

#### **2. Use of information**

Farmer proven yield used in determining fertilizer rate.

#### **D. Drainage Category**

#### **1. Format for requesting information**

Has a drainage system been installed in this field? Yes No

#### **2. Use of Information**

If field has been drained, the computer will select a "drained" category with higher expected yields for the estimate.

#### **E. Manure/Sludge Use.**

#### **1. Format for requesting information:**

Will/has manure/sludge been used in this field? Yes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

#### **2. Use of Information:**

If answer is "Yes," appropriate computer comments related to N application will be printed (see Corn fertilization section).

# **F. Previous Crop.**

#### **1. Format for requesting information:**

Last crop? \_

# **2. Use of Information:**

If crop was a legume, N fertilizer rates will be reduced according to the information in the following table:



# **Legume Credits**

\* One-half (2) lb N/bu of soybeans. If yield information is not available, credit the soybean crop with 20 lb N/A.

# **APPENDIX A**

# **Table A1. Soil Characteristics For Soil Management Groups**

The following summaries describe the general soil characteristics that are related to crop production. The purpose of this write-up is to focus on the common soil feature(s) of the management groupings that relate to management and productivity. The format includes the following soil characteristics:

 Regional occurrence Parent material Landscape position or influence Solum thickness Dominant profile feature, texture or other feature Plant available water supplying capacity Internal soil drainage

(A) The soils in this grouping occur over several physiographic provinces, have formed in alluvial parent materials, and are on gently sloping landscapes of flood plains or stream terraces whose watersheds originate west of the Blue Ridge. They are deep, medium textured soils throughout, with high water supplying capacities, and are well drained.

(B) Soils formed from alluvium within the Coastal Plain region and are associated with stream and river terraces. They are deep soils, with loamy textures throughout, have high water supplying capacities, and are well to moderately well drained.

(C) Soils formed from alluvium or coastal plains sediments, on terraces, levees, and broad coastal plain landscapes. They have loamy to silty textures throughout, have high water supplying capacities, and are poorly drained unless artificial drainage is provided which increases their productive capacity significantly.

(D) Soils which occur in the Northern Piedmont region on upland landscapes and have formed from a variety of residual parent materials. They are moderately deep soils, with fine loamy textures, moderately high water supplying capacities, and are well to moderately well drained.

(E) Soils formed from sandy coastal plain sediments, on low lying terraces, depressions, or flats where surface drainage is restricted. They are deep soils with coarse loamy textures throughout, commonly have high water tables even during some parts of the growing season, and thus are high water suppliers, and are poorly drained.

(F) Soils formed in coarse textured coastal plain sediments, in low lying landscape positions and are underlain by stratified loamy sediments. The are deep soils, with coarse loamy textures throughout, are high to moderately high water suppliers, and are some what poorly drained.

(G) Soils occurring from the Piedmont region westward, formed in locally transported , medium textured sediments of either colluvial or alluvial origin that overlay a wide range of residual materials. Located in landscape positions ranging from foot and toe slopes, to the heads of drainage ways, to depressions, to narrow upland drainage ways. They are deep soils with silty to loamy upper subsoils underlain with clayey to stony materials. They have moderately high water supplying capacities and range from moderately well to somewhat poorly drained.

(H) Soils located predominantly in the western Piedmont and mountainous regions and formed in alluvium along streams or terraces. They are moderately deep, have silty to clay loam subsurface textures, and are moderately high water suppliers. They are somewhat poorly to poorly drained unless artificial drainage is provided which increases their productive capacity significantly.

(I) Soils formed from alluvium along floodplains in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont provinces. As a result they are somewhat prone to hazards of flooding. They are deep soils with predominantly clay loam subsurface horizons, moderately high water suppliers, and are somewhat poorly drained.

(J) Soils formed from coastal plain sediments in low-lying landscape positions. They are deep soils with loamy subsurface horizons, moderately high water supplying capacity, and range from somewhat poorly to moderately well drained.

(K) Soils located mainly within the Coastal Plain region, forming from mixed marine and fluvial sediments on landscapes that range from stream terraces to broad, nearly level interfluves in uplands. They are deep soils with loamy surfaces and clay loam to clayey subsurfaces, are moderate water suppliers, and are somewhat poorly drained.

(L) Soils common to the Piedmont and mountainous regions where they have formed from old transported deposits of alluvium or colluvium. They are common on stream terraces, foot slopes, and older, elevated, upland landscapes that were once stream terraces. They are deep soils with medium textured surfaces, more clayey subsurfaces, and commonly with gravels and rounded stones. They are moderate to high water suppliers and usually are well drained.

(M) Soils found mostly in the mountainous regions forming in material weathered from carbonate rocks. They are on upland summit and sideslope positions. They are deep soils with reddish brown, clayey subsurface horizons, sometimes with coarse fragments. They are moderate water suppliers, unless coarse fragment contents are significantly high, and they are well drained.

(N) Soils located on dissected uplands in the Piedmont region, and have formed from residuum ranging from weathered mafic rocks to triassic sediments. They are deep to moderately deep, have medium textured surfaces with reddish brown clayey subsurfaces, are moderate water suppliers, and are well drained.

