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# WHAT DOES WINNING LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

When it comes to the end of a growing season there are many factors that go into determining if the year was a win. Some years, just getting crops out of the field was a win. Unfortunately, Mother Nature is not something we can control. Every year for someone it's too hot, too cold, too wet or too dry. There is no such thing as a "normal" growing season. There are however, many factors we can control. Crop nutrition and other crop inputs is one of these. Whether you know it or not, many of these decisions go back to what you consider winning.

What does winning look like for you? Here are three examples of different grower situations. Each take a little different approach in their fertility buying decisions, but they are all winners based upon how they measure success.

## YIELD

This grower wins if he has top yield. Being able to win a yield contest or earn bragging rights at the local coffee shop is the most important, top yield is the goal. Input costs and time are still important but not as critical.



To get top yields, crops can never be hungry for nutrients. If this is you, look at increasing your fertilizer rates and adding additional secondary or micronutrients into your fertility program. Spoon feeding fertility throughout the season is another great way to ensure your crop has all the nutrients in needs. Foliar applications or adding other nutrients into your in-season nitrogen program have also proven beneficial.

## PROFIT

To win in profit, this grower knows their economic return. They know what yield they can realistically achieve and make their buying decisions based upon their expected income. Yield is a very important piece, but only within spending limits. Every application is carefully planned and fits into their budget.

If you are looking for top profit, you can be a little risky and spend the extra dollars if there is high probability to produce returns in the future. An economically planned fertilizer program which includes N, P, K and micronutrients is necessary. Your best bet is to understand your soils and crop needs and work with your IFA Crop Advisor to best spend your fertilizer budget dollars.

## RETURN

The grower that wins with return on investment looks for balance between budget and yield. Achieving top yield isn't necessary as long as there is a good return on the dollars spent. These growers carefully weigh out every fertilizer input dollar and the potential return before making a buying decision. Often, it's less about dollars per acre and more focused on total dollars spent. Fertilizer is an investment; they expect to get their money back plus some.

If this is the category you fall into, you need to do your homework. Looking at research to help determine the potential return on the dollars spent is a great start. There is little room for risky purchases here and using a soil test to

develop the best fertilizer program will be key. In fact, careful planning with your IFA Crop Advisor will help determine which nutrients are best to spend dollars on to increase their turn on money invested.

## THE PERSONAL CHALLENGE

In recent years, a group from AgroLiquid's research and sales teams have taken advantage of the North Central Research Station to conduct an economic challenge experiment. Each person developed a fertilizer program based on a soil test, with the goal of whatever they felt they would "win" the challenge. For this analysis, only fertilizer costs and corn value were used in the final calculations. It is evident that each person had different views of winning which has influenced their fertilizer programs and results. This year grower Tim "won" by achieving top yield with 203 bu/A, but gave up some profit and had a lower return on investment.

In comparison, grower Galynn had a slightly lower yield and improved their return, but won in profit with over \$457/A gained.

Grower Stephanie had a good yield and was profitable but won on return on investment. For every dollar spent on fertilizer they received \$4.50 in return. Three different growers, fertilizer programs and perceptions of winning. In hindsight, we should have established exactly what would constitute winning – because each of these growers is claiming bragging rights.

Every operation is different and the target for winning looks different for everyone. If you haven't already, sit back and think about what winning looks like for you. Whatever it is, AgroLiquid has the products and IFA has the experts to move you closer to that target.

Please contact your local IFA Crop Advisor and make winning part of your crop planning for this coming season.

*\*This article was adapted from an article by Stephanie Zelinko, AgroLiquid Sales Team. AgroLiquid is a trusted partner with IFA for liquid fertilizer.*

	GROWER	YIELD (bu/R)	PROFIT (\$/R)	RETURN
PROFIT	GALYNN	189.3	\$457.41	4.3
RETURN	STEPHANIE	180.3	\$439.07	4.5
YIELD	TIM	203.2	\$453.55	3.5
<b>PROFIT = VALUE OF CORN (GROSS VALUE) - COST OF FERTILIZER (EXPENSE)</b> <b>RETURN = VALUE OF CORN (GROSS VALUE) / FERTILIZER COSTS (EXPENSE)</b>				

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