



Things you may have heard about the University of Wisconsin nutrient recommendationsare they true?

True/false, fact/fiction, myth/true story...we live in a time when we are constantly bombarded with information, and we have to evaluate what is valid and what is not. In some areas, like science, it can be easy to identify a fact; water freezes at 32 degrees F.

Outside the lab, things get more complicated; yet we have to keep sorting through the information to separate fact from fiction. In this publication, we are going to pull some of the facts from the fiction that you may have heard about the UW nutrient recommendations.

**All the data comes from research done on the Arlington research farm.....
.....is this true?**

*A lot of research data is collected at the the Arlington Research Station, **but not all the data**. Data is also collected from other agricultural research stations throughout the state—Lancaster, Marshfield, Hancock, Spooner, Rhinelander, Hancock and West Madison.*

Research is also conducted with local farmers, agriculture agents and university specialists on working farms across the state each year to collect data and find solutions to Wisconsin crop fertility questions. Plots are placed across the state to represent different landscapes, soil types and varying climatic conditions.

The research hasn't kept up with changing crop needs as crop hybrids change every year.....is this true?

In recent years there are so many new traits being introduced that UW soil fertility research trials cannot include all of the hybrid varieties.

***However, the fertility research that is conducted year after year throughout the state does utilize an array of different corn, soybean and other crop varieties.** Also, farmers that welcome research on their farms have different preferences in seed companies and traits and often use them for their on-farm research plots.*



UW recommendations are too rigid with little opportunity to adjust them to meet my farm's specific needs.....**is this true?**

There is flexibility built into the recommendations to fit your specific field needs. For example, the nitrogen recommendations for corn and wheat are given with a range to accommodate varying scenarios such as high or low organic matter content, over 50% crop residue in the field at planting and others. UW nitrogen recommendations also consider the economics of applying nitrogen fertilizer depending on the crop market price and cost of fertilizer. Adjustments can also be made according to a preplant or pre-sidedress soil nitrate test if tests are taken on your farm.

The UW phosphorus and potassium recommendations also provide flexibility in conjunction with Wisconsin's nutrient management rule, the 590 Standard. If the soil phosphorus levels test as excessively high, up to 20 lbs per acre of phosphorus can still be applied as a starter on corn. If soil test levels are low, the recommendations include a build-up of nutrients over a 4-8 year period to reach optimum levels.

The fertilizer value of manure is difficult to determine, and most manure-nutrients will not be available to my crops.....
.....**is this true?**

*Not all the nutrients contained in manure are immediately available to crops grown on fields that receive manure, **but decades of Wisconsin research has shown that a large percentage of manure nutrients are available to crops.** The exact amount varies with animal species, rate, time and method of application. If you sample the manure on your farm and have a laboratory analysis done, you will have the best estimate of manure-nutrient content to work with when crediting the nutrients for your crops. However if you choose not to sample, you can use the UW book values for manure nutrient credits, which are based on the averages of samples submitted to Wisconsin DATCP's* certified soil testing labs. Over a five-year period (1998 to 2012), over 10,000 solid dairy manure and 19,000 liquid dairy manure samples were submitted to certified soil testing labs in Wisconsin.*

* Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection