



Wisconsin Association of **Professional Agricultural** **Consultants**

WAPAC is an association of consulting professionals who advise farmers in crop production, dairy nutrition, animal health, financial planning, engineering, regulatory compliance, education and overall farm management. We represent these many fields of professional expertise to provide technical recommendations and ideas to increase production, profitability and environmental stewardship in all facets of farming in Wisconsin. Please visit us at: www.wapac.info

Briefly:

- 1) We support nutrient management implementation. Relevant committees or workgroups should be comprised of at least 50% active farmers and professional agricultural consultants.
- 2) We promote research based nutrient management as a tool for improving water quality. We advocate for WAPAC and FARMER input on any revisions to nutrient management regulations in Wisconsin.
- 3) We encourage the continued cooperative efforts between farmers, agency staff, and professional agricultural consultants to address environmental concerns that maintain or improve our soil and water resources.
- 4) We support efforts to expand fertilizer research in Wisconsin with emphasis on increasing both yields and profitability on the farm while protecting the environment.
- 5) We support and promote science based Integrated Pest Management research and implementation in Wisconsin.
- 6) We support Right to Farm legislation, the objectives of the Farmland Preservation Program within the Working Lands Initiative and Use Value Assessment to keep Wisconsin land in production agriculture.
- 7) We support any and all initiatives for broadband access in ALL areas of Wisconsin

In More Detail:

- 1) We support nutrient management implementation. Relevant committees or workgroups should be comprised of at least 50% active farmers and professional agricultural consultants.
 - a. Active farmers and professional consultants are responsible for rule implementation.
 - b. By having farmers and professional consultants on these committees (i.e. farmer-led watershed groups), positive outcomes are greatly increased with practical solutions.

- 2) We promote research based nutrient management as a tool for improving water quality. We advocate for WAPAC and FARMER input on any revisions to nutrient management regulations in Wisconsin.
 - a. Nutrient management is a system used by farmers and consultants to manage the right amount, right timing, right placement, and right form of nutrients whether it is manure, commercial fertilizer or another form of nutrient.
 - b. We support uniform implementation of nutrient management standards among County Land Conservation Departments, NRCS, DATCP, and WI-DNR.
 - c. Wisconsin should not limit itself to a single software tool for nutrient management plan development.
 - d. Have better oversight of software for nutrient management planning
 - e. We oppose the practice of codifying University nutrient recommendations and NRCS Standards into regulatory statutes. We support sound agronomic research and professional judgement as a basis for implementing nutrient management programs.
 - f. We support continued funding of nutrient management plans written by certified crop professionals.

- 3) We encourage the continued cooperative efforts between farmers, agency staff, and professional agricultural consultants to address environmental concerns that maintain or improve our soil and water resources.
- a. We support the existing cost sharing process within DATCP, DNR, and LCD that encourages voluntary soil and water quality projects on farms.
 - b. We support the Producer Led Watershed Grant program within DATCP
 - c. We support innovative solutions regarding water quality standards that benefit Wisconsin farmers and improve water quality especially as it relates to point/non-point trading and adaptive management.
 - d. We support the utilization and development of innovative tools that improve the development and implementation of soil conservation plans.
 - i. Soil depth to bedrock verification
 - ii. Groundwater flow, presence, and quality (i.e. nitrates and pathogens)
- 4) We support efforts to expand fertilizer research in Wisconsin with emphasis on increasing both yields and profitability on the farm while protecting the environment.
- a. The primary funding tool for fertilizer research in Wisconsin is the Wisconsin Fertilizer Research Program (WFRP) which is administered through DATCP.
 - b. The WFRP is currently funded at a rate of \$0.17/ton of fertilizer sold to Wisconsin farmers which generated approximately \$315,000 in 2017. For comparison, in Minnesota the fee collected for research has been \$0.40/ton for several years and in 2017 they generated \$1.1 million dollars. Illinois generated \$2.3 million in 2017 with their \$0.75/ton tonnage fee dedicated for research. We would advocate for an increase in WFRP funding to \$0.50/ton which would give Wisconsin a little over \$900,000.00 to work with each year, and there will be no associated 'overhead' costs, they would remain the same as they are currently. In order to meet the current inflation rate since the inception of the tonnage fee in 1981, we should at least raise the research tonnage fee by 33 to 34 cents.
 - c. A typical fertilizer research project costs \$30,000-40,000/year over a three-year period for a total of \$90,000-120,000/project.
 - d. We support a goal of funding the WFRP at a rate of least \$0.50/ton of fertilizer sold which would generate approximately \$900,000/year for fertilizer research within the UW System for the benefit of Wisconsin farmers.
 - e. Unbiased science-based crop production research, such as that conducted within the UW System, is critically important to the Wisconsin farmer and the consulting industry.

5) We support and promote science based Integrated Pest Management research and implementation in Wisconsin.

- a. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) blends the science of pest biology with control technology. The goal is to find the best solution to a pest problem (or combination of problems), taking into consideration both the economic and environmental impacts of control decisions.
- b. We support State and Federal funding for local and regional University and agency IPM programing.
- c. We support responsible use of seed traits, fungicides, and other chemical or organic practices that are used on farms in conjunction with sound field scouting and the use of pest threshold monitoring.
- d. We support the continued use of atrazine in Wisconsin and recognize its important contribution to economical weed control in the state.
- e. We also support methodology to remove atrazine prohibition areas that are no longer of concern.

6) We support Right to Farm legislation, the objectives of the Farmland Preservation Program within the Working Lands Initiative and Use Value Assessment to keep Wisconsin land in production agriculture.

- a. We support the intent of Wisconsin's Right to Farm Legislation in an effort to protect farmers from frivolous lawsuits.
- b. We support the preservation of farmland in Wisconsin for the production of food, fuel, and fiber.
- c. We support Wisconsin's Use Value Assessment as a tool to encourage continued agricultural stewardship in our communities.
- d. We support financial incentives to continue the Farmland Preservation Program within the Working Lands Initiative and support established protocols to remove land for anything other than farming.

7) We support any and all initiatives for broadband access in ALL areas of Wisconsin

- a. High speed internet service is not only important for the transmittal and receipt of farm information but also important as students complete homework. Enterprising young professionals will not reside in an area that has poor internet service.