

October

Ensure that adequate nutrients will be available for a newly planted wheat crop.

If soil pH needs adjusting and you have not done so, go ahead and apply lime before planting. Next, give wheat a good start by fertilizing according to soil test recommendations, especially with regard to phosphorus, potassium and sulfur. When the crop is planted on time, 15 to 30 pounds of preplant nitrogen per acre should be sufficient to promote maximum growth and tillering.

Nutrition will be especially important if wheat is planted after grain sorghum on sandy soils with low CEC because soil nutrient reserves may have been significantly depleted. In that situation, be particularly attentive to crop development. Yellowing, poor stand establishment and lack of tillering could signal a need for additional nitrogen as the season progresses.

Remember to check for nematode problems during crop harvest.

Plant-parasitic nematodes are common in all field crop soils and often lower yields without being very apparent. Fall is an excellent time to find out if nematode populations are high and, if so, to develop a plan to manage them. When the weather is good for harvest, it is also good for collecting soil samples for nematode assay.

Nematode populations peak at the end of the growing season so samples assayed at this time provide an accurate description of potential hazards. If you submit samples in the fall, you will have time to plan a management strategy.

If you noticed localized areas of poor growth during the growing season, it is a good idea to collect separate soil samples from good and poor areas. Submit two samples from each of these areas—one for nematode assay and one for soil fertility. Comparison of results from good and poor areas and from nematode assays and soil tests is helpful in pinpointing a problem.

Before planting legume cover or forage crops, be sure to submit soil samples, or get revised recommendations based on recent soil report data.

High fertilizer costs may have you considering the use of legumes as a cover crop or as part of a forage program. If so, be sure to refer to recent soil report data for your fields as you plan. Legumes have different fertility than many traditional crops.

It is usually not necessary to collect new soil samples from fields that have been sampled within the last two (sandy soils) or three (clay soils) years. To get revised/updated recommendations for your current situation, consult your regional agronomist. If you need to collect new samples, send them to the Agronomic Division soil testing lab now to avoid the processing delays that are common during the fall/winter. The sooner you get your results, the sooner you'll be able to finalize lime and fertilizer purchases or make plans to plant legume cover or forage crops to supply additional nitrogen.

Fall is an ideal time to apply lime.

Fall liming is an excellent way to prepare for the spring growing season. Whether you are renovating your yard, preparing a new landscape planting or readying your fields for the next crop, fall is the best time to apply lime. However, lime should only be applied according to the recommendations from a recent soil report.

Take advantage of dry fall weather to apply lime as soon as possible. If you delay, wet weather may prevent the application even longer. The earlier you put out lime, the sooner soil pH will be adjusted to meet your planting needs.