



Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP) and Crop Insurance

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The Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP) was announced in late 2022 and the first Wisconsin farmers enrolled and planted their research areas in 2023. This post provides some guidance to those farmers enrolled in NOPP who have crop insurance.

What's a farmer to do?

When farmers are filing their 2023 crop insurance acreage reports (due July 15), they should note the NOPP research areas and report them as uninsurable acres due to being planted for experimental purposes. In this way, farmers will not be charged an insurance premium for these acres. Note that production from these acres should still be reported, but it will not be used to calculate actual yield for your Actual Production History (APH) for the crop year, and so will not affect your yield history.

What's the logic?

It is a long-established policy of the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) that crop acres devoted to experiments are not insurable, whether small plot experiments or on-farm research trials conducted with university researchers or other researchers. The primary reason for this determination is that crop acres managed for research are not managed following “good farming practices”. Farmers are required to manage insured acres using good farming practices officially defined as “*production methods utilized to produce the insured crop and allow it to make normal progress toward maturity and produce at least the yield used to determine the production guarantee or amount of insurance, including any adjustments for late planted acreage, which are those generally recognized by agricultural experts or organic agricultural experts, depending on the practice, for the area.*” In short, limiting key inputs (such as nitrogen) is not managing the crop to produce at least the yield used to determine the production guarantee.

If a farmer disagrees with this determination, they should work with their crop insurance agent and contact the St. Paul Regional Office of the USDA Risk Management Agency (which covers Wisconsin) to work through the official process. Contact information:

Pamela Stahlke, Director, 30 Seventh Street East, Suite 1890, St. Paul, MN 55101-4901
Phone: 651-290-3304, Fax: 651-290-4139, Email: rsomn@usda.gov
Web page: <https://www.rma.usda.gov/en/RMALocal/Field-Offices/Regional-Offices/St-Paul-Minnesota-Regional-Office-Page>

For more information on NOPP

- Program Announcement: <https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/CommercialNitrogenOptimizationPilotGrantProgram.aspx>
- 2023 Application Form: <https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents2/2023NOPP-%20RFP.pdf>