

# Sidedressing Is Option As Fall Applied N Has Lagged

**URBANA, ILL.**

University of Illinois Extension reports that there is still quite a bit of nitrogen that needs to be applied for the 2009 corn crop. Wet weather and high prices last fall made for a slow fall application season. As a result, some areas have quite a bit of ground to make up this spring – which leads to many concerns.

Never in recent memory have so many acres lacked fall applied nitrogen. The pressure is on for an early spring to allow preplant applications to occur. Of course, since so many will need to apply, the next question becomes one of infrastructure. There really aren't enough tool-bars, nurse tanks and semi's available to ensure timely delivery to the dealer and to your field. And no doubt, everyone will want product at the same time. And it's not just here, but across the entire Midwest.

Therefore, sidedressing may be an option this year. This method does offer the most efficient use of N, as there is less time for N to be lost between application and use. In fact, you can reduce the amount of N applied due to this increased efficiency.

Other forms of nitrogen are available as well, including Urea and UAN. There are several forms of Urea available – coated and uncoated. Coated costs more, but offers protection of N loss in some instances. The coating begins to break down about 4 weeks after application and continues for about 4 more weeks. Temperature

and moisture affect the breakdown process.

There are at least two times in which you should consider the use of the coated product. First is if you'll be applying the product several weeks earlier than planting. Second is if you will be applying immediately before planting and not incorporating. Conventional urea should be incorporated within several days of application (depending upon application rate, amount of residue, soil temperature, etc.) to prevent N loss.

There is one caution on the use of the coated product. In a dry spring and if no soil moisture is available in the zone of Urea, it won't release and be available to the corn crop.

U of I research has shown little difference between N sources, if all sources are properly applied. However, this past spring/summer, because of the excess moisture, higher yields were observed from the coated Urea product. This is probably because the N was not able to be lost.

U of I's new N rate recommendation uses an economic return to N, rather than a yield based recommendation. Using a N cost of \$.43/ pound (\$700/ton NH3 or \$390/ton urea) for a corn/soybean rotation, and a corn price of \$3.50 the formula suggests a N rate of 155 pounds total N (ranges from 140-171). The website can be found at: <http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/soilfertility/nrate.aspx>. Δ



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