

The best soybean management practices by Extension researchers from across the United States

# Foliar Fertilizers Rarely Increase Yield in U.S. Soybean

#### **Foliar Fertilizer Overview**

There is interest among farmers and agronomists to test different fertilizer products to improve soybean yield. With increasing soybean yields across the U.S., there are concerns that fields with higher yields may need supplemental fertilizer. Soybean farmers are interested in foliar products that apply a mixture of micronutrients

#### **Take Home Messages**

- This coordinated study was conducted in 16 states at 46 sites.
- The tested prophylactic foliar fertilizers did not increase soybean yield.
- Foliar fertilizers did not change grain protein and oil concentration.
- Some tested prophylactic foliar fertilizers decreased profitability, and no tested products increased profitability.

This paper is Open Access! More details about the trial, including individual site results, are available in the full publication at: <u>https://</u> doi.org/10.1002/agj2.20889 and macronutrients and can be tank-mixed with insecticides and fungicides and applied during early reproductive growth (R1-R4). This timeline corresponds with a period of high nutrient uptake for soybean (Gaspar et al., 2017).

Foliar fertilizers enter the plant through the leaves, first passing through the waxy cuticle, then the cell wall, and finally the cell membrane. Foliar fertilizers enter leaves more quickly when stomata are open, since stomata aid passage past the waxy cuticle (Fageria et al., 2009). Macronutrients are more mobile than micronutrients in plant tissues, with the exceptions of Ca and S (Fageria et al., 2009). For immobile nutrients, foliar fertilization may help distribute essential nutrients to deficient plant parts.

#### **Past Foliar-applied Macronutrient Trials**

Past foliar fertilizer research has shown inconsistent impacts on soybean yield, with soybean yield increases associated with N-P-K-S application of up to 8 bu/A observed in Iowa in the 1970s (Garcia L. & Hanway, 1976) despite a contemporaneous study in Wisconsin showing much smaller yield increases associated only with N application (Syverud et al., 1980). In a Minnesota study, the yield benefit to N-P-K-S foliar fertilization was only observed in one out of 16 trial site-years, and no yield benefit to micronutrient application (Poole et al., 1983).

Larger studies in the 1990s in Iowa showed small, inconsistent increases in yield with early-season prophylactic foliar fertilizer application, including yield increases in plots treated with N-P-K of less than 1 bu/A at 10 out of 48 site-years (Haq & Mallarino, 1998). In a subsequent on-farm strip trial testing N-P-K fertilization, there was a 0.5 bu/A increase in soybean yield at one out of eight sites (Mallarino et al., 2001). The associated small-plot trial tested a wider range of nutrient rates and had two responsive locations out of 18 with a 1.4 to 5.3 bu/A increase in soybean yield when N, P, and K were applied (Mallarino et al., 2001).

Agronomists in Michigan have performed extensive foliar fertilizer trials in soybean since 2000. Out of the 51 location N-P-K product trials, four locations had increased yield in fertilized plots. Three of 18 locations in Michigan had higher yield in N-treated plots than control plots (Staton, 2019).

#### **Past Foliar-applied Micronutrient Trials**

Prophylactic application of micronutrients has shown similarly minimal effects on soybean yield. Between the 1980s and today, trials in Iowa, Minnesota, and Michigan have not shown a yield increase in soybean associated with Fe, Zn, B, Co, Cu, Zn, Mn, or Mo foliar prophylactic application (Mallarino et al., 2001; Poole et al., 1983). Rare response to micronutrients has been observed in Ohio, where less than 2% of Mn trials have seen an increase in yield when fertilizer was applied and less than 5% of trials treated with a mixture of Mn. Fe, Cu, Mo, and B fertilizers had an observed soybean yield increase (Sharma et al., 2018). In Michigan fields with high pH lakebed soils that are likely to respond to Mn application, foliar Mn application only increased yield when it was applied after visual symptoms of nutrient deficiency began, but not when Mn was applied prophylactically (Staton, 2019).

## **Trial Objectives**

Past foliar fertilizer research indicates that yield increases are infrequent. This study was a coordinated effort across 16 states to test the effects of macronutrient and micronutrient foliar fertilization across the primary soybean producing region of the U.S. and includes a broad range of commercially available foliar fertilizer products. The objectives of this study were to:

- Identify soybean grain yield response to prophylactic foliar fertilizer application across a broad range of environments.
- Determine if foliar fertilizer application changes soybean grain composition.
- Conduct economic analyses on the value of these products in U.S. soybean production.

Table 1. Nutrients applied for each treatment in Ib./A.



#### **Tested Products**

Foliar fertilizer products vary based on the nutrients they contain and their relative concentrations, the formulation of the product, the recommended product rate, and other application recommendations. In this trial, we selected six commercially available foliar nutrient products that are marketed nationwide for soybean production. These products included different nutrients at different rates (Table 1).

