



Cutting back on micronutrients this year could mean risky economics

“Should I cut back on my micronutrients this year?”

Given the current economic outlook, this may be a common question among your grower customers. There are a number of things to consider before you respond. The following summarizes a study¹ that examined the return on investment from various fertilizer applications.

The study looked at yield of corn in a trial with and without N and P, and Copper. Soil tests indicated the field was deficient in copper, and recommended N, P, and copper.

Treatment	Yield (bu/acre)	Net per acre	Cost of fertilizer	Margin contribution
No P, no N, no micro	28.0	\$ 114.94	\$ -	
P at 80 lbs, N at 120 lbs, no micro	64.7	\$ 265.15	\$ 70.40	\$ 2.13
P at 80 lbs, N at 120 lbs + Copper	93.0	\$ 381.39	\$ 75.40	\$ 3.53

Adding N and P increased the yield by over 30 bu/ac, and provided a margin contribution of \$2.13 (every dollar spent on N and P provided a return of \$2.13). On the surface, this would be a positive return. However, full yield potential was not achieved because of a shortage of copper.

When the researchers added copper to the macronutrients, yield jumped *another* 30 bu/ac, and the farmer increased his margin contribution by two-thirds (from \$2.13 to \$3.53 for every dollar spent on fertilizer). In fact, the farmer achieved a return of **over \$23** for every dollar he spent on the copper application.

¹ From 2006, *Lisuma, et al., Agron J., 98: 402-406.*

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Looking at it another way, each pound of N gave the grower 0.5 bu/acre if he did not add the micronutrients he needed but each pound of N added 0.7 bu/acre if he also fed his crop the micronutrients the crop needed.

So, how to answer your grower-customers?

Feeding your crop some needed nutrients but not others may save you money, but it may also cost you in reduced yields, and reduced returns at the end of the season. Not addressing nutrient deficiencies is inefficient from an economic point of view. The bottom line is, if your crop needs micronutrients to reach full yield potential, don't skimp on them!

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For more information on the Wolf Trax DDP family of Innovative Micronutrients, please call 204-237-9653, or visit us at www.wolftrax.com.