

Spring Nitrogen Application

Overview

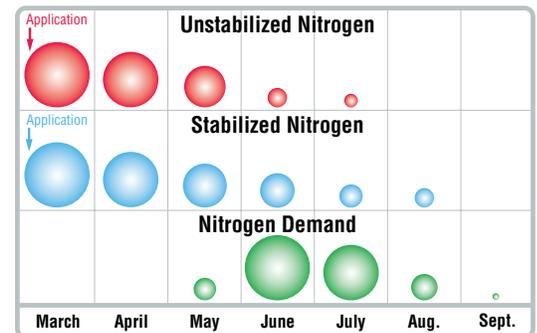
Many farmers find applying nitrogen (N) in the spring rather than in the fall has greater agronomic benefit because it coincides with corn's nitrogen needs. With a spring application, is a nitrogen stabilizer still needed?

What you should know

- A field's nitrogen (N) can be lost after one or two spring rainfalls.
- Many university researchers believe spring applications benefit from a nitrogen stabilizer since there's a significant period of time between application and when the corn crop utilizes the applied N the most.
- Nitrapyrin offers the best nitrogen protection. Products that protect against volatility don't slow the bacteria that convert N from its ammonia form to its nitrate form, which can be lost to leaching or denitrification. Nitrapyrin helps keep N available in the root zone of the corn crop through the phase of the growing season when it's needed most.

Action steps

- 1. Check soil texture, drainage and CEC (cation exchange capacity):** Heavy clay soils have a higher CEC and water-holding capacity. If these soils are poorly drained or are in a saturated condition for days at a time, N stabilizers can help keep nitrogen in the ammonium form, to prevent leaching or denitrification. Sandier soils may not be able to hold the required amount of nitrogen because of their low CEC. In these soils, a nitrogen stabilizer can hold nitrogen in the ammonium form longer, keeping it in the root zone longer and reducing leaching.
- 2. Understand your ammonium nitrate source:** Anhydrous ammonia and urea are both composed of 100% ammonium. To prevent loss, anhydrous ammonia needs to be applied below the soil surface. Urea, if surface-applied and not incorporated, will need a urease inhibitor to keep it from volatilizing. If a urease inhibitor is used, nitrapyrin can provide effective stabilization. UAN is 75% ammonium and 25% nitrate—which is a leachable form—so stabilizing that remaining 75% is even more critical.



Make sure nitrogen is available when the crop needs it most.



30-Second Summary

- No matter your source of N in the spring, using an effective stabilizer can help keep N available throughout the corn-growing season.
- Nitrapyrin offers the best stabilization option, keeping N in the corn root zone when it's needed most.

NOTES:

For more information, contact:



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