

FEEDING YOUR FIELDS...

Part 3: THE RESULTS

Conditioned manure is a high-quality fertilizer with greater nutrient availability than its raw counterpart and a lower price tag than commercial fertilizers.

But what about its performance out in the field?

Because of the presence of organic matter, conditioned manure's effect is a long-term one. A single manure application provides up to three years of fertilization. On a wheat test plot located on producer Jason Allen's farm, that continued release of nutrients became apparent.

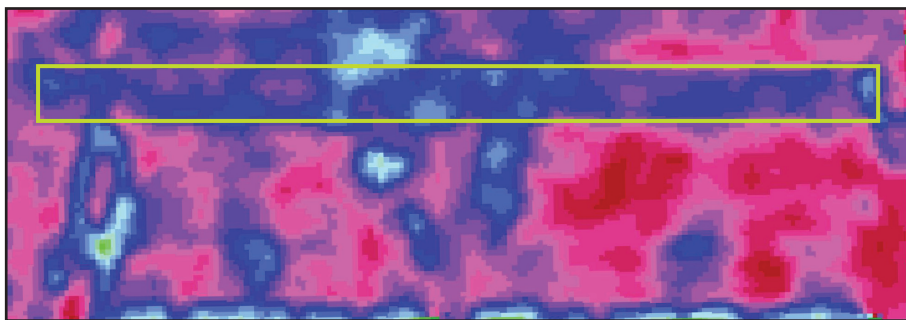
In 2009, Allen followed his standard fertilization program on the field in question, but applied a 100-yard wide strip of

conditioned manure down the center. He then grew a corn crop on that field and followed it with his 2010 wheat crop.

The results are telling.

The corn yielded over 5 bushels per acre higher on the test strip, while the wheat yielded 5-10 bushels per acre higher, making Allen's investment more than pay for itself. An even greater impact would be expected if the rainfall in 2009 had not been so limited.

It is important to note that the manure application had occurred nearly *two years prior* to the collection of data and had already sustained the growth of a corn crop, illustrating conditioned manure's lasting effects.



Above: Jason Allen's manure test strip (highlighted in green) showed wheat yields anywhere from 5-10 bushels per acre higher than the control strips.

Yield (none)

19.51 32.46 45.40 58.35 71.29



Lessons from the field

What we've learned about breaking out CRP on our farm

- Residue height was not an issue - even when planting into waist-high CRP grass!
- Costs of production on CRP were about 20-40% higher because of extra fertilizer, herbicide and trips across the field.
- Yields from CRP first crops were consistently on par with the yields from neighboring farm ground - for both wheat and corn.
- Soil tests showed CRP has virtually no nitrogen and very low phosphorus levels.
- Grass clumps and roughness mellowed significantly throughout the summer.