(O) Soils formed from transported materials ranging from mountain colluvium to old alluvium on dissected uplands of the Piedmont and mountainous regions and as old elevated river terrace deposits. They range from deep to shallow, have very dark red clayey subsurface horizons, some may have significant coarse fragments, are moderate water suppliers, and are well drained.

(P) Soils formed in alluvium or colluvium and are in low lying terrace positions. All the physiographic provinces in Virginia are represented by one or more soils of this group. They are deep soils with clayey subsurface horizons and are moderate to high water suppliers. They are somewhat poorly drained unless artificial drainage is provided which increases the productive potential significantly.

(Q) Soils located on the upper Coastal Plains on the most stable parts of the nearly level upland landscape. They have formed in very old coastal plain sediments. They are deep soils with sandy surfaces and clayey to sandy clay subsurfaces with plinthite and/or a fragipan in the lower subsoil which may inhibit root growth. They are moderate to moderately low water suppliers when the plinthite or fragipan is nearer the surface. They are moderately well to somewhat poorly drained depending on the depth to the plinthite or pan layer.

(R) Soils located on the gently sloping uplands of the Coastal Plain and have formed from marine sediments. They are deep soils with sandy loam surfaces, reddish yellow clayey to clay loam subsurfaces with some mottles in the lower part, are moderate water suppliers, and are well to moderately well drained.

(S) Soils found on gently sloping coastal plain uplands, are moderately deep, and have formed from loamy coastal plain sediments. They have fine loamy textures in the subsoil with moderate to high water supplying capacities, and are well to moderately well drained.

(T) Soils located on uplands and stream terraces in the coastal plains, are deep and have formed from loamy coastal plain sediments. They have fine loamy subsurface textures, usually underlain by coarser sediments, are moderate water suppliers, and are well drained.

(U) Includes soils in the mountainous and Piedmont regions that are moderately deep to shallow, and have formed from a variety of residual parent materials ranging from triassic sediments to sandstone, shales, and limestone, to colluvium from these materials. They commonly have fine loamy subsurface textures, commonly have coarse fragments to one third the soil volume, and as a result, are moderate to moderately low water suppliers. They are well to moderately well drained.

(V) Soils found on upland landscapes in the Piedmont, are moderately deep, and have formed from saprolites derived from a variety of parent materials ranging from slates, to granites, gneisses, schists, and more basic granitic rocks. They have clayey subsurface horizons, are moderates water suppliers, and are well drained.

(W) Includes soils in the mountainous and Piedmont regions, on stream terrace or footslope positions, and are formed from mixed colluvium. They have fragipans within the upper three feet of soil, have loamy subsurface horizons, commonly with accompanying coarse fragments. As a result they are moderately low water suppliers, and range from moderately well to somewhat poorly drained.

(X) Soils located on upland landscapes in the Piedmont region, are moderately deep, and are derived from a variety of residual materials including slates, granites, gneisses, and schists. They have clayey subsurface horizons, sometimes with coarse fragments or gravels, are moderate water suppliers, and are well to moderately well drained.

(Y) Soils representing upland landscapes in both mountainous and Piedmont regions. They range from shallow to moderately deep and have formed from the residuum of weathered limestones, shales, or other carbonate influenced rocks. They have clayey subsurface horizons, sometimes with coarse fragments, and are moderate to low water suppliers where shallow to bedrock. They are mostly well drained.

(Z) Soils formed in alluvium or colluvium and are in low lying terrace positions. All the physiographic provinces in Virginia are represented by one or more soils of this group. They are deep soils with clayey subsurface horizons, are moderately high water suppliers, and are somewhat poorly drained.

(AA) Upland soils, formed from a variety of sediments with the resulting soils ranging from deep to shallow. They have clayey subsurface horizons, sometimes with coarse fragments, and as a result are moderately low in water supplying capacity. They range from somewhat poorly to moderately well drained.

(BB) Soils representing upland, terrace, or footslope landscapes in the western mountains, Piedmont, and Coastal Plains. The soils have formed from a variety of parent materials including colluvium, alluvium, and limestone residuum. The soils have fragipans that underlie silty to loamy subsurface horizons. sometimes with coarse fragments. The fragipans limit the rooting zone, thus, these soils are low to moderately low water suppliers. They are generally somewhat poorly drained.

(CC) The soils in this diverse group occur across the Piedmont and mountainous regions. They are formed from a range of parent materials that include alluvium, colluvium, and loamy saprolites. They are represented

by a variety of landscapes including uplands, stream terraces and colluvial positions to bottomlands. The common soil features are moderately deep sola, clayey skeletal to coarse loamy subsurface horizons, some with as much as 70% coarse fragments, and have moderately low water supplying capacities. They are well drained.

(DD) This group of soils in the Coastal Plain have formed from loamy coastal plane sediments and local alluvium. They formed on gently sloping uplands and stream terraces. They are moderately deep soils with predominantly coarse loamy subsurface horizons, and some have arenic or very thick sandy surfaces. They have moderately low, water supplying capacities and are excessively drained.

(EE) Coastal Plains soils formed in loamy sediments, on low lying landscape positions. They are deep soils with coarse loamy to sandy subsurface horizons. Water tables are usually high in these soils during some part of the year yet the soil textures are very sandy. The drainage is poor to very poor on these soils.