Each product label included different application instructions, including recommended rates and application timings. We applied all treatments at the R3 soybean growth stage (beginning pod) and used an application rate within the range specified on each product label (Table 2.)

| Treatment Name                                     | N   | Р    | К   | S    | Mn   | Fe   | Мо    | Zn   | В    | Other             |
|--|-----|------|-----|------|------|------|-------|------|------|-------------------|
| FertiRain™   | 3.5 | 0.9  | 0.9 | 0.5  | 0.02 | 0.03 | -     | 0.03 | -    | -                 |
| Sure-K®  | 0.6 | 0.3  | 1.7 | -    | -    | -    | -     | -    | -    | -                 |
| Harvest More <sup>®</sup> Urea Mate                | 0.1 | 0.25 | -   | -    | 0.01 | -    | 0.002 | 0.01 | -    | Ca, Mg, B, Co, Cu |
| BRANDT <sup>®</sup> Smart B-Mo                     | -   | -    | -   | -    | -    | -    | 0.006 | -    | 0.07 | -                 |
| BRANDT <sup>®</sup> Smart Quatro <sup>®</sup> Plus | -   | -    | -   | 0.04 | 0.08 | -    | 0.003 | 0.08 | 0.06 | -                 |
| MAXIMUM N-PACT® K                                  | 1.9 | -    | 1.9 | -    | -    | -    | -     | -    | -    | -                 |
| Untreated Control                                  | -   | -    | -   | -    | -    | -    | -     | -    | -    | -                 |

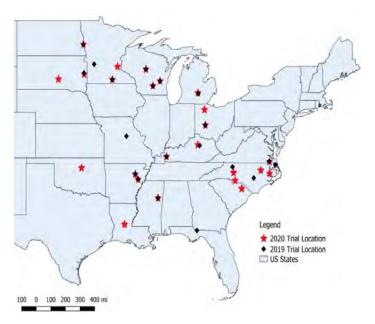
Table 2. List of foliar products names, brands and application rate.

| Treatment Name                                     | Company    | Application Rate |
|--|------------|------------------|
| FertiRain™   | AgroLiquid | 3 gal/A          |
| Sure-K <sup>®</sup>                                | AgroLiquid | 3 gal/A          |
| Harvest More® Urea Mate                            | Stoller    | 2.5 lbs/A        |
| BRANDT <sup>®</sup> Smart B-Mo                     | BRANDT     | 1 pt/A           |
| BRANDT <sup>®</sup> Smart Quatro <sup>®</sup> Plus | BRANDT     | 1 qt/A           |
| MAXIMUM N-PACT® K                                  | Nutrien    | 1.5 gal/A        |
| Untreated Control                                  | -          | -                |

## **Trial Methods**

Small-plot field trials took place in 2019 and 2020 at a total of 46 sites in 16 states (Figure 1). The six foliar nutrient products (Table 2) and an untreated control were applied in a randomized complete block design with four to eight replications depending on site. Products were applied at soybean growth stage R3 to align with commonly used fungicide and insecticide application timing. Site soil properties and management practice are summarized in Supplemental Table 1.

*Figure 1.* Trial locations in 2019 and 2020, displayed with red stars and black diamonds, respectively. South Carolina and Louisiana have two nearby sites each that appear as a single marker due to the scale of this map.



Products were applied to plots using backpack sprayers at the R3 growth stage. Leaf tissue samples were taken before foliar products were applied at R3 and two weeks following application. At both sampling time points, the newest fully expanded trifoliate leaf was collected from 20 plants per plot and dried in paper bags before being shipped to the North Carolina Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services Agronomic Division (Raleigh, North Carolina) for analysis.

Yield data were collected using plot combines at each site and adjusted to 13% moisture. Grain protein and oil concentrations were measured via near-infrared spectroscopy (NIR) and reported at a standard moisture of 13%.

#### **Analysis Methods**

Cost of foliar fertilizer products were assessed by calling retailers in the study region in 2019 and averaging the cost of product per acre at the application rate used in the study (Table 2). Partial profits were calculated by multiplying yield by the price of soybean grain and subtracting the cost of the foliar fertilizer product. Application costs were not considered since these products are frequently applied by farmers as part of a tank-mix with foliar fungicides and insecticides. Calculations were performed at \$10 and \$15 per bushel to be reflective of recent soybean prices.

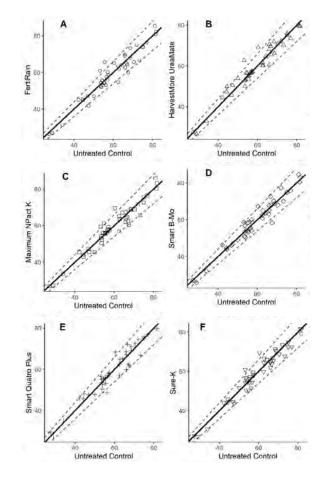
Change in tissue nutrient concentration was calculated by subtracting nutrient concentration from the preapplication samples from the nutrient concentration from the two-week post-application samples. Details on the statistical analysis used can be found in the scientific publication.

## Results

The treated plots and untreated control plots yielded similarly. Each subplot in Figure 2 compares yield in a fertilized treatment to yield in the untreated control. When points fall above the solid line, it indicates that the fertilized plots yielded higher than the untreated control plots at a particular site. Points falling below the solid line indicate a site where the untreated control plots yielded higher than the fertilized plot. When points are between the solid line and dashed line, the treated and untreated plots at that site yielded within 10% of each other. The few points that fell above the 10% yield increase line tended to have average yields near 60 bu/A. All sites with average yields higher than 80 bu/A had mean treated plot yield within 10% of the untreated control plots for all foliar fertilizer products (Figure 2). Observed differences in yield among treatments were not statistically significant (F=0.23, p=0.9663). There was not a significant interaction between site and treatment, which indicates that all products performed similarly across all sites.

Given the uniformity of the response across these 46 sites, there is no evidence that foliar fertilizers increase soybean yield in the absence of visual symptoms of nutrient deficiency. Similar results were observed in a smaller geographic area in past trials from Iowa and Michigan, where micronutrient and macronutrient foliar fertilization did not consistently increase soybean grain yield (Mallarino et al., 2001; Staton, 2019).

