

CEMSA participants and the Nitrogen Conference

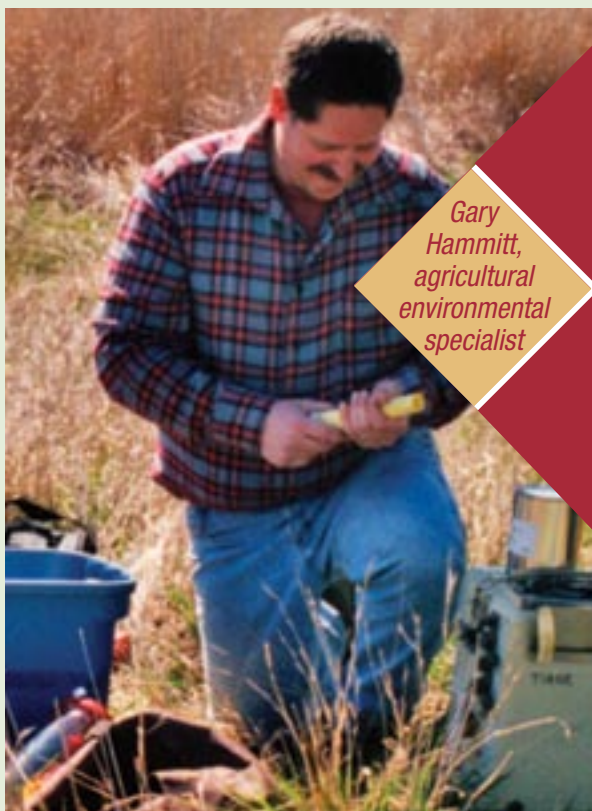
Heath Ellison, Iowa Soybean Association agricultural environmental specialist, works with farmers in developing environmental management plans. He says that the Nitrogen Conference should be a positive experience for CEMSA participants and those who are looking at EMS implementation.

“One thing farmers can find out is how their operation compares to others, because that’s really what the whole nitrogen conference is about — peer comparison, with a focus on nitrogen management. So, just like CEMSA, the work is focused on improving the bottom line through a management evaluation.”

“And evaluation is a critical component of CEMSA, or any conservation planning for that matter. If someone is succeeding, another farmer can examine why. CEMSA helps answer the question, ‘How do you get where you want to be?’ It also can help CEMSA participants learn new testing techniques and finding ways to improve management evaluation on the farm by learning more about systems and applying those lessons across the board.” ♦



Heath Ellison
agricultural
environmental
specialist



Gary
Hammitt,
agricultural
environmental
specialist

Gary Hammitt, an agricultural environmental specialist with the Iowa Soybean Association, agrees that farmers who are involved in Iowa Soybean Association Watershed projects can learn a lot from attending the Nitrogen Conference.

Hammitt says participating in events like the Nitrogen Conference can create momentum for change.

“The impact of management change on a farming operation can be considerable for the individual farmer. But, when a large group of farmers come together, the potential for impact at the watershed and state levels becomes extensive.”

“First, it can show farmers how their work fits into a larger effort, and help them get the big picture. So if, for one reason or another, they are not yet a part of stalk sampling or nitrogen trials, then maybe they will be inspired to do it all in 2006,” he continues.

“Also, since a lot of farmers are already doing work in the Boone River watershed, I hope that they see that the next step there should be to work to establish a track record or baseline with water quality monitoring, as is being done in the Buttrick Creek watershed, so if they can follow nitrate levels in the river as their management evolves over time.” ♦