

Summary of Regional Studies in Corn on Selected Commercial Asymbiotic N-fixing Organisms and Suggestions for Companies Developing Similar Products

Dave Franzen, PhD
Extension Soil Specialist, Professor of Soil Science
North Dakota State University
Fargo, ND

Point #1- Asymbiotic N-fixing organisms are a natural part of soils

Asymbiotic N-fixing organisms

Organisms, usually a species of bacteria, that have the ability to fix atmospheric N (N_2), transforming it into NH_3 , which is immediately attached to a 'carbon-skeleton', safeguarding it.

The fixation requires energy, which when conducted in soil comes from organic matter.

N-fixation is an energy-expensive process.

The enzyme that serves as 'fixation facilitator' in bacteria is *nitrogenase*.

To convert 1 N_2 to 1 NH_3 requires 16 ATP molecules (produced during photosynthesis) and 8 electrons.

Energy limits N fixation.

(Smircina et al., 2019, Applied Environmental Microbiology)

For comparison, production of 1 peptide bond in protein synthesis requires only 5 ATP (still considered 'high energy requirement')

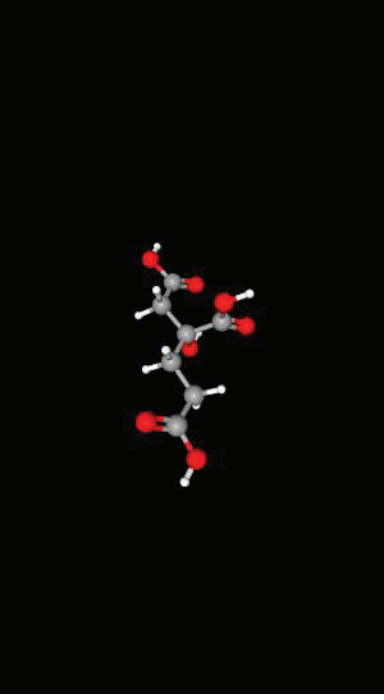
Evidence for asymbiotic N-fixing organisms finds that these organisms were active 1.5 billion years ago- some of the oldest organisms found in the fossil record.

(Boyd & Peters, 2013, Frontiers in Microbiology)

Compared with about 59 million years ago for symbiotic

N-fixers (Sprent and James 2007, Plant Physiology)

Nitrogenase enzyme



Substrates to meet energy requirement

Energy sources for asymbiotic N-fixing organisms close to plant roots are the root exudates that surround many roots, and also includes components of soil organic matter and residue decay intermediary compounds in the bulk soil.

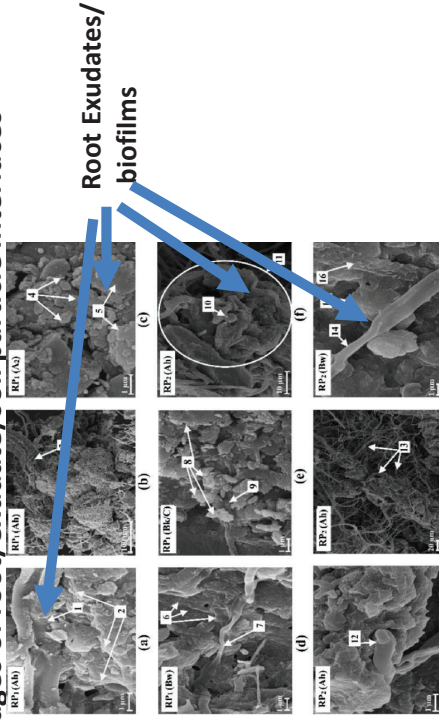
N-fixing organisms that exist inside the plant tissue have to receive substantial energy from the plant within which they reside.

Diversity of Asymbiotic bacteria types-

A Chinese/Tibetan paper, using genetic screening, found Asym-bacteria from 6 Phyla, 13 Classes and 43 genera (Li et al, 2021, Front. Ecol. Evol. 13 August. Vol 9)

Genera include species from *Azotobacter*, *Ochrhobactrum*, *Sphingomonas*, *Opitutus*, *Clostridium*, *Pseudomonas* and 'a host of others'. There are many species, some more efficient than others, Their activity is linked to substrate and soil condition.

Images of root/exudate/soil particle interfaces



RP 1 images (SEM) of fine root (1), root exudates/biofilms (2), fine roots (3), clay mineral aggregates (5), root exudates/biofilms (6), organic filament (7), fine clay aggregates (8), fine root (9), and RP 2 images (SEM) of aggregates with abundant root remnants (10), pollen (11), root tap (12), root exudates/biofilms (13), clay mineral grains (14), clay mineral aggregates (15), root exudates/biofilms (16), organic filament (17), fine clay aggregates (18), fine root (19), and RP 2 images (SEM) of aggregates with abundant root remnants (10), pollen (11), root tap (12), root exudates/biofilms (13), clay mineral grains (14), clay mineral aggregates (15), root exudates/biofilms (16), organic filament (17), fine clay aggregates (18), fine root (19), and organic filament, primary mineral, clay minerals coating (20). From Razzaghi et al., 2017.

