**NCGA ANNOUNCES NEW CORN YIELD CONTEST CLASS: NITROGEN MANAGEMENT**

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**Audio with Jim Isermann, an agronomist and farmer from Northern Illinois, Nicole Hasheider, NCGA Director of Crop Inputs and Investor Relations**

Suggested lead: On May 1st, the National Corn Growers Association will launch the 59th annual National Corn Yield Contest. This year, NCGA is bringing an additional feature to the contest in the form of a new pilot class for growers to enter, all centered around the idea of maximizing nitrogen use for high yields.

Jim Isermann, an agronomist and farmer from Northern Illinois, helped design the parameters for the pilot. Isermann says the new class includes a 180 lbs. per acre nitrogen limit…tape

Cut #1 :43 OC:…”corn yield contest.”

*“Once we determined that we were going to limit the overall amount of nitrogen to have that 180-pound cap, we came up with a number of rules and guidelines to ensure that this could be employed effectively and fairly across the geographies that we've chosen. So, we're looking at limiting the total amount of off-field nitrogen that will be applied. And we're also taking a look at some field sources in terms of things like are we raising alfalfa crops ahead of it are those high nitrogen legumes, things like that. The goal is to really try to take a look at those inputs that are on the field to try to help farmers become more profitable as they look to manage nitrogen sources and their resources better. But other than that, it's really still looking at very similar rules to the rest of the corn yield contest.”*

Isermann says NCGA will verify the records of winners…tape

Cut #2 :36 OC:…”additional nitrogen.”

*“When a farmer joins this classification, we're basically just asking for all their records involved. This shouldn't be anything too difficult for farmers who are keeping good records to achieve, we are asking them to track all the nitrogen that they'll be applying to their field and we're basically asking for all inputs just so that we can double check that there's not some nitrogen being applied through processes that we're not necessarily expecting. And then there'll be an audit process for anybody who wins. Before we declare them a winner, we’ll go through and do a simple audit process just to kind of check your records, check things such as geospatial maps, just ensure that everything that they said they had applied is accounted for and that they didn't somewhere apply additional nitrogen.”*

Nicole Hasheider, NCGA Director of Crop Inputs and Investor Relations, says the new class brings a new opportunity for farmers to participate in the contest…tape

Cut #3 :43 OC:…”sustainability goals.”

*“For all of its 59 years, the premise has really been grow as many bushels per acre as you can, and you get to that number however you want to get to that number. So, this time, we thought, well, what's a different challenge that brings in some new opportunities, that challenge that we came up with was a limiting factor, and so that limiting factor is limiting the amount of nitrogen. In the last few years nitrogen prices have skyrocketed, and so, we thought, well, that's one issue that farmers are dealing with right now. And then, another issue that we thought about was just the conversation around sustainability, and we know that creating synthetic nitrogen is an incredibly energy intensive process, and thinking about how we can increase nitrogen use efficiency goes a long way for reaching those long-term sustainability goals.”*

For the first year of the Nitrogen Management Class, NCGA will limit the number of entries to 100 across nine midwestern states. Hasheider says NCGA hopes this is the first of many successful years of new ideas around the National Corn Yield Contest…tape

Cut #4 :36 OC:…”new and different.”

*“The intent is never to take away what exists as a National Corn Yield Contest right now. We intend to keep the existing contest as it is for as many years as growers are interested in participating. But I do think there is this desire to keep building on the contest and exploring new opportunities. So, this is very much a pilot year for the nitrogen management class, but we really do see this and hopefully some other categories down the line becoming permanent fixtures of the contest, and opening up those opportunities for growers who already participate in the contest to have a new challenge or opening up to some farmers who maybe haven't participated in the past and want to try something new and different.”*

Learn more about NCGA’s National Corn Yield Contest and the new Nitrogen Management Class online at ncga.com.

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