NREC Council

Voting Members

Gary Hudson, Farmer, Hindsboro IL

Dale Hadden, Farmer, Jacksonville IL

Matt Hughes, Farmer, Shirley IL

Dr. Howard Brown, GROWMARK, Bloomington IL

Ed Corrigan, Brandt Consolidated, Springfield IL

Matt Duncan, Crop Production Services, Galesburg IL

Dave Creech, IL Certified Crop Advisor Board, Greenup IL

Chris Matlock, FS Custom Turf, Bloomington IL

Jim Larkin, IL Department of Agriculture, Springfield IL

Non-Voting Members

Dr. German Bollero, UI Department of Crop Sciences, Urbana IL

Marcia Willhite, IL EPA, Springfield IL

Jessica Dexter, Environmental Law Policy Center, Chicago IL

Dr. Cindy Skrukrud, Sierra Club, Richmond IL

How is NREC funded?

NREC is supported by all the major Illinois ag organizations as well as environmental organizations, Illinois EPA and the Illinois Department of Agriculture. NREC is governed by a 13 member Council with 9 voting members from agriculture and 4 non-voting members from academia and environmental organizations.

The makeup of the Council demonstrates the commitment of agriculture and environmental groups to work together to address nutrient issues in Illinois. The voting members determine the NREC assessment of between 50¢ and $3.00 per ton of fertilizer sold to fund NREC. The bill became Public Act 97-0960 when Governor Quinn signed the bill on August 14, 2012; it was effective immediately.

The NREC Council set the initial assessment level at 75¢ cents per ton of fertilizer sold after August 15, 2012 and until further notice. The Council meets regularly to review proposals targeted at improving crop production and protecting water quality.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture requires fertilizer distributors to collect and remit the NREC assessment as a condition of their license to distribute fertilizer in Illinois. NREC is a public-private partnership whose sole purpose is to advance programs to improve nutrient efficiency, enhance crop production, and protect water quality.

Illinois Nutrient Research & Education Council

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Illinois Nutrient Research & Education Council

2013 NREC PROJECTS

Illinois Agriculture's Investment in Nutrient Research and Education to:

Enhance Nutrient Utilization

Increase Crop Production

Protect Water Quality

4 nutrient stewardship

The Nutrient Research & Education Council supports the 4R Nutrient Stewardship Framework:

Right Source
Right Rate
Right Time
Right Place

www.nutrientstewardship.com

NREC's Role and Function

a. Illinois has funded nutrient research & education since 1989, with a designated fertilizer tonnage fee and a program called the Fertilizer Research & Education Council (FREC) whose monies were held within the Illinois Dept of Agriculture. Since 2004, the FREC fund has been swept and diverted to the State's General Revenue Fund to fund other state programs.

b. State budget cuts to ag research are on-going, leaving little to no resources available to advance nutrient research in Illinois at our state universities, including our land grant university which is responsible for supporting recommendations in the Illinois Agronomy Handbook. The Handbook also serves as the basis for NRCS guidelines on nutrient application.

c. NREC solicits proposals for research and educational programs that will improve nutrient efficiency, enhance crop production and protect water quality. The Council reviews each proposal and approves those projects deemed most likely to contribute to NREC's objectives and which will provide valuable information to Illinois farmers. Projects are ranked on their merit and availability of funds.

d. NREC is responsible for insuring that all projects are progressing as proposed. Each project must contain a plan to publicize the findings and ensure dissemination of the information to farmers and agribusiness. NREC will also provide a written annual report to all ag organizations.

2013 NREC Crop Production Research Projects

Re-evaluation of P & K Recommendations
The current Illinois recommendations for phosphorus and potassium application rates were published in the Agronomy Handbook in 1968 when average yields were 85 bushels for corn, 29 bushels for soybeans and 36 bushels for wheat. Much has changed in the last 40 years with hybrids, management, nutrient distribution and economics. NREC will provide funding to the University of Illinois to re-evaluate P & K recommendations using long-term P & K rate studies, correlating soil test levels to crop response and calibrating P & K fertilization rates to maximize productivity and economic returns to the farmer. Researchers will conduct strip till at locations throughout the state to create a repository of yield and soil test data.

Agronomic Assessment of Cover Crops in Illinois
This 5 year study by the University of Illinois and Southern Illinois University will be done on producer-owned fields and at Research Centers throughout the State to determine if cover crops can be utilized effectively in Illinois to improve soil nutrient values and crop yields. The study will measure the extent to which cover crops scavenge nitrogen left following harvest, how well they sequester nutrients in their biomass and the availability of N and P for the following crop. The study also looks at different tillage practices and the impact of these practices on the effectiveness of the cover crop.

Phosphorus Runoff from Surface and Subsurface Fertilizer Applications in No-Till and Strip-Till
This study was previously funded by the Fertilizer Research & Education Council (FREC). NREC has committed to continue funding this project to ensure its completion and subsequent sharing of the findings to growers throughout the state. This project looks at various methods of P application in different conservation tillage methods and in soils with less than 2% slope. It will evaluate the effect of repeated application of broadcast and subsurface band P and determine the effect of P placement and tillage on the runoff potential from the soil surface. Researchers will compare P runoff potential under both corn and soybean cultivation. The University of Illinois is leading this project with numerous cooperating farmers and in partnership with the Keep it for the Crop (KIC) program.

2013 NREC Water Quality/Education Projects

Keep it for the Crop (KIC) Program
NREC supports the KIC program, which is managed by the IL Council on Best Management Practices (CBMP). KIC partners with ag retailers and farmers to encourage nutrient practices that enhance yields and reduce nutrient losses. KIC works closely with universities and other nutrient stakeholders to promote science-based projects and practices that demonstrate agriculture's commitment to providing solutions to production and nutrient challenges. In the fall of 2012, the KIC program launched the **N WATCH** soil sampling program, encouraging ag retailers throughout the state to take soil samples to evaluate residual soil nitrate following the drought of 2012. This is extremely important data to collect to ensure that policy makers understand how nitrogen reacts to environmental conditions and prepares the industry to respond to questions about nitrate movement and nitrate losses as a result of the drought. KIC also helps farmers conduct in-field nitrogen rate studies to determine a defensible and reliable nitrogen rate for their farm.

Discovery Farms & Partnership with Point Source Community on Nutrient Issues
NREC signaled its support for on-farm data discovery by supporting the beginning of a Discovery Farms program in Illinois, similar to those already in place in Minnesota and Wisconsin. This program will partner with farmers to evaluate subsurface and surface water quality on the farm and determine the agronomic practices that most effectively reduce nutrient losses. NREC also funded a first of its kind partnership between ag and the point source community to look a nutrient issues in a watershed and determine cost effective practices to improve water quality. CBMP manages these projects.

Anhydrous Ammonia Training for Farmers
Farmers now have an innovative on-line safety training program to assure the safe handling of anhydrous ammonia, thanks to NREC funding. Anyone wanting to increase their knowledge of the safe handling of this important source of nitrogen can go to www.ifca.com and access the program free of charge.