



# C-BMP

Illinois Council on Best  
Management Practices

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## **ILLINOIS SOIL NITROGEN MONITORING NETWORK** *CBMP funds program to evaluate nitrate levels in soil*

URBANA, IL – The drought of 2012 raises both economic and environmental questions about the amount of nitrogen that remains in the soil due to low corn yields and the early death of the crop in dry areas. As the harvest winds down and farmers consider fertility needs for the 2013 crop, the Illinois Council on Best Management Practices (CBMP) and the University of Illinois are partnering on a new project to inventory soil nitrate levels in Illinois in order to fine-tune nitrogen recommendations.

Dan Schaefer, Director of Nutrient Stewardship for CBMP, is coordinating the program with the UI extension specialists Dr. Emerson Nafziger and Dr. Fabian Fernandez. “This program is directly tied to CBMP’s *Keep it for the Crop* program, whose mission is to minimize environmental impact, optimize nutrient utilization and maximize crop yield” he said. CBMP is asking ag retailers and certified crop advisors to collect soil samples according to instructions provided by UI extension. The emphasis is on fields that were in corn, and will return to corn in 2013. Sample collection instructions can be found at [www.KIC2025.org](http://www.KIC2025.org) and additional information about the importance of evaluating nitrate levels in the soil can be found in the UI Bulletin at <http://bulletin.ipm.illinois.edu/index.php>. CBMP is funding the sample shipping and analysis costs, and will share results with those collecting the samples. UI will also receive the sampling results and will use the data to help the fertilizer industry and farmers fine-tune nitrogen application strategies for 2013.

“We want to make this as easy as possible for ag retailers and crop advisors to collect this vital information from their customers’ fields” said Schaefer. Sending in samples from 5 to 20 sites at once will improve efficiency, so coordination within an area is very much encouraged. Sample collection bags and shipping boxes may be requested from Dr. Emerson Nafziger at [ednaf@illinois.edu](mailto:ednaf@illinois.edu). Soil probes are also available from CBMP for ag retailers and crop specialists who are willing to commit to collecting samples this fall and into the spring. Contact Dan Schaefer at [dschaefer@illinoiscbmp.org](mailto:dschaefer@illinoiscbmp.org) or at 217.202.5173 to discuss the availability of soil probes and with any questions about the sampling procedures.

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