Figure 2. Average yield (bu/A) at each site for each treatment plotted against the average yield of the untreated control at the same site for treatments (A) FertiRain<sup>™</sup>, (B) Harvest More<sup>®</sup> Urea Mate, (C) MAXIMUM N-PACT<sup>®</sup> K, (D) BRANDT<sup>®</sup> Smart B-Mo, (E) BRANDT<sup>®</sup> Smart Quatro<sup>®</sup> Plus, and (F) Sure-K<sup>®</sup>. Solid lines represent x=y, and the dashed lines represent ±10% of yield.



The sites tested in this trial included a wide range of soil chemical and physical properties (Supplemental Table 1). When analyzed individually, four of the 46 site-years had significantly different yield between treatments, but there was not a discernable reason for those four sites to respond when 42 did not. Soil properties were not necessarily predictive of yield response. Sites such as Princeton, Kentucky (2020) and Fargo, North Dakota (2019), had soil test P concentration below 15 ppm, but did not have a yield response to treatment. Site soil pH ranged from 4.7 to 8.3, and generally sites with pH higher than 7.5 or 8 have lower micronutrient availability. All four responsive sites had soil pH between 6.5 and 7.3, and pH was not predictive of site responsiveness.

Average protein and oil content across all sites and treatments was 37.6% and 20.6%, respectively. Differences in grain protein and oil content were observed among sites but not treatments. At nutrient application rates currently recommended by foliar fertilizer manufacturers, there is no evidence that fields that receive foliar fertilizer should be expected to have different grain protein or oil content as compared to fields that do not receive foliar fertilizer.

Across all sites and treatments, average leaf tissue Ca, Mn, and B concentration increased slightly between the preapplication sampling and the two weeks after application timepoint. Leaf tissue S concentration did not change between sampling timepoints, and concentration of N, P, K, Mg, Fe, and Cu decreased by less than 10% between the pre-application sampling timepoint and the two weeks after application timepoint. This is likely due to soybean plants partitioning an increasing proportion of their nutrient uptake to seeds relative to other plant parts after R4 (Gaspar et al., 2017). Across all nutrients tested, there was a significant difference in leaf tissue nutrient content among sites. Leaf tissue Mn, Cu, and B content varied among treatments.

Cost of foliar fertilizer products ranged from \$3.64 to \$22.27 per acre. Partial profits were different among treatments and sites at both tested soybean grain prices (\$10 and \$15 per bushel), and there was no interaction between treatment and site at either tested soybean grain price. At \$15 per bushel, plots treated with MAXIMUM N-PACT<sup>®</sup> K had \$24 per acre lower profits than the untreated control and at \$10 per bushel, plots treated with MAXIMUM N-PACT<sup>®</sup> K, Sure-K<sup>®</sup>, and FertiRain<sup>™</sup> had lower profits than the untreated control by \$23, \$21 and \$21 per acre, respectively (Table 3). While other treatments did not have statistically lower profits than the untreated control at the tested grain prices, application of foliar fertilizer products included in this study would not increase profit since foliar fertilizer treatments did not statistically increase soybean grain yield. Further reductions in profit may occur when applying foliar fertilizer using a ground-based applicator since wheel damage can reduce soybean yield by 3%-5% after R1 (Hanna et al., 2008).



*Table 3.* Mean partial profit at two soybean grain prices and mean grain yield, oil concentration, and protein concentration among foliar fertilizer treatments.

| Treatment   | Mean partial<br>profit at<br>soybean grain<br>price of \$15<br>per bu | Mean partial<br>profit at<br>soybean grain<br>price of \$10<br>per bu |
|---|---|---|
|   | USD per acre  | USD per acre  |
| Untreated Control                                     | 891 a*  | 595 a   |
| BRANDT <sup>®</sup> Smart B-Mo                        | 890 ab  | 593 a   |
| Harvest More® Urea Mate                               | 888 ab  | 591 a   |
| BRANDT <sup>®</sup> Smart<br>Quatro <sup>®</sup> Plus | 878 ab  | 584 ab  |
| FertiRain™  | 871 ab  | 574 b   |
| Sure-K  | 870 ab  | 574 b   |
| MAXIMUM N-PACT <sup>®</sup> K                         | 867 b   | 572 b   |

\*Means not sharing common letters within each column denote statistical differences among treatments ( $\alpha$  = .05). Bonferroni adjustments were used to adjust for multiplicity.

## Recommendations

Prophylactic foliar fertilizer applications did not consistently increase soybean yield or alter grain composition when applied at rates recommended by their manufacturer. Based on the results of this study and the current body of published agronomic research, there is no scientific evidence to support the use of foliar fertilizer products on soybeans in the absence of visual symptoms of nutrient deficiency.

#### Learn More

Further information on this trial, including individual site results, is available in the full publication at: https://doi.org/10.1002/agj2.20889.

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*Supplemental Table 1.* Planting date, management information and soil test result at each site. Phosphorous was extracted using Bray1-P ICP methods unless otherwise specified. Tillage and Irrigation were summarized as yes (Y) or no (N) variables. Soil texture for sites that did not measure soil particle size distribution was reported by each site using soil survey records.

