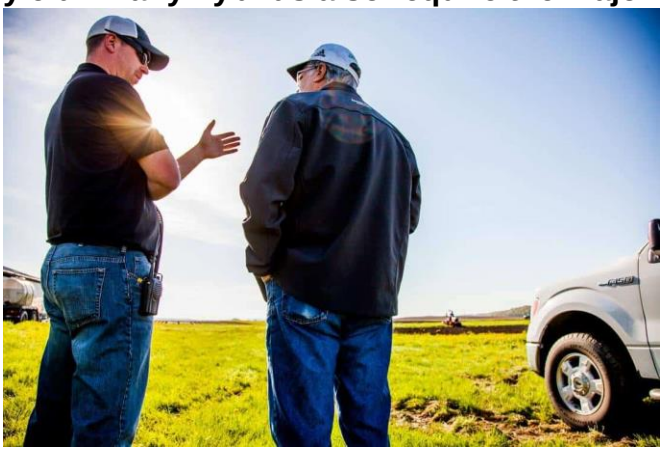
Have you decided how many acres of corn you are planting in 2019?

As we attempt to wind up a rather slow harvest, many of you have started planning for next year. Early indications are that Nitrogen prices may be higher this next season. There are many global and domestic reasons for the increase in cost. I won't even attempt to explain that in this article. I also know that higher priced Nitrogen is counterintuitive to current corn prices. So, what are some factors we need to consider when it comes to managing our nitrogen usage for next year?

Today's modern, high yielding hybrids often require more nitrogen to produce top end yield. Many hybrids also require the majority of that nitrogen during the pollination and grain fill period. With that said, when are we applying nitrogen and in what form. Our geography is about evenly split between 28% and NH3 users. There are also a few using urea or AMS. Some of you apply all your Nitrogen up front with pre-plant NH3 applications or over the top 28% "weed and feed" applications. Others put some N up front with the planter or herbicide and then side dress with either 28% or NH3. The form and timing of N can determine how much is still available later in the season, when the plant needs it most.



If prices for N are up this next year, it makes sense that each customer consider stabilizing the product to make sure it's available later in the season when the plant needs it most. Depending of the form of N you are using, it's possible to lose 10-15% of nitrogen per acre each time it rains 1" or more. Nitrogen in the nitrate form can move 5 – 12" in the soil with each rainfall depending on soil type. UAN (28%) liquid nitrogen, if applied to the top of the ground, can be susceptible to 30-40% losses due to volatilization. Side-dress applications are not immune to loss before the corn plant needs it most either. Many of you are side-dressing V2-V5 corn. If the majority of N is taken up by the plant from V10 to grain fill, there is plenty of time for large rainfall events to move N down in the soil into tile and thus unavailable for the plant.

Ag Plus recommends stabilizing your nitrogen to prevent loss of product and prolong it's availability to the plant. N-serve and Nutrishphere NH3 are great options for NH3 and Instinct II and Nutrishphere HV for UAN are excellent products to stabilize your 28% or Urea. These products have different modes of action and ways they protect against nitrogen loss. All of the mentioned products promote raising yields by 5% or more. If your expected yield is 200 bu., then you can expect average yield increases of at least 10%. In years like 2017 and 2018, with large rainfall events after nitrogen applications, the yield response and return on investment have been even higher. The Ag Plus staff is well educated on selecting the right product for your operation. We can even utilize the Winfield United R7 CHT charts that track hundreds of hybrid trials and generate a Response to Nitrogen score to better manage individual varieties. Please get in touch with your local Ag Plus salesperson this winter and have the conversation about protecting you N against loss. Making the decision to stabilize your nitrogen in 2019 could just make the difference between a profitable or unprofitable year.