

# *New Recommendations* Could Result From Studies

Results from a 2006 LSU AgCenter study could lead to changes in fertilizer recommendations for growing soybeans in acidic soils if those results continue to hold up in future studies. In addition, studies with corn could eventually lead to an efficiency indexing system to help farmers choose varieties.

LSU AgCenter soil scientist Jim Wang said his research in 2006 showed fertilizer for soybeans in acidic soils is unnecessary if the soil phosphorous level is detected at 30 parts per million under the Mehlich III testing protocol. The threshold previously used under the old testing procedures was 37 parts per million, he said.

“We hope to at least confirm with 2007 results,” Wang said about repeating the studies of the potential new threshold level again this year. With Mehlich III, there is no change for the threshold for the potassium level in soil, he said.

In addition to the work with soybeans, Wang is on an LSU AgCenter team studying nutrient uptake efficiency in corn. That project also involves Dr. Don Boquet, Dr. Rick Mascagni, Dr. David Lancelos and J. Cheston Stevens.

Preliminary results from last year’s tests appear to show that the more efficient corn varieties have the best yields.

In those tests, fertilizer with identical amounts of nitrogen, zinc, potassium, phosphorous and other elements were used on test plots at the Northeast Research Station at St. Joseph, and the levels of those nutrients were determined through tissue samples before the corn was harvested. The tests studied nutrient efficiencies in plots with conventional tillage and minimal tillage.

The research will be repeated this year, and if the data confirm the 2007 results, it’s possible an efficiency indexing system could be created to help farmers choose varieties, Wang said. Bruce Schultz