| Year | Site                         | Tillage | Irrigation | Planting<br>Date | Harvest<br>Date | Seeding<br>Rate | Previous<br>Crop           | Relative<br>Maturity | Row<br>Space | pН  | Buffer<br>pH | Organic<br>Matter | Ρ     | к   | Mg      | Ca   | Na  | CEC                        | Sand | Silt | Clay | Texture<br>Class      |
|------|------------------------------|---------|------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------|-----|--------------|-------------------|-------|-----|---------|------|-----|----------------------------|------|------|------|-----------------------|
|      |                              |         |            |                  |                 | 1000 s/A        |                            |                      | in           |     |              | %                 |       |     | - ppm - |      |     | cmol<br>100g <sup>-1</sup> |      | %    |      |                       |
| 2019 | Newport,<br>AR               | Y       | Y          | 1-Jul            | 17-Oct          | 150             | corn                       | 4.6                  | 15           | 6.3 | 6.9          | 1.6               | 101   | 127 | 128     | 621  | 18  | 5.7                        |      |      |      | Silt Loam             |
| 2019 | Pine Tree,<br>AR             | Y       | Y          | 15-Jun           | 17-Oct          | 150             | soybean                    | 4.6                  | 15           | 6.7 | 7.0          | 2.0               | 23    | 76  | 208     | 1175 | 234 | 8.9                        |      |      |      | Silt Loam             |
| 2019 | Florida                      | Y       | Y          | 18-Jun           | 14-Nov          |                 | winter oats                | 7.6                  | 36           | 6.0 | 7.3          | 0.6               | 63    | 39  | 28      | 350  |     | 2.1                        | 88   | 6    | 6    | Sand                  |
| 2019 | Lexington,<br>KY             | Ν       | Y          | 21-May           | 3-Oct           | 120             | corn                       | 3.8                  | 15           |     |              | •                 |       |     | •       |      |     | •                          | ÷    | ·    |      | Silty Clay<br>Loam    |
| 2019 | Princeton,<br>KY             | Ν       | N          | 28-May           | 4-Oct           | 140             | corn                       | 4                    | 15           | 6.5 | 6.9          | 2.2               | 5     | 117 | 87      | 1530 | 13  | 9.7                        | 8    | 62   | 29   | Silty Clay<br>Loam    |
| 2019 | Michigan                     | Y       | Ν          | 16-May           | 23-Nov          | 130             | corn                       | 2                    | 15           |     | 6.9          | 2.1               | 45 *  | 111 | 145     | 1227 | 9   | 9.5                        | 42   | 34   | 24   | Loam                  |
| 2019 | Danvers,<br>MN               | Y       | Ν          | 2-Jun            | 17-Oct          | 140             |                            | 1.7                  | 30           | 8.1 |              | 4.4               | 54    | 320 | 870     | 5533 | 40  | 35.9                       | 51   | 27   | 22   | Sandy<br>Clay<br>Loam |
| 2019 | Minnesota<br>Lake, MN        | Y       | Ν          | 16-May           | 16-Oct          | 140             |                            | 2.1                  | 30           | 6.0 | 6.7          | 4.8               | 20    | 151 | 411     | 2325 | 13  | 20.0                       | 28   | 36   | 35   | Clay<br>Loam          |
| 2019 | Mississippi                  | Y       | Y          | 2-Jul            | 24-Oct          | 130             | corn                       | 4.8                  | 38           | 8.3 |              | 2.6               | 95 *  | 167 | 64      | 7344 | 15  | 37.8                       | 35   | 28   | 38   | Clay<br>Loam          |
| 2019 | Missouri                     | Ν       | Ν          | 20-May           | 28-Oct          | 160             | corn                       | 4.1                  | 30           | 5.8 |              | 2.4               | 21    | 125 |         |      |     |                            | 12   | 69   | 19   | Silt Loam             |
| 2019 | Currituck,<br>NC             | Y       | Ν          | 9-May            | 25-Oct          | 120             | corn                       | 5.4                  | 15           | 5.9 | 6.9          | 1.6               | 23    | 51  | 189     | 613  | 21  | 6.4                        | 31   | 51   | 18   | Silt Loam             |
| 2019 | Sampson,<br>NC               | Y       | Ν          | 22-May           | 24-Oct          | 120             | corn                       | 5.6                  | 15           | 6.0 | 6.9          | 1.0               | 113   | 62  | 46      | 325  | 17  | 3.5                        | 80   | 14   | 7    | Loamy<br>Sand         |
| 2019 | Yadkin, NC                   | Ν       | N          | 21-May           | 7-Nov           | 120             | soybean                    | 6.4                  | 30           | 5.5 | 6.9          | 1.9               | 66    | 68  | 54      | 338  | 12  | 3.6                        | 65   | 20   | 16   | Sandy<br>Loam         |
| 2019 | North                        | Ν       | N          | 17-May           | 29-Oct          | 185             | spring                     | 0.8                  | 14           | 7.8 |              | 5.3               | 14    | 383 |         |      |     |                            | 10   | 39   | 51   | Clay                  |