Asymbiotic N-fixing bacteria are in most soils.

Their activity increases when tillage decreases. (*Food & Housing*)

Lamb, Doran and Peterson, 1987

Nonsymbiotic dinitrogen fixation in no-till and conventional tillage SSSAJ 51:356-361

Recorded greater activity with no-till, but concluded that it was not great enough to contribute to any N credit. They considered the values from incubation to be values that might be experienced in the field. But the disturbance of soil probably killed billions of N-fixing critters, so values are index.

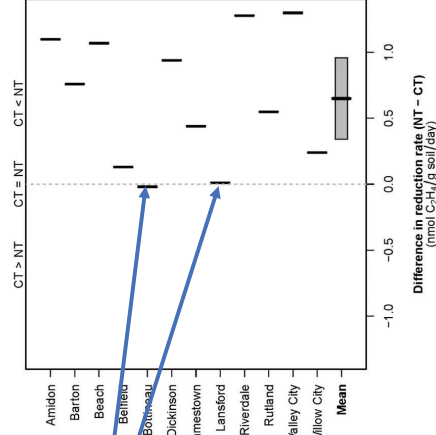
In North Dakota, there is an N credit for 6 or more years of continuous no-till, one-pass shallow tillage, shank strip-till, amounting to 40-50 pounds N per acre.

Part of this credit probably comes from the increased microbial biomass under no-till that protects N from loss. But a part of the credit, perhaps 25-33% may come from greater asymbiotic activity in long-term no-till.

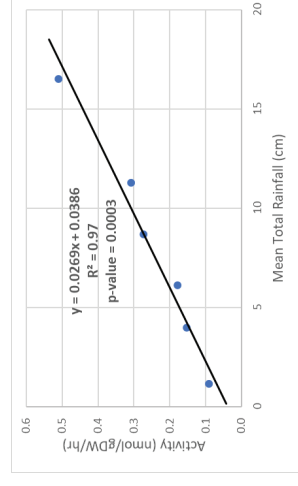
Franzen et al. 2019, SSSAJ

Turned paired no-till/conventional till across ND.

Turns out the 'conventional till' site across the fence was one-pass shallow tillage, so the same tillage category



From 2019 thru 2021, 6 sites in eastern North Dakota were sampled each month for asymbiotic N fixing activity. Change in activity was related to rainfall within 30 days before sampling and mean air temperature. Franzen et al., SSSAJ, 2023



The relationship of N-fixing activity to soil condition made a large impact on the trend of activity over a season



Gardner, 2020, Period for July sampling, soil was saturated in a high clay soil.

Jamestown, 2021. Period from late May to early July moist, then very dry.

Summary of what we know about native activity-

Greater in long-term no-till. Their activity increases when their 'homes' are not destroyed and there is sufficient food to support their N-fixation.

Moist soil and warm conditions favor N-fixation.
Dry soil conditions, saturated soil conditions, and cold soil temperatures inhibit their activity.

Regional studies on commercial asymbiotic N-fixation products

Products tested-

- Envita, Azotic North America *Gluconacetobacter diazotrophicus*
- Utrisha, Corteva Agriscience *Methylobacterium symbioticum*
- Proven, PivotBio *Klebsiella variicola*
- Proven 40, PivotBio *Kosakonia sacchari & Klebsiella variicola*

Summary of results from 10 states.
 No means no difference between same N rate with or without additive
 Yes means a yield increase present at least 1 N rate

State	Envita IF+	Utrisha	Proven	Proven 40 IF	Proven 40 ST
ND	4 No	4 No	Number of site years included in evaluations		
MIN	1 No		3 No/1 Yes		
IL	2 No		4 No	5 No	2 No
IN	1 No				
MO	2 No / 1 Yes	3 No	2 No	1 No	
KS			1 No		
MI	1 No	1 No		1 No	
KY		2 No			
NE			5 No		
OH		1 No			
Total	11 No/1 Yes	11 No	15 No/1 Yes	13 No	2 No

Total corn experiments 54.

52 no benefit to yield over N rate alone.

2 benefits with N rate benefits 12-20 lbs N/a

Growers should be skeptical about new products

Point # 2-

Try them on replicated strips on the farm.

Refer to [L. Thompson, 2022](#) from

Proceedings of the North Central Extension-Industry Soil Fertility Conference

for ideas regarding on-farm testing and data analysis.