(FF) Soils represented by this group extend across the Piedmont to the mountainous provinces and have formed in residual parent materials ranging from sandstone, shales, and slates, to loamy granitic saprolites, and mountain colluvium. They are on steeply dissected uplands and mountain side slopes. They are moderately shallow soils , mostly with loamy skeletal subsurface horizons that may contain 80 %, or more, coarse fragments. As a result the water supplying capacity of the soils is low to very low. The soils are well to moderately well drained.

(GG) The soils in this group of Piedmont and mountainous soils formed from cherty limestone or other residuum. They are on ridge top and side slope positions and are deep to moderately deep soils. They have loamy skeletal subsurface horizons, usually with greater that 60 % coarse fragments, are low water suppliers and are well drained.

(HH) All physiographic provinces of Virginia are represented by one or more soils from this group. They formed from loamy sediments in floodplain positions in the mountains and Piedmont to finer textured sediments in the Coastal Plain. They are moderately deep soils with fine loamy or clayey subsurface textures, have moderate water supplying capacities, and range from somewhat poorly to moderately well drained.

(II) All physiographic provinces of Virginia are represented by one or more soils from this group. The common feature is that all have formed from sandy parent materials within the Coastal Plain, or from local alluvium or colluvium of sandy origin. They range from deep, in Coastal Plain from alluvial materials, to shallow in upland positions in the mountainous and Piedmont region. They are sandy textured throughout, with little horizonation, are low to very low in water supply, and are well to moderately well drained.

(JJ) The soils in this group are from either the Piedmont or mountainous regions and have formed from a wide variety of residual parent materials ranging from sandstones, shales, and limestones, to triassic materials, phillites, and granite saprolites or schists. They are shallow soils, predominantly with loamy skeletal textures throughout, ranging from 30 to 70 % coarse fragments. They are very low water suppliers and are well drained.

(KK) Soils in this group located predominantly in the Piedmont region and have formed from a variety of residual materials including triassic sediments, residuum from basic rocks, and other clayey sediments. They are moderately deep soils with clayey textured subsurface horizons, commonly with large components of high shrink-swell clays. They are moderate water suppliers and range from moderately well to somewhat poorly drained.

(LL) Soils found mostly in the Coastal Plain region, have formed from clayey sediments or formed from saprolites over basic rocks, and are on low coastal plain landscapes or gently sloping piedmont uplands. They are deep soils with clayey subsurface textures throughout. They are moderate water suppliers, and are somewhat poorly to poorly drained.

(MM) Soils located on floodplains in the Coastal Plain, formed from loamy sediments, flood frequently, have

moderate to high water supplying capacity and are poorly drained.
(NN) These are the undrained soils that are listed in group "H". They are predominantly in the mountainous and western Piedmont region and have formed in alluvium along streams or on terraces. They are moderately deep, have silty to clay loam subsurface textures, are moderately high water suppliers, and are somewhat poorly to poorly drained.

(OO) These are the undrained soils that are listed in group "C". They are formed from alluvium or coastal plain sediments, on terraces, levees, and broad nearly level landscapes in the Coastal Plain. They have loamy to silty textures throughout, have high water supplying capacities, and are poorly drained.

(PP) Soils found within the Coastal Plain, and are represented by the marshes and tidal wetlands. They formed in depressions, tidal basins, tidal flats, and other ponded areas. Some have organic horizons, some have clayey mineral horizons, and some have sulfidic materials. They have water tables at or near the soil surface, and are saturated most of the time.

(QQ) The soils in this group represent the coastal sand dunes of the tidewater area. They are deep, extremely sandy, have low water supplying capacity, and are excessively drained.

## **Table A2 . Soil Management Groups and Productivity Estimates**



2





Legore, Mayodan, Mecklenburg, Mecklenburg variant, Nason, Spotsylvania, Watauga Wedowee

 $\mathsf{W}$   $^{\star}$ Aldino, Ardilla, Clarksburg, Ernest, Glenville, Laidig, Landisburg, Malbis, Marbie, Meckesville, Monongahela, Raritan, Readington, Savannah, Trego



2





2

\* Length of growing season for some soils in this group may not be favorable for reaching the yield goal for soybean.



Table A3. Soil Productivity Groups vs. Soil Management Groups for Corn Grain

Table A4. Soil Productivity Groups vs. Soil Management Groups for Intensive Wheat





Table A5. Soil Productivity Groups vs. Soil Management Groups for Canola

\* These are somewhat poorly drained soil. In some years, excess water will result in serious stand and subsequent yield reductions. In years when this is not a problem, yields will be good.

\*\* Not suited, too wet.







Table A7. Soil Productivity Groups vs. Soil Management Groups for Tall Grass-Clover Hay





\* Animal Unit (AU) - one 1000 lb. cow and her calf or two 500 lb. steers or five ewes with lambs



### Table A9. Soil Productivity Groupings for Various Cropping Categories















### **Soil Series**

### $\bar{\rm H}$ Izagora  $\mathsf J$  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{IIb}}$  $I<sub>1</sub>$  $\sim 1^{\circ}$  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{II}}$  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{NS}^{\star}}\xspace$

 $\bar{1}$ 



















### NS\* - Not suited

Note: Soil Productivity Groups were not developed for small acreage, high cash value crops such as tobacco, peanuts and vegetables because:

1.Practically all producers are familiar with those soils that are not suited for the production of these crops.