| 2019 | Dakota<br>Ohio               | Y       | N          | 22-May           | 10-Oct          | 150             | wheat<br>corn              | 3.3                  | 15           | 5.8 | 6.7          | 3.1               | 34 *  | 122 | 351     | 1995 |     | 17.1                       | 20   | 52   | 28   | Clay                  |
| 2019 | South                        | N       | N          | 8-Jun            | 26-Oct          | 150             | corn                       | 1.4                  | 30           | 6.1 | 6.7          | 4.9               | 24 *  | 157 | 638     | 2763 |     | 23.1                       | 21   | 49   | 31   | Loam<br>Silty Clay    |
| 2019 | Dakota<br>Virginia           | Y       | N          | 26-Jun           | 25-Nov          | 220             | winter<br>wheat<br>(double | 5.6                  | 15           | 6.3 |              | 1.1               | 34 §  | 130 | 115     | 973  |     | 3.9                        |      |      |      | Loam<br>Sandy<br>Loam |
| 2019 | Arlington,<br>Wl             | Y       | N          | 13-May           | 9-Oct           | 140             | crop)<br>corn              | 2                    | 15           | 7.0 | ÷            | 3.9               | 62    | 146 | 601     | 1825 | 36  | 14.7                       | 24   | 48   | 29   | Silt Loam             |
| 2019 | Fond du<br>Lac, WI           | Y       | N          | 7-Jun            | 12-Nov          | 140             | corn                       | 2                    | 15           | 7.3 |              | 3.1               | 30    | 169 | 476     | 1463 | 18  | 11.9                       | 16   | 60   | 25   | Silt Loam             |
| 2019 | Marshfield,                  | Y       | N          | 17-May           | 27-Oct          | 140             | corn                       | 2                    | 15           | 6.7 |              | 4.3               | 28    | 219 | 423     | 1150 | 37  | 10.7                       | 23   | 56   | 21   | Silt Loam             |
| 2020 | WI<br>Newport,               | Y       | Y          | 2-Jun            | 3-Nov           | 150             | corn                       | 4.5                  | 15           | 5.5 | 6.7          | 1.9               | 36    | 114 | 100     | 957  |     | 9.4                        |      |      |      | Silt Loam             |
| 2020 | AR<br>Pine Tree,             | Y       | Y          | 16-Jun           | 21-Oct          | 150             | rice                       | 4.5                  | 15           | 7.1 | 7.2          | 2.2               | 18    | 99  | 264     | 1324 |     | 9.2                        |      |      |      | Silt Loam             |
| 2020 | AR<br>Lexington,             | N       | Y          | 26-May           | 14-Oct          | 120             | corn                       | 3.9                  | 15           | 6.4 | 6.9          | 4.2               | 150 * | 84  | 191     | 2214 | •   | 14.5                       |      | 73   | 15   | Silt Loam             |
|      | KY<br>Princeton,             |         |            |                  |                 |                 |                            |                      |              | _   |              |                   |       |     |         |      |     | 14.5                       | 12   | 15   | 15   |                       |
| 2020 | KY<br>Chambers-              | N       | N          | 22-Apr           | 22-Oct          | 150             | corn                       | 4.6                  | 15           | 4.7 | 6.8          | 1.8               | 8*    | 206 | 82      | 1527 |     |                            | ·    | •    | •    | Silt Loam             |
| 2020 | East, LA<br>Chambers-        | Y       | N          | 22-Apr           | 16-Sep          | 123             | soybean                    | 4.5                  | 38           | 8.1 | •            | 0.8               | 21    | 67  | 183     | 2758 | 14  | 15.6                       | ·    | ·    |      | Silt Loam             |
| 2020 | West, LA                     | Y       | N          | 22-May           | 8-Oct           | 123             | corn                       | 4.9                  | 38           | 7.9 | •            | 1.2               | 23    | 94  | 234     | 2408 | 19  | 14.3                       | •    | ·    |      | Silt Loam             |
| 2020 | Michigan<br>Minnesota        | Y       | N          | 13-May           | 20-Oct          | 130             | corn                       | 2                    | 15           | 7.4 | •            | 2.3               | 16    | 67  | 260     | 1200 | •   | 8.4                        | 53   | 30   | 17   | Loam<br>Clay          |
| 2020 | Lake, MN<br>St. Paul,        | Y       | N          | 1-May            | 6-Oct           | 140             | corn                       | 2                    | 30           | ·   |              | •                 |       |     | •       | ·    | •   | ·                          | ·    |      |      | Loam                  |
| 2020 | MN                           | Y       | Y          | 26-Apr           | 30-Sep          | 140             | corn                       | 1.6                  | 30           | ·   | •            |                   | ·     | •   | •       | •    | •   | •                          | •    | ·    | ·    | Silt Loam             |
| 2020 | Mississippi                  | Y       | Y          | 14-May           | 1-Oct           | 130             | cotton                     | 4.6                  | 38           | 6.2 | 6.8          | 2.2               | 53    | 144 | 72      | 2110 | •   | •                          | •    | ·    | •    | Silty Clay<br>Loam    |
