

Rice Growers Submit 1,500 Samples For New Soil Test

FAYETTEVILLE, ARK.

Since last fall, when the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture initiated the N-STaR Nitrogen Soil Test for Rice, farmers have submitted about 1,500 silt loam soil samples for analysis, said Trent Roberts, research assistant professor of crop, soil and environmental sciences.

N-STaR offers field-specific recommendations for nitrogen applications that, in many cases, have the potential to reduce application rates by half or more, Roberts said. Using N-STaR ensures that producers are applying the correct N rate to maximize rice yields on silt loam soils.

The Division of Agriculture has posted short video tutorials to the Web that demonstrate how to construct the tools and follow the procedures for collecting and submitting samples for N-STaR.

Roberts said most of the soil samples, more than 1,200 of them, have come from Arkansas growers, mostly in Arkansas, Prairie and Lonoke counties. Some 200 to 300 samples have come from Louisiana farmers.

Roberts said samples must be submitted to the Division by mid-April in order to be certain the results will be returned before planting season. During the busiest periods – usually following dry weather when farmers can get into their fields to collect samples – the lab requires 7 to 10 days to process and return samples, he said.

The video tutorials are intended to help farmers and agricultural consultants assemble the tools needed and to make sure the samples are properly collected, packaged and submitted to the N-STaR lab, Roberts said.

The first video demonstrates how to assemble the tools needed to collect the samples. It can be found at this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZD37JlrXEg&feature=youtu.be>. A downloadable document describing the same procedure can be downloaded from the Web at http://www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/PDF/FSA-2168.pdf.

A video demonstrating how to collect soil samples from silt loam fields can be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_dzpmJs6NY&feature=youtu.be. A demonstration of how to submit the samples is at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqY13TrxTsl&feature=youtu.be>.

A downloadable document describing the procedures for collecting and submitting the samples can be found at

http://www.aragriculture.org/crops/rice/NSTR_protocol_2011_2012.pdf. The information form for submissions is at <http://www.aragriculture.org/crops/rice/>



(Top) Program associate Stephanie Williamson analyzes nitrogen separated from soil samples to determine how much nitrogen is available to the plants in a rice field. The analysis renders an NSTaR index that is used to calculate the recommended nitrogen fertilizer rate for a specific field.

(Bottom) Trent Roberts, research assistant professor, demonstrates how to collect soil samples for the N-STaR Nitrogen Soil Test for Rice in one of a series of video tutorials available online from the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

[NSTR_orderform_2011_2012.pdf](#).

A document with an overview of the N-STaR system can also be downloaded from this link: http://www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/PDF/FSA-2167.pdf.

Roberts said a video demonstrating how to interpret the information returned after the analysis is expected to be available online in the near future. △

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