- 2.Although yield potentials will vary between soils, fertilizer costs make up a relatively small part of the cost of production. Therefore, adjusting fertilizer application rates to expected yields is not as economically important as it is for other crops.
- 3.The level of nitrogen application that will have a significant detrimental effect on crop quality is reached before there is a significant detrimental effect on water quality.

4.Practically all fields being used for the production of these crops have already been raised to medium or higher

levels of soil fertility. Therefore, the objective in P and K fertilization of these crops is limited to maintenance of these fertility levels.

# **Table A10. Soil Yield Potentials for Various Crops**




























# **APPENDIX B**

# **Table B1. Corn for Grain**

#### I. Nitrogen Recommendations:

1 lb. of N/Bu of expected yield. Refer to Table A4 for soil yield estimates.

II. Phosphorus and Potassium Recommendations:



#### III. Comments to Accompany Recommendations:

- A. For soils testing high in P and/or K.
- "The most effective method of application of low rates of phosphate and potash is in a starter (planter) fertilizer placed in a band 2 inches to one side and 2 inches below the seed. Because of potential salt toxicity, the total amount of nitrogen plus potash should not exceed 80 lbs/A."
- B. For soils with leaching indices of 15 or greater.

"Potassium can be lost through leaching on these soils. You can apply up to 50 lb/acre of K20 in a starter fertilizer and sidedress the remainder when the corn is about 18 inches tall."

- C. For nitrogen identify the soil management group.
	- 1. For soil management groups

A, B, C, D, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, V, W, X, AA, BB and CC

and

The previous crop was alfalfa, alfalfa - grass red clover-grass, tall grass (orchard grass or fescue) and clover, grass-clover pasture (> 25% legume) or native pasture (> 25% legume)

and/or

Manure or sludge has been applied or there is a history of manure application.

"The soils, cropping sequence and management indicate significant amounts of nitrogen could be present in the soil at the time corn would be sidedressed. Apply 30 lb N per acre in a starter (planter) fertilizer. Test the soil for nitrate when the corn is about 12 inches tall to determine if sidedressing is needed."

2.For soil management groups W, BB

- "Fragipans in these soils will limit depth of root penetration and increase the probability of nitrogen being moved beyond the reach of the plant root system. Apply 30 lb/acre of N in a starter fertilizer and sidedress the remainder of the total application when the corn is about 18 inches tall."
- 3. For soil management groups FF, GG, JJ
- "These shallow soils limit the depth of root penetration which increases the likelihood of nitrogen being moved beyond the reach of the plant root system. To avoid this, apply 30 lb/acre of N in a starter (planter) fertilizer and sidedress the remainder of the total application when the corn is about 18 inches tall."
- 4. For soil management groups C, H, P
- Nitrogen can be lost through denitrification and to surface waters through the drainage system. To reduce the likelihood of this happening, apply 30 lb N per acre in a starter (planter) fertilizer and sidedress the remainder of the total application when the corn is about 18 inches tall."
- 5.For soils with leaching indices of 15 or greater
- "Because these are highly leachable soils, total nitrogen application should be split between an at-planting and a sidedressing application. Apply 30 lb N/acre in a starter (planter) fertilizer and the remainder when the corn is about 18 inches tall."

D.For soil management groups BB, CC, DD, EE, FF, GG, HH, II, JJ, KK, LL and MM

"Because these soils have such low yield potentials for corn, it is doubtful you can recover your variable cost of production. Consideration of an alternative crop or cropping sequence is recommended."

E.For soil management groups NN, OO, PP, QQ

"Attempted production of corn on these soils is not recommended."

## **Table B2. Corn for Silage**

#### I. Nitrogen Recommendations:

 $\overline{\phantom{0}}$ 

The relationship between corn grain versus corn silage is described in the following table:





 $1$  Values in this table are based on 11 years of data from the Galva-Primghar Research Center. Data supplied by W.D. Shrader.

- <sup>2</sup> Corn grain at 15.5 percent moisture.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  Silage at 35 percent dry matter.
- Silage yield obtained at midpoint of the corn yield per acre range in column 1.

(Source: Iowa St. Univ., Pm-417d, Oct 1978)

Equation to convert corn grain to corn silage yields:

Silage  $(T/A) = 3 + 0.114$  x grain yield  $(Bu/A)$ 

The optimum realistic yield for corn silage is somewhat higher than corn grown for grain because of the higher comparable value of corn silage. For example, 100 bushels of corn, at \$2.50/bushel, is worth \$250 whereas the equivalent silage yield, 14.4 tons, at \$25.00/tons is worth \$360. Calculations to determine the optimum realistic yield for corn silage using the data in Soil Management Group T, using \$0.25/lb N and \$25.00/ton silage are presented in the following table:



Calculation Used to Determine Optimistic Realistic Yield for Corn Silage (refer to text for calculations for corn grain).

