Dear Producer:

This week: two charts and an attachment! First…the charts…
The following chart is from the KSU Corn Production Handbook.

The chart above shows the point (based on days after emergence) that nutrient uptake starts to increase – around 35 days give or take. That rapid nutrient uptake means that corn can start to show a couple of things:

1. If it’s got N available to it, it seems to really take off and start growing. If it doesn’t, it can show symptoms of deficiency. In short, if you haven’t started a N monitoring/evaluation system yet – it’s a good time to start paying close attention to the crop.

2. If there are issues that can lead to K deficiency, this may start showing up as well. While potassium deficiencies can certainly be the result of low soil test K levels, they can also be brought on by compaction issues, crown rots, etc…
This chart shows the form of N as found in soil tests at varying growth stages. In short, it should underscore the value of understanding the N cycle as you are trying to make potential decisions on whether added N will be needed or not. The conversion to NO3 – what many soil test labs analyze for – happens after corn reaches the V8 stage. At that point, we may be underestimating the amount of N in the soil profile if we only look at a soil test. Is N monitoring valuable? Absolutely! Is there a foolproof way of knowing exactly how much N might be lost (or not lost, for that matter…)? That’s a lot tougher task! Other validation tools to consider would be N reference strips (areas of high N rates in a field that will likely not become deficient) and/or tissue testing. For more information on tissue testing, click here.

I wish I could tell you how much N has been lost thus far this season. I cannot. Every situation is different, but there has very likely been some level of loss – with the potential for more if temperatures increase in June (they very likely will) and soils become saturated. Keep in mind as well that we may have plenty of N to get us to reproductive stages, but then become deficient as we progress in to reproduction. With greater than 30% of our N needs coming after the start of reproduction, being short during these growth stages is not advised. Manage N needs appropriately, based on a logical yield goal for the season we have had.

The attached PDF document is announcement of the second in our three part Tailgate Talk forage management series coming up on Wednesday evening, June 26th. We’ll start @ 5:30 at a pasture located NE of Oskaloosa (directions on the flyer) and be hosted for the evening by Perry Ranch of Oskaloosa. The topics for this Tailgate Talk will be weed/brush control and electric fencing. If you want to attend, please RSVP by Tuesday, June 25th to the Oskaloosa Office of the Meadowlark Extension District @ (785) 863-2212 or by e-mailing me @ dhallaue@ksu.edu .

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