| 2020 | Beaufort,<br>NC              | Y       | N          | 15-May           | 3-Nov           | 100             | corn                       | 5.6                  | 30           | 5.8 | 6.4          | 5.0               | 74    | 148 | 286     | 1250 |     | 15.8                       | 47   | 33   | 20   | Loam                  |
| 2020 | Nash<br>(Rocky<br>Mount), NC | Y       | Ν          | 26-May           | 15-Oct          | 117             | cotton                     | 4.7                  | 36           | 6.5 | 7.1          | 1.2               | 35    | 100 | 98      | 483  | ÷   | 3.5                        | 63   | 28   | 8    | Sandy<br>Loarn        |
| 2020 | Rowan<br>(Salisbury),<br>NC  | Ν       | Ν          | 8-May            | 20-Oct          | 120             | cereal rye<br>cover crop   | 5.2                  | 30           | 6.7 | 6.9          | 5.4               | 207   | 242 | 290     | 2000 |     | 13.7                       | 38   | 35   | 27   | Clay<br>Loam          |
| 2020 | Union, NC                    | Ν       | N          | 26-Jun           | 6-Nov           | 140             | soybean                    | 5.5                  | 15           | 5.9 | 6.9          | 4.6               | 63    | 85  | 180     | 733  |     | 7.0                        | 18   | 66   | 17   | Silt Loam             |
| 2020 | North<br>Dakota              | Ν       | N          | 20-May           | 2-Oct           | 185             | spring<br>wheat            | 0.6                  | 14           | 7.7 |              | 5.5               | 31    | 426 | 1489    | 3906 | 36  | 33.2                       | 12   | 28   | 60   | Clay                  |
| 2020 | Hoytville.<br>OH             | Y       | Ν          | 12-May           | 2-Oct           | 140             | corn                       | 3.3                  | 15           | 7.0 |              | 4.3               | 55 *  | 160 | 501     | 2562 |     | 17.4                       | 24   | 28   | 48   | Clay                  |
| 2020 | South<br>Charleston,<br>OH   | Y       | N          | 7-May            | 14-Oct          | 140             | corn                       | 3.3                  | 15           | 5.9 | •            | 5.4               | 63 *  | 211 | 595     | 3245 |     | 26.5                       | 20   | 34   | 46   | Clay                  |
| 2020 | Oklahoma                     | Y       | Y          | 12-May           | 15-Oct          | 97              | wheat/fallow               | 4.8                  | 30           | 7.2 | •            | 1.1               | 147*  | 110 | 751     | 2259 |     |                            |      | ·    | •    | Clay loam             |
| 2020 | Dargan<br>Pond, SC           | Y       | Ν          | 15-May           | 6-Nov           | 120             | peanut                     | 8                    | 30           | 6.2 | 7.2          | 0.7               | 227   | 26  | 41      | 288  |     | 1.8                        |      |      | •    | Loamy<br>Sand         |
| 2020 | Rock Rd,<br>SC               | Y       | Ν          | 5-Jun            | 6-Nov           | 120             | cotton                     | 6.9                  | 30           | 6.6 | 7.0          | 0.5               | 84    | 44  | 50      | 225  |     | 1.7                        | ~    |      |      | Loamy<br>Sand         |
| 2020 | Brookings,<br>SD             | Y       | Ν          | 20-May           | 2-Oct           | 150             | corn                       | 1.4                  | 30           | 6.9 |              | 3.8               | 21 *  | 124 | 465     | 2813 |     | 18.8                       | 42   | 32   | 26   | Clay<br>Loam          |
| 2020 | Reliance,<br>SD              | Ν       | N          | 11-May           | 12-Oct          | 150             | com                        | 1.4                  | 30           | 5.9 |              | 3.3               | 18 *  | 300 | 662     | 2108 |     | 21.0                       | 13   | 52   | 35   | Silty Clay<br>Loam    |
| 2020 | Virginia                     | N       | N          | 4-Jun            | 25-Nov          | 140             | corn                       | 4.9                  | 15           |     |              |                   |       |     |         |      |     |                            |      |      |      | - Coann               |
| 2020 | Arlington,<br>WI             | Y       | N          | 1-May            | 8-Oct           | 140             | corn                       | 2.0                  | 15           | 7.2 | 7.2          | 4.3               | 53    | 237 | 520     | 1588 |     | 12.9                       |      |      |      | Silt Loam             |
| 2020 | Fond du                      | N       | N          | 1-May            | 9-Oct           | 140             | com                        | 2.0                  | 15           | 7.4 | 7.2          | 4.1               | 57    | 222 | 495     | 1550 |     | 12.5                       |      |      |      | Silt Loam             |
| 2020 | Lac, WI<br>Marshfield,       | Y       | N          | 5-May            | 15-Oct          | 140             | com                        | 2.0                  | 15           | 7.2 | 7.2          | 4.5               | 34    | 256 | 458     | 1275 |     | 10.9                       |      |      |      | Silt Loam             |
|      | WI                           |         |            | 2                |                 |                 |                            |                      |              |     | 100          |                   |       |     |         |      |     |                            | 1    |      |      |                       |