PROMOTING ADOPTION OF PRECISION NITROGEN MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGIES THROUGH ON-FARM RESEARCH

L.J. Thompson, L.A. Punieri, T. Milano, J. Iqbal, B. Maharajan, J. Luck, S. Norquest, J. G. C. P. Pinto, C. Uwineza
University of Nebraska — Lincoln, Lincoln, NE
laura.thompson@unl.edu 402-245-2224

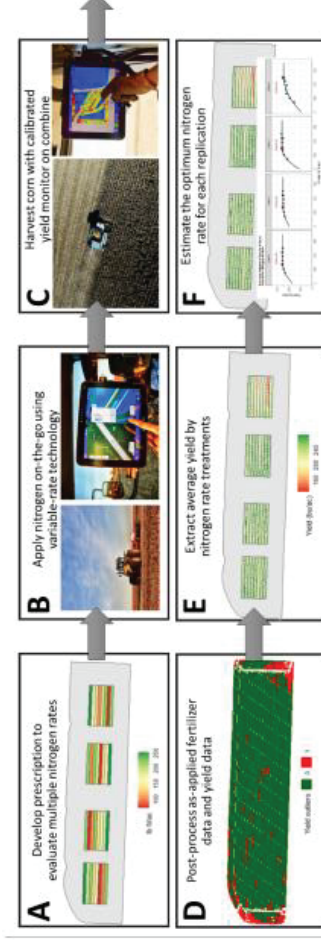
ABSTRACT

The Nebraska On-Farm Research Network helps farmers evaluate products and practices that impact the productivity, profitability, and sustainability of their operations. There are many technologies that have potential to increase nitrogen use efficiency (NUE) on corn and wheat, but typically these technologies have low adoption. Currently, farmers that use technologies like GPS, yield monitors, and variable-rate application equipment are not fully utilizing the data that enables the use of variable-rate approach to evaluate new technologies and products. Participating farmers evaluated commercially available nitrogen (N) management technologies across Nebraska and their impact on yield, profit, and NUE. We enabled farmer's hands-on experience with technologies that are relevant to their operation and promoted technology adoption. We also collected field data to validate and improve the technology tested. 40 trials are established each year in the three-year project. We utilized an innovative experimental design combining traditional strip trials with small N plots where all treatments are established with variable-rate fertilizer equipment on-the-go. An automated data processing tool was developed for data processing, analysis, and reporting. 98% of the experiments were successfully established in the first year of the study and 90% were analyzed using the automatic process. To measure impact, grower incremental changes in N management strategy and technology adoption were documented.

INTRODUCTION

Nitrogen (N) is critical for attaining higher crop yields; however, risks of environmental losses necessitate more precise fertilizer management. Predicting the

Example from Thompson paper:



<https://cropwatch.unl.edu/farmstat>



Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

CROPWATCH

Home Weather (GDD & ET) Info & Resources Crops Management Released Topics Archives

Statistics | Data | Publications | Conferences | Get Farm Research | FarmStat

FarmStat

FarmStat is a statistical analysis tool that provides quick, accurate, and straightforward analysis for data from agricultural experiments. While FarmStat is provided at no cost, we do require you to register with your name and email address.

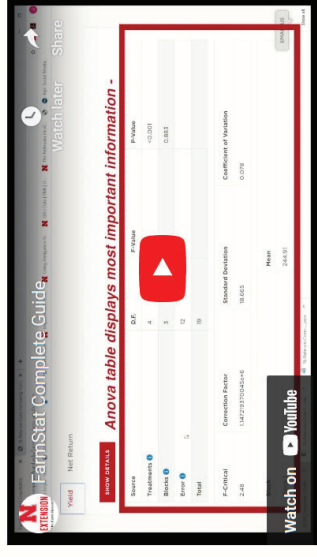
First Name Required

Last Name Required

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FarmStat Beta Welcome

Thank You



[Download FarmStat User Guide](#)

[Download CRD Excel Template](#)

[Download RCBD Excel Template](#)

Farmers have GPS
Farmers have GPS yield monitors

Farmers have everything they need to
replicate treatments and test product effectiveness.

Point 3-

There should be a quick method of analysis developed to determine whether the organism is alive and functioning in the container, the field or the plant.

Point 4-

Organisms need to be kept alive through transportation and storage intervals between manufacturer, shipper, warehouses, distributor, dealer and on the farm awaiting application.

Storage and Disposal

Storage Conditions: Keep the product in a well-ventilated place. Store at room temperature, do not subject to temperatures below 39 °F (4 °C). Keep the product hermetically closed.

STORAGE AND HANDLING: DO NOT FREEZE. This product contains live non-pathogenic organisms. Store between 39°F to 46°F. Store in well ventilated buildings, away from foodstuffs and animal feed. Keep out of reach of children. Keep out of direct sunlight. DO NOT open product container until ready for use.

Point 5-

Organisms should be able to compete and ‘win the war’ with native microorganisms in order to survive and perform its function.

Point 6-

Organisms should be adapted to variable moisture, variable soil pH and variable soil salts in order to perform its function.

Contact information:

Dave Franzen, NDSU

david.franzen@ndsu.edu