H Realistic Yield

The optimum realistic yield for corn grain for silage on Soil Management Group T soils is 16.6 T/A (119 bu/A equivalent) as compared to 111 bu/A when corn is grown for (sale of) grain. This relationship, approximately an 8% greater target yield, is similar for all the Soil Management Groups in this study (because of the fairly straightforward relationship between corn grain versus silage prices). Since the assumption has been made in this study that the amount of N needed to produce a given yield of corn is one pound per bushel, the nitrogen rate at which to fertilize corn silage should be increased approximately 8% above the N rate recommended for corn grown for grain.

As with corn grown for grain, large fluctuations in nitrogen and silage value dictate only small changes in the optimum yield of corn silage for which one should fertilize.

#### II. Phosphorus and Potassium Recommendations:



#### III. Comments to Accompany Recommendations:

- A. For soils testing high in P and/or K.
- "The most effective method of application of low rates of phosphate and potash is in a starter (planter) fertilizer placed in a band 2 inches to one side and 2 inches below the seed. Because of potential salt toxicity, the total amount of nitrogen plus potash should not exceed 80 lbs/A."
- B. For soils with leaching indices of 10 or greater.

"Potassium can be lost through leaching on these soils. You can apply up to 50 lb/acre of K20 in a starter fertilizer and sidedress the remainder when the corn is about 18 inches tall."

- C. For nitrogen identify the soil management group.
	- 1. For soil management groups

A, B, C, D, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, V, W, X, AA, BB and CC

and

The previous crop was alfalfa, alfalfa - grass red clover-grass, tall grass (orchard grass or fescue) and clover, grass-clover pasture (> 25% legume) or native pasture (> 25% legume)

#### and/or

Manure or sludge has been applied or there is a history of manure application.

- "The soils, cropping sequence and management indicate significant amounts of nitrogen could be present in the soil at the time corn would be sidedressed. Apply 30 lb N per acre in a starter (planter) fertilizer. Test the soil for nitrate when the corn is about 12 inches tall to determine if sidedressing is needed."
- 2.For soil management groups W, BB
- "Fragipans in these soils will limit depth of root penetration and increase the probability of nitrogen being moved beyond the reach of the plant root system. Apply 30 lb/acre of N in a starter fertilizer and sidedress the remainder of the total application when the corn is about 18 inches tall."
- 3. For soil management groups FF, GG, JJ
- "These shallow soils limit the depth of root penetration which increases the likelihood of nitrogen being moved beyond the reach of the plant root system. To avoid this, apply 30 lb/acre of N in a starter (planter) fertilizer and sidedress the remainder of the total application when the corn is about 18 inches tall."
- 4. For soil management groups C, H, P
- Nitrogen can be lost through denitrification and to surface waters through the drainage system. To reduce the likelihood of this happening, apply 30 lb N per acre in a starter (planter) fertilizer and sidedress the remainder of the total application when the corn is about 18 inches tall."

5.For soils with leaching indices of 15 or greater

"Because these are highly leachable soils, total nitrogen application should be split between an at-planting and a sidedressing application. Apply 30 lb N/acre in a starter (planter) fertilizer and the remainder when the corn is about 18 inches tall."

D.For soil management groups BB, CC, DD, EE, FF, GG, HH, II, JJ, KK, LL and MM

"Because these soils have such low yield potentials for corn, it is doubtful you can recover your variable cost of production. Consideration of an alternative crop or cropping sequence is recommended."

E.For soil management groups NN, OO, PP, QQ

"Attempted production of corn on these soils is not recommended."

## **Table B3. Grain Sorghum**

#### I. Nitrogen Recommendations:

1 lb. of N/Bu of expected yield. Refer to Table A4 for soil yield estimates.

II. Phosphorus and Potassium Recommendations:



#### III. Comments to Accompany Recommendations:

- A. For soils testing high in P and/or K.
- "The most effective method of application of low rates of phosphate and potash is in a starter (planter) fertilizer placed in a band 2 inches to one side and 2 inches below the seed. Because of potential salt toxicity, the total amount of nitrogen plus potash should not exceed 80 lbs/A."
- B. For soils with leaching indices of 10 or greater.

"Potassium can be lost through leaching on these soils. You can apply up to 50 lb/acre of K20 in a starter fertilizer and sidedress the remainder when the grain sorghum is about 18 inches tall."

- C. For nitrogen identify the soil management group.
	- 1. For soil management groups
		- A, B, C, D, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, V, W, X, AA, BB and CC

and

The previous crop was alfalfa, alfalfa - grass red clover-grass, tall grass (orchard grass or fescue) and clover, grass-clover pasture (> 25% legume) or native pasture (> 25% legume)

#### and/or

Manure or sludge has been applied or there is a history of manure application.

"The soils, cropping sequence and management indicate significant amounts of nitrogen could be present in the soil at the time grain sorghum would be sidedressed. Apply 30 lb N per acre in a starter (planter) fertilizer. Test the soil for nitrate when the grain sorghum is

about 12 inches tall to determine if sidedressing is needed."

