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A comparison of different fertility programs.

Amalgamated Sugar provides fertility recommendations to growers with the goal of maximizing beet yield and sugar %, while minimizing beet juice impurities. These recommendations are based upon soil testing to a depth of 3 ft, and take into consideration historical performance of district, beet station, grower and field, as well as irrigation type, and prior crop. Although provided to growers as a free service, many growers choose instead to employ commercial agronomists and crop advisors to determine their fertility requirements for them. These companies determine their fertilizer requirements according to their own unique and propriety rationale. Their resulting fertilizer recommendations are usually very different from Amalgamated's and often call for later season applications, more foliar micronutrient fertilizers, and higher levels of many crop nutrients than Amalgamated would recommend. This has resulted in much speculation from growers and crop advisors as to how each of these different fertility programs compare, and which is the most appropriate for sugarbeet production. We established a field trial to compare the fertility recommendations of three commercial advisory companies to those of Amalgamated Sugar. Results showed that Amalgamated's fertility recommendations compare favorably to those of commercial advisors despite their much lower application rates.