*Supplemental Table 2.* Treatment mean soybean grain yield, standard deviation in bushels per acre and the number of replications (Reps) per treatment at each site. BRANDT Smart Quatro® Plus was not applied at four Wisconsin sites, and Harvest More® Urea Mate was not applied at the Lexington, Kentucky, site in 2019. Individual site-year ANOVAs were calculated, and p-values represent the probability that yield differed between treatments at that site year. Least significant differences were calculated only for sites with ANOVA p-values < 0.05.

| Year | Reps | Site                   | Control |      |       |      | Control |      | Control |      | Control FertiRain |                 | HarvestMore<br>UreaMate |      | Maximum<br>NPact K |      | Smart I | Smart B-Mo |  | rt Quatro<br>Plus | <sup>o</sup> Sure-K |  | P-<br>value | LSD |
|------|------|------------------------|---------|------|-------|------|---------|------|---------|------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|------|--------------------|------|---------|------------|--|-------------------|---------------------|--|-------------|-----|
|      |      |                        | Yield   | SD   | Yield | SD   | Yield   | SD   | Yield   | SD   | Yield             |                 |                         | SD   | Yield              | SD   |         |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | Newport, AR            | 53.7    | 4.7  | 54.4  | 4.5  | 53.2    | 7.0  | 54.2    | 8.2  | 53.4              | 7.9             | 53.6                    | 8.4  | 56.7               | 6.3  | 0.95    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 5    | Pine Tree, AR          | 62.7    | 7.0  | 63.5  | 6.8  | 60.3    | 6.2  | 65.2    | 4.1  | 62.6              | 2.3             | 62.6                    | 6.4  | 64.7               | 5.5  | 0.38    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 4    | Florida                | 53.7    | 5.4  | 54.4  | 11.3 | 50.1    | 10.2 | 50.5    | 8.6  | 56.8              | 5.2             | 50.4                    | 8.1  | 50.5               | 14.6 | 0.68    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | Lexington, KY          | 67.6    | 4.8  | 60.1  | 8.9  |         |      | 60.5    | 7.6  |                   | 58.3 9.6 61.9 1 |                         | 16.2 | 65.6               | 6.8  | 0.32    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | Princeton, KY          | 55.7    | 3.3  | 65.7  | 3.4  | 55.3    | 4.8  | 55.5    | 4.3  | 58.5              | 4.0             | 53.3                    | 7.3  | 57.2               | 5.4  | <0.01   | 507        |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 5    | Michigan               | 34.1    | 4.4  | 31.4  | 4.6  | 33.0    | 9.9  | 33.6    | 5.4  | 32.2              | 7.3             | 35.0                    | 4.8  | 30.6               | 5.7  | 0.79    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | Danvers, MN            | 34.1    | 5.6  | 44.9  | 4.6  | 50.0    | 6.7  | 43.1    | 9.1  | 44.0              | 6.7             | 48.2                    | 6.2  | 44.4               | 10.3 | 0.68    | 1.0        |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | Minnesota Lake, MN     | 53.4    | 1.2  | 52.5  | 0.4  | 52.8    | 3.0  | 53.3    | 3.2  | 51.0              | 4.4             | 55.2                    | 2.7  | 54.3               | 3.7  | 0.14    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | Mississippi            | 27.2    | 3.1  | 26.4  | 3.5  | 27.5    | 3.1  | 26.8    | 2.8  | 27.2              | 2.4             | 29.4                    | 1.3  | 27.2               | 3.0  | 0.8     |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | Missouri               | 64.3    | 2.4  | 64.2  | 3.9  | 64.7    | 1.8  | 67.3    | 2.9  | 63.7              | 3.4             | 65.5                    | 1.8  | 66.1               | 2.4  | 0.36    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | Currituck, NC          | 77.0    | 2.1  | 76.4  | 2.1  | 73.6    | 3.0  | 76.7    | 4.5  | 75.9              | 2.4             | 77.0                    | 3.9  | 72.5               | 3.3  | 0.09    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | Sampson, NC            | 73.4    | 3.9  | 66.6  | 3.3  | 70.2    | 3.5  | 65.9    | 7.8  | 70.2              | 4.9             | 67.0                    | 5.4  | 67.8               | 4.9  | 0.18    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | Yadkin, NC             | 29.0    | 7.1  | 26.9  | 2.8  | 26.6    | 4.6  | 27.2    | 4.2  | 25.8              | 1.4             | 27.2                    | 1.9  | 26.8               | 5.0  | 0.93    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 8    | North Dakota           | 53.9    | 5.7  | 52.1  | 5.9  | 53.1    | 5.3  | 52.3    | 4.8  | 50.6              | 7.4             | 52.5                    | 7.7  | 55.4               | 4.5  | 0.5     |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | Ohio                   | 75.2    | 3.5  | 73.9  | 3.2  | 76.1    | 3.4  | 75.7    | 3.3  | 75.1              | 4.4             | 75.2                    | 4.6  | 74.8               | 3.0  | 0.85    | 100        |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | South Dakota           | 55.5    | 2.9  | 54.4  | 6.7  | 53.5    | 5.1  | 56.1    | 5.2  | 53.5              | 3.8             | 55.6                    | 2.8  | 56.4               | 3.3  | 0.65    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | Virginia               | 62.6    | 4.8  | 54.9  | 9.2  | 61.8    | 3.8  | 56.8    | 7.1  | 60.9              | 2.7             | 56.9                    | 7.0  | 60.0               | 7.0  | 0.21    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | Arlington, WI          | 81.9    | 4.7  | 82.5  | 6.6  | 79.5    | 7.3  | 83.3    | 4.7  | 83.1              | 4.1             | -                       | -    | 81.5               | 6.9  | 0.84    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | Fond du Lac, WI        | 54.8    | 4.7  | 53.2  | 6.7  | 56.5    | 7.3  | 61.4    | 6.8  | 58.4              | 5.4             | -                       | -    | 50.5               | 6.9  | 0.03    | 433        |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2019 | 6    | Marshfield, WI         | 47.5    | 7.1  | 41.9  | 6.3  | 50.5    | 8.9  | 45.6    | 10.2 | 46.8              | 8.2             | -                       | -    | 43.7               | 6.8  | 0.51    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Newport, AR            | 56.7    | 9.8  | 57.5  | 8.4  | 56.7    | 9.2  | 57.3    | 7.3  | 55.6              | 6.6             | 57.2                    | 7.3  | 54.5               | 5.2  | 0.89    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Pine