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An Efficient Fertilizer Program after Drought

by James R. Gerwing, Extension Soil Specialist

After drought years farm income is frequently limited and it becomes critical to use fertilizer more efficiently. The following list is a few tips on getting the largest return for every dollar invested in fertilizer.

- 1) Apply fertilizer only after soil testing. It will measure most carryover fertilizer.
- 2) Do not surpass SDSU or neighboring Land Grant University fertilizer recommendations.
- 3) Concentrate on nitrogen fertilizer. Use the 2 foot deep nitrate test to measure carryover N fertilizer and determine N rate needed.
- 4) Band phosphorus and potassium when needed near the seed.
- 5) Use legume and manure credits where possible to reduce fertilizer needs.
- 6) Eliminate or severely reduce the use of sulfur, zinc or other micronutrient fertilizers.
- 7) Do not use soil conditioners, soil additives or specialty fertilizers.

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