- 2.For soil management groups W, BB
- "Fragipans in these soils will limit depth of root penetration and increase the probability of nitrogen being moved beyond the reach of the plant root system. Apply 30 lb/acre of N in a starter fertilizer and sidedress the remainder of the total application when the grain sorghum is about 18 inches tall."
- 3. For soil management groups FF, GG, JJ
- "These shallow soils limit the depth of root penetration which increases the likelihood of nitrogen being moved beyond the reach of the plant root system. To avoid this, apply 30 lb/acre of N in a starter (planter) fertilizer and sidedress the remainder of the total application when the grain sorghum is about 18 inches tall."
- 4. For soil management groups C, H, P
- Nitrogen can be lost through denitrification and to surface waters through the drainage system. To reduce the likelihood of this happening, apply 30 lb N per acre in a starter (planter) fertilizer and sidedress the remainder of the total application when the grain sorghum is about 18 inches tall."
- 5.For soils with leaching indices of 15 or greater
- "Because these are highly leachable soils, total nitrogen application should be split between an at-planting and a sidedressing application. Apply 30 lb N/acre in a starter (planter) fertilizer and the remainder when the grain sorghum is about 18 inches tall."

D.For soil management groups BB, CC, DD, EE, FF, GG, HH, II, JJ, KK, LL and MM

"Although grain sorghum has more drought tolerance than corn, it is questionable whether you can recover your variable cost of production because of the low yield potential for this soil. Consideration of an alternative crop or cropping sequence should be evaluated."

E.For soil management groups NN, OO, PP, QQ

"Attempted production of grain sorghum on these soils is not recommended."

# **Table B4. Soybeans**

I. Nitrogen Recommendations:

None recommended.

# II. Phosphorous and Potassium Recommendations:



## **Table B5. Wheat and Barley**

- A. Recommendations for N application:
	- 1. At planting.
		- $a.$  With NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> soil test from top 6 inches

If a  $NO<sub>3</sub>$  soil test from the top 6 inches is greater than 14 ppm,

No nitrogen needed at planting.

- b. Without  $NO<sub>3</sub>$  soil test results.
	- (1)Conventional tillage: broadcast and incorporate 1-2 inches, 25-30 lb N/acre during land preparation for planting. However, if a  $NO<sub>3</sub>$  soil test from the top 6 inches is greater than 14 ppm, then no nitrogen is needed at planting.
	- (2) No-till: broadcast 25-30 lb N/acre shortly before planting. However, if a  $NO_3^-$  soil test from the top 6 inches is greater than 14 ppm, then no nitrogen is needed at planting.
- 2. Midwinter (December-January)
	- If:
- a.Significant leaching rains have occurred during the October-December period, i.e., two or more rainfall events of 2.0 inches or more,
	- and
- b.there has been very little tiller development, i.e., less than 3 tillers per plant, and the crop has a pale green color,

and

c.there is an expectation of several days during January and February when maximum daily temperature will exceed 50ΕF;

Then:

Apply 30 lb N/acre as a topdressing.

- 3. Late Winter (February-early March)
	- a. Single application of N.

(1) Fields with less than 100 tillers per sq. ft. Apply 80 lb N/acre in February. Fertilize those fields with less than 60 tillers per sq. ft. first.

(2) Fields with more than 100 tillers per sq. ft., plants dark green and N tissue levels are 3.75% or higher. Apply 30-40 lb N/acre in late March (Zadoks growth stage 30).

- b. Split applications of N
	- (1) February (Zadoks growth stage 25).
		- (a) Fields with less than 60 tillers per sq. ft. Apply 60 lb N/acre.
		- (b) Fields with 60 to 100 tillers per sq. ft. Apply 40 lb N/acre.

(c) Fields with more than 100 tillers per sq. ft. and the crop has a good green color do not apply nitrogen. Tissue test at Zadoks growth stage 30 to determine N application needs.

(2) March (Zadoks growth stage 30).

(a) N application rate for wheat based on the % N in a plant tissue sample taken at Zadoks growth stage 30. (Observations have shown that barley should be decreased by 0.5% N):

#### B. Phosphorus and Potassium Recommendations:



#### C. Comments to accompany recommendations:

1. For soil management groups KK, LL, MM, NN, OO, PP and QQ. These soils are not suited for production of small grains. It is recommended you consider another crop.

2. For soil management groups C, H, P, and Z. There will likely be periods of time during the winter and early spring when these soils will be very wet, making field operations very difficult if not impossible. This excess water could also damage small grain plant-resulting in lower yields.

3. For soils with leaching indices greater than 15. These soils are highly leachable because of thick sandy surfaces. The late winter-early spring nitrogen application should be divided between one made at Zadoks growth stage 25 (February) and one made at Zadoks growth stage 30 (March).

# **Table B6. Rye Grown for Grain or Silage**

- 1. Soil productivity groups same as for wheat and barley
- 2. Nitrogen recommendations:
	- A. at planting 25-30 lb. N/acre
	- B. late winter a single application made in February
		- (1). For grain production 45 lb. N/acre
		- (2). For silage production 70 lb. N/acre

# 3. P and K Recommendations:



# **Table B7. Cotton**

#### I. Nitrogen Recommendations:

The planned rate of total nitrogen application should take into consideration the crop that cotton will be following and the soil on which it will be grown. The following suggestions consider both:



Reduce the planned rate of nitrogen application by 10 pounds per acre if cotton will be following soybeans and by 20 pounds per acre if it will follow peanuts.

