

Using On-Farm Tests

Cooperative Extension Service
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Home Economics



Guide A-608

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Rapid development of new technologies applied to agriculture and new genetic techniques make it essential for farmers to stay competitive. Consider what it would mean if farmers could increase the silage yield by 300 to 500 pounds per acre. If those farmers were selecting the best set of hybrids for their operations, it's not an unreasonable goal. On-farm test plots are one of the best tools producers can use to select new management systems, varieties, and hybrids.

Agricultural scientists test crops varieties or cultural practices in small plots. But well-conducted on-farm tests can provide additional information about the variety or practice under a broad

range of actual conditions that producers can encounter. This makes the results of on-farm tests relevant to farmers' practices, costs, and potential problems.

To get good information from on-farm tests, they should be conducted at several locations and over several years. It's also important to keep track of all the conditions that can vary from site to site or year to year. Some of these factors include weather, soil types, fertilizer applications, irrigation, as well as insecticides and herbicides that may have been used.

Use the attached record sheets to chart your own on-farm tests.

On-Farm Research Management

Producer/farm: _____

Address: _____

Date planted: _____

Date harvested: _____

Treatments compared:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____

Objectives

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Crop rotation (previous 3 years)

Last year: _____

2 years ago: _____

3 years ago: _____

Rain (per month)

Jan: _____ May: _____ Sep: _____

Feb: _____ June: _____ Oct: _____

Mar: _____ July: _____ Nov: _____

Apr: _____ Aug: _____ Dec: _____

Observations (such as, insects, diseases)

Date:	Observation
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____

Inputs

Fungicides (Type, rate, method):

1. _____
2. _____

Herbicides (Type, rate, method):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Insecticides (Type, rate, method):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Fertilizer (Type, rate, method):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Tillage operations (Type, method)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Irrigations (Date, amount applied)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Other inputs:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

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