Tree, AR          | 63.0    | 3.6  | 62.0  | 1.8  | 60.2    | 2.3  | 63.6    | 3.8  | 65.0              | 3.1             | 64.9                    | 2.6  | 66.6               | 2.2  | < 0.01  | 190        |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Lexington, KY          | 70.6    | 4.9  | 65.7  | 4.0  | 70.9    | 8.5  | 69.0    | 4.7  | 68.1              | 7.8             | 72.5                    | 7.9  | 68.8               | 6.5  | 0.27    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Princeton, KY          | 68.8    | 5.3  | 73.4  | 8.4  | 66.3    | 12.0 | 69.0    | 6.2  | 68.8              | 5.9             | 69.2                    | 7.3  | 70.6               | 8.6  | 0.8     |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Chambers-East, LA      | 47.0    | 4.4  | 47.1  | 4.3  | 45.8    | 3.1  | 47.3    | 4.0  | 46.1              | 0.9             | 47.6                    | 4.7  | 44.6               | 2.2  | 0.81    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Chambers-West, LA      | 60.5    | 4.7  | 65.3  | 5.2  | 69.2    | 4.7  | 69.6    | 9.1  | 67.3              | 5.4             | 68.5                    | 13.2 | 69.6               | 4.7  | 0.35    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 5    | Michigan               | 56.3    | 14.5 | 53.2  | 12.3 | 56.5    | 14.5 | 56.1    | 9.4  | 55.3              | 16.0            | 48.6                    | 8.3  | 51.5               | 10.5 | 0.83    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Minnesota Lake, MN     | 55.4    | 5.6  | 54.2  | 4.1  | 55.2    | 5.1  | 55.9    | 3.3  | 54.3              | 5.2             | 56.2                    | 5.6  | 52.8               | 6.0  | 0.93    | 1.0        |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | St. Paul, MN           | 66.1    | 8.5  | 62.8  | 8.1  | 60.7    | 10.0 | 64.2    | 9.9  | 65.2              | 9.0             | 60.0                    | 8.0  | 62.0               | 7.8  | 0.38    | 1.0        |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Mississippi            | 57.1    | 3.3  | 56.4  | 2.7  | 57.4    | 4.5  | 58.2    | 4.9  | 54.0              | 3.9             | 58.0                    | 3.7  | 58.7               | 5.1  | 0.51    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Beaufort, NC           | 44.3    | 4.5  | 45.4  | 2.8  | 47.3    | 3.7  | 44.2    | 1.4  | 44.6              | 4.0             | 45.8                    | 3.4  | 46.0               | 2.9  | 0.57    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Nash (Rocky Mount), NC | 67.2    | 7.2  | 64.4  | 8.8  | 65.5    | 8.0  | 62.4    | 7.6  | 68.1              | 10.1            | 62.5                    | 8.4  | 66.9               | 13.5 | 0.84    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Rowan (Salisbury), NC  | 75.2    | 8.0  | 74.1  | 4.5  | 75.2    | 3.6  | 72.8    | 6.0  | 74.9              | 7.2             | 75.9                    | 3.6  | 72.5               | 4.5  | 0.94    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Union, NC              | 54.4    | 7.1  | 55.8  | 4.8  | 56.7    | 7.7  | 56.2    | 9.3  | 54.3              | 6.0             | 55.4                    | 7.2  | 54.6               | 5.8  | 0.88    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 8    | North Dakota           | 57.7    | 3.4  | 58.8  | 3.3  | 57.3    | 5.7  | 57.6    | 2.5  | 58.6              | 3.1             | 58.6                    | 3.1  | 58.2               | 1.7  | 0.94    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Hoytville, OH          | 68.5    | 2.8  | 67.9  | 3.0  | 72.0    | 3.3  | 68.9    | 5.4  | 70.3              | 3.9             | 71.2                    | 3.5  | 71.5               | 3.5  | 0.02    | 185        |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | South Charleston, OH   | 81.7    | 2.6  | 57.1  | 3.3  | 79.7    | 2.6  | 80.3    | 4.1  | 80.6              | 2.8             | 79.8                    | 4.2  | 79.1               | 3.7  | 0.65    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 7    | Oklahoma               | 66.8    | 3.5  | 65.3  | 3.4  | 69.8    | 8.0  | 64.9    | 4.4  | 72.8              | 12.8            | 72.1                    | 11.3 | 63.9               | 8.8  | 0.6     |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 4    | Dargan Pond, SC        | 50.1    | 4.4  | 47.2  | 9.6  | 53.9    | 4.3  | 45.5    | 10.3 | 49.0              | 2.3             | 47.7                    | 9.3  | 51.7               | 12.3 | 0.76    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 4    | Rock Rd, SC            | 53.2    | 6.8  | 61.0  | 1.8  | 62.7    | 0.5  | 59.5    | 7.2  | 58.6              | 3.4             | 56.7                    | 6.6  | 60.9               | 0.8  | 0.27    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Brookings, SD          | 57.2    | 3.9  | 60.2  | 4.7  | 56.9    | 3.3  | 59.2    | 2.2  | 60.2              | 3.9             | 56.8                    | 2.1  | 59.7               | 4.5  | 0.36    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Reliance, SD           | 42.2    | 5.6  | 45.1  | 3.8  | 44.4    | 6.0  | 45.4    | 5.4  | 46.3              | 2.8             | 46.2                    | 4.9  | 44.1               | 3.6  | 0.39    | 1.0        |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Virginia               | 66.1    | 3.5  | 69.9  | 3.0  | 70.5    | 5.3  | 67.5    | 4.5  | 67.8              | 6.6             | 67.3                    | 6.8  | 64.6               | 6.2  | 0.3     | 1.0        |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Arlington, WI          | 81.2    | 4.1  | 85.6  | 8.1  | 79.6    | 3.8  | 86.1    | 6.5  | 84.6              | 5.8             | 8 — —                   |      | 81.8               | 7.2  | 0.45    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Fond du Lac, WI        | 65.9    | 7.6  | 69.2  | 3.7  | 68.2    | 7.6  | 61.9    | 1.9  | 63.2              | 5.6             | 68.5                    | 4.0  | 64.6               | 4.4  | 0.15    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
| 2020 | 6    | Marshfield, WI         | 72.1    | 4.3  | 75.2  | 7.9  | 72.1    | 3.1  | 71.6    | 6.9  | 77.4              | 3.2             | 74.6                    | 4.1  | 73.6               | 3.9  | 0.44    |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |
|      |      | All Sites              | 59.5    | 13.6 | 59.7  | 14.0 | 59.6    | 13.7 | 59.3    | 14.0 | 59.7              | 14.2            | 59.1                    | 13.4 | 59.4               | 13.9 |         |            |  |                   |                     |  |             |     |

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