IV. Soil Management Groups that are not suited for cotton production: P, Z, BB, CC, EE, FF, HH, JJ, KK, LL, MM, NN, OO, PP, QQ.\*

V. Soil Management Groups on which cotton will not be grown: D, G, H, I, J, L, M, U, W, Y, GG.

Print out a statement such as, "Soils in this field are not suited for cotton production. If at all possible, select another field, but if cotton will be grown, apply 50-70 lbs of N per acre."

#### Timing of Nitrogen Application

Only about 20 percent of the total nitrogen uptake will have occurred by early square formation (approximately 45 days after planting). To avoid possible stimulation of excessive vegetative growth and loss of unneeded nitrogen through leaching, apply only one third of the planned nitrogen application rate at planting. The most effective method of application of this nitrogen is in a starter fertilizer which would also supply 20 to 40 pounds of  $P_2O_5$  depending upon  $P_2O_5$  needs as shown by a soil test. This can be done by using either a 1:1:0 ratio fertilizer such as 15-15-0, a 1:2:0 ratio fertilizer such as 18-46-0 or a 1:3:0 fertilizer such as 10-34-0. Use of a starter fertilizer has been shown to stimulate the early growth rate and increase lint cotton yields by 60 to 100 pounds per acre, both of which are desirable.

The preferred placement of this starter fertilizer is two inches to one side of the seed and at least as deep as the seeds are planted but preferably one to two inches below seed level. Placing the starter fertilizer in the row behind the subsoiler shank while ripping under the row has also been shown to be an effective placement. However, applying the starter fertilizer in a 3 to 4 inch wide band on the soil surface in front of the press wheel has not proven to be an effective placement method in research conducted in North Carolina.

The remainder of the planned nitrogen application can be applied at first square formation (approximately 45 days after planting).

The growth of cotton should be checked at early bloom to determine whether or not additional nitrogen may be needed. If the plants are no more than 20 inches tall yet adequate water has been provided either through rainfall or irrigation and neither insect, disease or weed infestations have limited growth, an additional nitrogen application of approximately 30 pounds per acre should be considered. If the plants at early bloom are 24 inches or more in height, do not apply any more nitrogen. When making this evaluation, the most recent growth is the best indicator of nitrogen needs, For example, if the plants were 21 to 22 inches tall but the top internodes were only or 1 1/4 - 1 1/3 inches in length, a small N application would be appropriate. However, if plants had the same height but the top internodes were two inches or more in length, indications are that vegetative growth is beginning. An additional nitrogen application would very likely stimulate excessive vegetative growth.

One should keep in mind that factors other than insufficient nitrogen can cause short plant heights. Some of these are water stress, root pruning caused by cultivation and the use of certain herbicides. These effects should be checked when making the decision about application of additional nitrogen.

#### Replacement of Nitrogen Lost through Leaching

Nitrogen can be lost through leaching when rainfall in excess of the water holding capacity of the soil occurs within a period of 5 days or less. This is the most likely to occur on those soils with low water holding capacities and are included in Soil Management Groups F, Q, S, T, DD and II.

Adjustment for suspected leaching losses are given in the following table:



Adjustment for Suspected Leaching Loss of Nitrogen

 $<sup>1</sup>$  Inches of water entering the soil during a 5 day period that is in excess of the soils water</sup> holding capacity.

 $2$  Extra nitrogen needed only through the third week of fruiting. (Nitrogen sidedressings are usually not beneficial after the third week of blooming.)

#### II. P and K Recommendations:



VH 0 0

# **Table B8. Canola**

#### **Fertilization**

#### I. Nitrogen Fertilization:

1. Apply 30 - 40 lb N/A at planting time. Broadcast and disc-in before planting.

2. Apply 90 - 120 lb N/A in late February just before spring growth begins. For soils with leaching indices greater than 15, the late winter application should be split with the first 45 to 60 lb/A being applied in late February and the second 45 to 60 lb/A being applied 4 weeks later.

#### I. Phosphorus and Potassium Recommendations:



# **Table B9. Peanuts**

I. Nitrogen Recommendations:

No nitrogen recommended

#### II. Phosphorus and Potassium Recommendations:

The phosphorus and potassium recommended for peanuts can be applied at the same time the crop preceding peanuts in the rotation is fertilized. If is not applied at that time, it should be plowed down before peanuts are planted.



 $^*$  Apply 40 lbs/A at H-. No P $_2$ 0 $_5$  recommended at H and H+.

#### III. Comments to Accompany Recommendations:

For soils with leaching indices of 15 or greater and peanuts are grown in the rotation. "Potassium can be lost through leaching. To insure an adequate supply for the peanut crop, apply that needed for the peanuts just before land preparation and plow it down."

