



Winning Practices

3/20/2015

What does it take to grow winning corn yields?

A review of National Corn Growers Association Yield Contest winners shows that many are utilizing fertility practices advocated by AgriEnergy Resources for years, including soil testing, split-applying nutrients, banding starters, and using micronutrients.

In fact, **100% of the national winners started with a soil test**. While soil test results are not perfect in predicting crop response to fertilizer, they are one of the best guides that we have. Current soil test information is especially important with today's low profit margins for most commodity crops. With the need to scrutinize cost of crop production, it is vital to make fertility applications based on which nutrients are most likely to limit crop yield. Many growers also utilize tissue testing to fine tune nutrient applications during the growing season. Stay tuned to AgriEnergy for more information about some new technology for assessing in-season nutrient needs.

94% of the national winners are sidedressing nitrogen (N) and 72% are applying N at planting, which means they are split applying nutrients. These split applications involve more than N for many of the growers. Several are split applying secondary and micronutrients as well as additional phosphorus (P) and potassium (K).

One-third of the national winners claim to be using micronutrients. Several years ago, AgriEnergy conducted research trials using our **Trace Pak** in a corn starter program. 30 replicated plots over a 7-year period found that adding 0.5 gallons/acre of Trace Pak increased corn yields 7.2 bushels/acre. Progressive growers that are really pushing for high corn yields find that adding micronutrients to the fertility program becomes more important with higher yields.

94% of the national winners are using starter fertilizer. While it is important to meet the nutrient needs at every growth stage, these growers realize that it is vital to get the crop off to a good start for top yields. Applying starter fertilizer in a band application is much more efficient than broadcasting fertilizer. Starter allows for concentrated placement of nutrients close to the roots, making for early nutrient uptake by the young plant.

Many of the top growers stress the importance of protecting plant health all season long. Of course, soil health and fertility play a huge role in protecting plant health. But many of these growers are also using fungicides during the growing season. AgriEnergy is excited to offer some of the newer, non-toxic plant protection products, such as **Regalia**. Regalia is a plant extract that stimulates the plant's defense system to help ward off both bacterial and fungal pathogens. It is OMRI-listed and therefore allowed for organic crop production. Most of these products can be applied with crop nutrient foliars. **Nutrient foliars are another favorite practice of many of these winning growers.**

Several of the top yielding growers mention using **humic acid** and **biological products** and many are using **seed treatments**. For years, AgriEnergy has consistently found that putting all these concepts together is a real winner!

You don't have to be a contest winner to take advantage of these concepts.

- Banding and split applying nutrients, along with adding biological products to boost soil health and nutrient cycling throughout the season, can be the best way to cut your cost of production/bushel.
- AgriEnergy has several biological or microbial products to help maximize your fertility dollars. These include **Myco Seed Treat™**, **SP-1™** and **Residue®**.
- We also have competitively-priced, high quality fertilizers for use in starters, foliars, sidedress applications, and fertigation.

Talk to your AgriEnergy Resources representative today to figure out the WINNING COMBINATION for your farm!