On-Farm Research
Ninety-seven percent of NSFGPP members indicate that considering all of the agricultural educational opportunities available to them they would rank the NSFGPP “above average” or “the best.”

“It educates all of us on proper scientific methods for on-farm testing of production questions.”

“There is a positive image of the program because of the joint effort among extension, industry and agricultural producers to help improve agricultural profitability.”

“In production agriculture, it’s what you think you know, that you really don’t know, that can hurt you.”

“From my starter fertilizer plots, I learned that 10-34-0 was as effective as a more expensive starter fertilizer. This has saved me $5/acre annually on 500 acres of corn for the last 6 years. This has been a savings of $15,000 for me.”

— On-Farm Research Participant

“Since joining the program, we have adopted a no-till corn, no-till soybeans, and biosolids program. In tillage costs alone, we have saved $7-8/ac on 2,500 acres. I would recommend this program to anyone.”

— On-Farm Research Participant

Program Impact:

Interested in learning more?  Contact us...

Keith Glewen  Saunders County  402-624-8030  kglewen1@unl.edu
Jenny Rees  Clay-Webster Counties  402-762-3644  jrees2@unl.edu
Brandy VanDeWalle  Fillmore County  402-759-3712  bvandewalle2@unl.edu
TBA  Dodge County  402-727-2775
Gary Zoubek  York County  402-362-5508  gzoubek1@unl.edu

2012 On-Farm Research
“Working with critical thinkers, farmers, and consultants is addictive and a formula for professional success.”

On-Farm Research Participant

On-farm research education allows farmers to test production ideas in partnership with University faculty—receiving technical support from Extension and industry personnel while conducting their studies. Farmers report their results at an annual winter meeting to which non-participating farmers and crop advisors are invited. Participants note that farmer research is a very important means to improving the area’s agriculture. Farmers highly value the interaction with other participants. As one farmer said, “Working with critical thinkers, farmers, and consultants is addictive and a formula for professional success.”

“I was interested in the potential return of lime and fertilizers in the soil. I just didn’t want to throw a great deal of money out on the soil without feeling secure of a potential return. The NSFGPP program provided me the academic and technical help to perform the study.”

On-Farm Research Participant

How it works…

There is no fee to join the network and you will gain valuable, useful information for your operation.

- The University of Nebraska works with the producer on developing and managing the field size research studies before and throughout the growing season and harvest. On-farm visits are made during the growing season.
- A Geographic Information System (GIS) technician and Extension educator will review the harvest plans with the grower in advance of harvest. Harvest data is collected and formatted by the GIS technician. Statistical analysis is reviewed with the UNL Department of Statistics.
- Local Extension educators meet with producers for individual consultations. Results and a financial analysis are shared with the producer and with collaborating faculty.
- An annual report including data from all producers involved in the project statewide is shared with producers and released to the public.

Your farm. Your equipment. Your questions answered.

The Research Process

- Meet with producers to determine their question(s)
- Private industry representatives typically involved
- Design research protocol
- Experimental designs are paired comparison studies and randomized complete block comparison studies
- Studies are field size research plots—all work conducted with farmer’s equipment
- Growing season observations are documented
- Crop yield is measured using weigh wagons or yield monitors
- Meet with farmers to review their results and determine profitability of their study, then plan for the next growing season
- Facilitate data sharing among farmers
- Publish results

Documented Benefit

From “Will this work on my farm?” to “These are the results on my farm.”

The on-farm research process is shared by faculty, industry professionals and farmers. Collectively, this process yields relevant and valued applied research data. Research data is shared among agriculturalists at regional forums and on the UNL Extension on-farm research website.

Nebraska corn growers are constantly challenged to grow corn responsibly using proven best-management practices with less impact on the environment while conserving natural resources. All of this while trying to make a profit. The goal of the UNL Extension and Nebraska Corn Growers Association partnership is to implement a statewide on-farm research program addressing critical farmer production, profitability and natural resources questions.

Growers can choose from one or more of these research studies:

1. Irrigation—water application management in corn production.
2. Nitrogen management—in corn production—both irrigated and rainfed.
3. Corn population study—in irrigated and rainfed.

The Nebraska Agricultural Water Management Network (NAWMN) will play an important role in this project. NAWMN provides a way to transfer high quality research-based information to Nebraskans through a series of demonstration and research projects established in farmers’ fields. Modern tools and technologies are implemented to enhance crop water use efficiency and reduce irrigation energy consumption. Over 700 growers currently participate in the Network.

NAWMN participants report saving an average 2” of water or $20/acre energy costs.

A 2006 evaluation of on-farm research programs in the Southeast District revealed participating farmers improved their annual whole farm profitability by $2,370 in planting, $3,643 in tillage, $5,188 in soil fertility, and $3,181 in pest management systems, respectively.

All results from the on-farm research programs posted on the Cropwatch on-farm research website have been screened and reviewed by a team of UNL Extension Educators and Specialists. Statistical analysis is conducted on all research data. In many cases, the economics of the study results are also included.

http://cropwatch.unl.edu/web/farmresearch

“With this group of producers, I trust the data. This is unbiased data collected from some very good producers in the region.”

On-Farm Research Participant

Land-Grant Mission

“No other country has focused such attention on the practical (applied) dimension of education by extending and applying the knowledge base of our land-grant universities to the laboratories of real life where people live and work, develop and lead.”

—Wayne D. Rasmussen (1989) Taking the University to the People: Seven Fifty Years of Cooperative Extension