Realistic yield goals—nutrient management to protect water quality


Recent surveys have shown that many crop producers are overly optimistic in assessing their yield goals. Because fertilizer recommendations are normally based on yield goal, selecting an unrealistically high yield goal leads to over-fertilization and loss of farm income and potentially threatens water quality. The key is to select a yield goal that is both realistic and achievable, based on soil potential and level of crop management utilized.

The farmer should achieve a yield goal at least 50 percent of the time before that yield goal is used to determine the appropriate fertilizer recommendations. If the desired goal is seldom achieved, factors other than soil fertility may be limiting yield.