



Patty Judge
Secretary of Agriculture
Iowa Department of Agriculture
and Land Stewardship

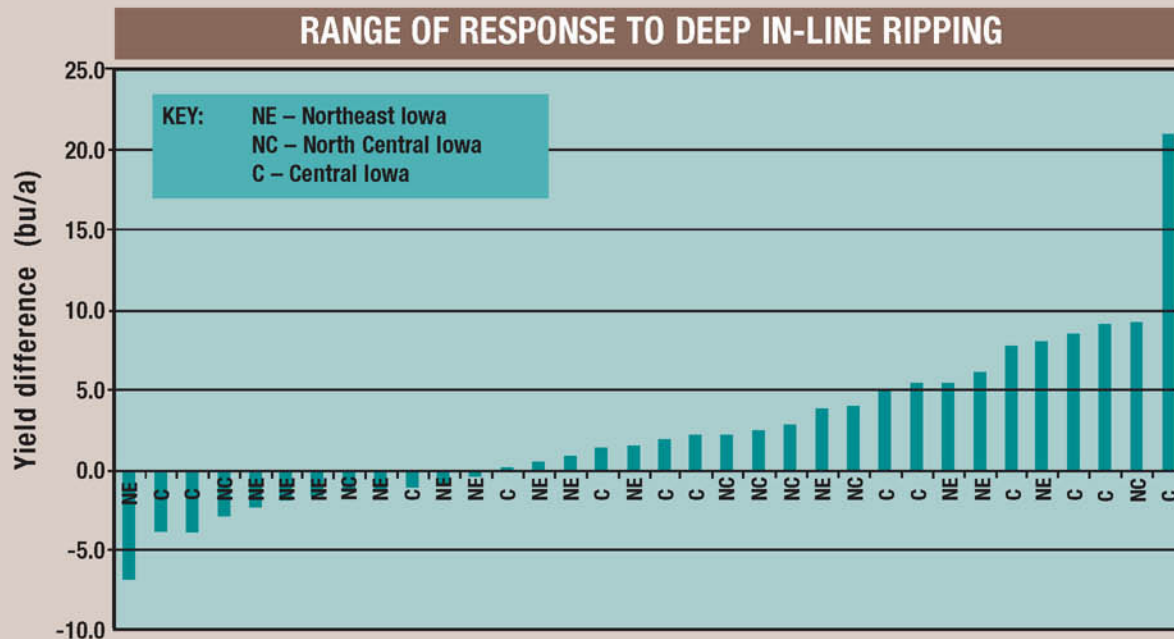
"This ongoing study of the economic benefits of deep tillage for corn and

soybean production is an example of grassroots initiatives, in that farmers themselves are conducting the evaluation and demonstration through individual strip trials. As a farmer myself, I know the value of squeezing every bushel of crop possible from every acre of land, while keeping production costs at a minimum. Learning where practices such as deep ripping should or should not be used benefits Iowa agriculture and the state of Iowa in general. Through the Integrated Farm and Livestock Management program, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship is pleased to help sponsor demonstrations like this."



William Ehm
Director, Division of Soil Conservation
Iowa Department of Agriculture and
Land Stewardship

"The strength of the On-Farm Network is that it allows producers to demonstrate to themselves and their neighbors that cutting edge best management practices can be agronomically, economically, and environmentally sound. This deep tillage demonstration has provided the participants with evidence that excessive tillage in most soils is not only unnecessary, but costly to farmers' pocketbooks and to the environment."



Summary

- There was an average benefit of 2.4 bu/a from the ripping compared to the non-ripped across the 34 locations.
- Ripping can cost from \$15 to \$20 an acre. In a best-case scenario, it takes at least 5 bu. of \$3 corn to make it break even. This doesn't include additional costs associated with stone removal after ripping.
- Out of the 34 locations, nine benefited by greater than 5 bu./a from ripping.
- In fields showing significant yield differences, the amount of benefit varied within the field. Typically, the heavier soils showed the larger benefits.
- Growers selected their trial areas based on a prior management history that could result in a hardpan saw larger yield differences.
- Headlands were not included in these trials.
- The increase in rock picking from the fields after ripping was a significant factor for many growers – especially in NE Iowa.
- The second crop year effects will be important for growers to consider as well.