Soil Test	Fertilizer Recommendations, Lb/A		
Level	N	$P_2O_5$	$K_20$
$\overline{a}$	0	170	170
	O	160	160
L+	0	150	150
M-	0	140	140
М	0	130	130
M+	0	120	120
Н-	ი	110	110
н	0	80	80
H+	ი	50	50
VH			

**Table B10. Alfalfa and Alfalfa-Orchardgrass Establishment**

**Table B11. Red Clover-Orchardgrass, Orchardgrass/Fescue-Ladino Clover, Orchardgrass and Fescue Establishment**

Soil Test		Fertilizer Recommendations, Lb/A		
Level	N	P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	$K_20$	
L-	40	170	170	
	40	160	160	
L+	40	150	150	
M-	40	140	140	
м	40	130	130	
M+	40	120	120	
н-	40	110	110	
н	40	75	75	
H+	40	40	40	
VH	40			

\* Apply the nitrogen at the time the grass is seeded in late summer, early fall or early spring. Overseed the grass with clover the following February.

Soil Test		Fertilizer Recommendations, Lb/A		
Level	N	$P_2O_5$	$K_20$	
	70	120	120	
	70	110	110	
L+	70	100	100	
M-	70	90	90	
М	70	80	80	
M+	70	70	70	
н-	70	60	60	
	70	50	50	

**Table B12. Bermudagrass Establishment**







#### **Table B14. Alfalfa and Alfalfa-Grass Hay Maintenance, Soil Productivity Group I**\*



 $^*$  For K $_2$ O rates greater than 200 lb/A, split the application, applying 1/2 in the fall and 1/2 in the spring. (Alternate recommendation where field sampled in spring - apply 1/2 in early spring, and 1/2 after the first cutting).

#### **Table B15. Alfalfa and Alfalfa-Grass Hay Maintenance, Soil Productivity Group II**\*





 $^{\ast}~$  For K $_2$ O rates greater than 200 lb/A, split the application, applying 1/2 in the fall and 1/2 in the spring. (Alternate recommendation where field sampled in spring - apply 1/2 in early spring, and 1/2 after the first cutting).

Soil Test	Fertilizer Recommendations, Lb/A		
Level	N	$P_2O_5$	$K_20$
L-	0	90	240
	0	80	220
L+	0	70	200
M-	0	60	185
М	0	50	170
M+	0	40	160
Н-	0	40	145
н	0	40	90
H+		40	40
VH			

**Table B16. Alfalfa and Alfalfa-Grass Hay Maintenance, Soil Productivity Group III**

# **Table B17. Red Clover-Grass Hay Maintenance, Soil Productivity Groups I, II**



#### **Table B18. Red Clover-Grass Hay Maintenance, Soil Productivity Groups III, IV**





#### **Table B19. Stockpiled Tall Fescue, Soil Productivity Groups I, II**



\* Apply the N in August. Where clover makes up more than 25% of the stand, use the 50 lb N rate. If clover is not present and you desire maximum production, apply the 90 lb N rate.

#### **Table B20. Stockpiled Tall Fescue, Soil Productivity Groups III, IV**



\* Apply the N in August. Where clover makes up more than 25% of the stand, use the 50 lb N rate. If clover is not present and you desire maximum production, apply the 90 lb N rate.

Soil Test		Fertilizer Recommendations, Lb/A		
Level	N	P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	K <sub>2</sub> 0	
Ŀ	$0^{**}$	120	120	
	በ**	110	110	
L+	0**	100	100	
M-	0**	90	90	
М	0**	80	80	
M+	0**	40	40	
н-	በ**	ი	0	
н	በ**	0	0	
H+	0**	U	0	
VH	$0**$			

**Table B21. Orchardgrass/Fescue-Clover Pastures, Soil Productivity Groups I, II\***

\* If stand contains less than 25% clover, apply 40-60 lbs/A of N.

\*\* If additional production is needed later on, apply 40 to 60 lbs/A of N. If you are planning to overseed a legume into the stand, do not apply N.

#### **Table B22. Orchardgrass/Fescue-Clover Pastures, Soil Productivity Groups III, IV\***



\* If stand contains less than 25% clover, apply 40-60 lbs/A of N.

\*\* If additional production is needed later on, apply 40 to 60 lbs/A of N. If you are planning to overseed a legume into the stand, omit the N recommendation.



#### **Table B23. Native or Unimproved Pastures, Soil Productivity Groups I, II\***

\* If stand contains less than 25% clover, apply 40-60 lbs/A of N.

\*\* For phosphorus + potassium application once each three or four years.

#### **Table B24. Native or Unimproved Pastures, Soil Productivity Groups III, IV\***



\* If stand contains less than 25% clover, apply 40-60 lbs/A of N.

\*\* For phosphorus + potassium application once each three or four years.


**Table B25. Orchardgrass/Fescue (Tall Grass) Hay Production, Soil Productivity Groups I, II**

\* The N recommendation is for a March application. If additional hay production is needed, apply 80 lbs N/acre after each cutting. Do not apply more than 250 lbs/acre per year.

## **Table B26. Orchardgrass/Fescue (Tall Grass) Hay Production, Soil Productivity Groups III, IV**



\* N recommendation is for a March application. For additional fall hay production apply 60-80 lbs N/acre in late August/early September. Do not apply more than 160 lbs N/acre/year.

## **Table B27. Bermudagrass Pastures, All Soil Productivity Groups**



\* The N recommendation represents the total amount of N to be applied during the season. Split the N into three applications - April, June and July.

## **Table B28. Bermudagrass Hay Production, All Soil Productivity Groups**



\* Total application of N should be divided equally between an early April application and applications made after the first and second harvests.