



# On-Farm Network™ Trials Cover Iowa

*Nearly 500 farmers conducted more than 1000 trials in 2005*

For five years now, ISA agronomy program staff have been helping growers establish strip trials on their own farms that can give them statistically significant yield data on which to base crop production decisions.

Each mark on the map above represents a farm or field where ISA is working with growers, either directly or through a contracted technical service provider on a number of different programs. Some of these are whole-farm programs, like base environmental management systems plans or Environmental Quality Incentive Plans (through NRCS). Other marks are strip trials, whole-field low nitrogen rate studies and pre-harvest stalk nitrate testing.

All growers need to participate is a field large enough to accommodate replicated strips that compare current management with a different practice or input, a way to mark those strips, and a way to measure the difference at harvest. "In most cases, that means GPS to mark the strips and a combine yield monitor. This makes collecting data and correlating it to the test strips a simple process," says Tracy Blackmer, ISA director of research.

## Interested in doing your own nitrogen strip trials?

Most of the growers involved in ISA on-farm testing are looking at nitrogen management. Given the current nitrogen price and availability picture, that might be worth looking into, even if it's just to show that you actually need all the nitrogen you're using.

The On-Farm Network is also looking for growers who want to compare fall vs. spring or sidedress applications. Our first widespread fertilizer timing studies were conducted in 2004-2005. Yield results are not yet available, but a preliminary look at aerial imagery from some of these fields suggests there may be some yield differences. (See next page.)

## Topics of Study

Iowa Soybean Association On-Farm Network™ programs in 2005 reached more growers than ever before. Growers are currently studying:

1. Nitrogen rate or timing
2. Manure Management
3. Deep Tillage
4. P&K strips
5. pH strips, related testing through ISU
6. Routine fungicide use in soybeans
7. Routine foliar feeding in soybeans
8. Inoculant and seed treatments for both corn and soybeans

In addition to these replicated strip trials, more than 100 farmers participated in a whole field study in which less than 100 lbs. of nitrogen was used. And, as of mid-October, stalk samples from all 99 Iowa counties had been collected for nitrate analysis at the Iowa State University Soils labs. Results of these studies will be available soon on-line at [www.isafarmnet.com](http://www.isafarmnet.com).