

Field Trials with Fertilizers in South Dakota 1945.

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Successful agriculture is dependent upon the maintenance of the fertility of our soils. Since the early days of settlement, more fertility or plant food has been taken out of the soil through soil building practices. The high productivity of virgin soils is due to their higher content of plant food and organic matter. Continued cultivation has depleted our soils of a considerable portion of their original plant food. It is true for the plant food elements nitrogen and phosphorus. Maximum crop production requires the restoration of plant food to the soil. Soil improvement practices which include returning manure, crop rotation, and legume crops, and the application of fertilizer. Of the ten principal plant food elements, only three may be deficient in soils, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potash. These elements or plant food materials occur naturally in the soil in small amounts, depending upon the type of soil and past soil management. If the fertility of the soil is not high enough for maximum crop production, the amount added by the application of fertilizers. In order to determine the amount of plant food to apply to the soil it is necessary to conduct field trials. Therefore, experiments are being conducted on different soil types and crops to determine the fertilizer need of South Dakota soils.

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