



2015 Demonstration Report

MONSANTO LEARNING CENTER AT MONMOUTH, IL

Fantasy Farming Program Challenges Students

Since 2013, the Monsanto Learning Center at Monmouth, IL (MLC) has conducted an educational competition (Fantasy Farming Challenge) for area high school agriculture students. In 2015, hundreds of students from 17 high schools in Illinois and Missouri took the opportunity to learn more about crop production and the agriculture industry.

Program Description

In February, students attend a presentation by MLC staff at their school to learn about basic corn production, key decisions a grower must make every season, and the risks and costs associated with those decisions. Student teams then design a corn production plan and make the following decisions:

- Select a corn product from a list of several different genetic families and trait packages
- Decide whether to add a soil insecticide
- Determine planting date (early, mid, or late)

- Select a planting population
- Select either 20-inch or 30-inch row spacing
- Determine the pounds of nitrogen per acre
- Determine timing of nitrogen application (all preplant or split between preplant and in-season applications).
- Decide whether to use a foliar fungicide

Costs were determined for each selected input. Fixed costs were assigned to each plot based on equipment, fuel, herbicides, land rent, etc.

MLC staff planted each plot, implementing all of the choices the students made. During the season, each school took a field trip to the MLC to see their plot and learn more about agronomy and opportunities in agriculture.

MLC staff harvested all plots. Yields were adjusted to 15% moisture content and the grain was sold on the cash market. Prizes were awarded to the student team that produced the highest yield and

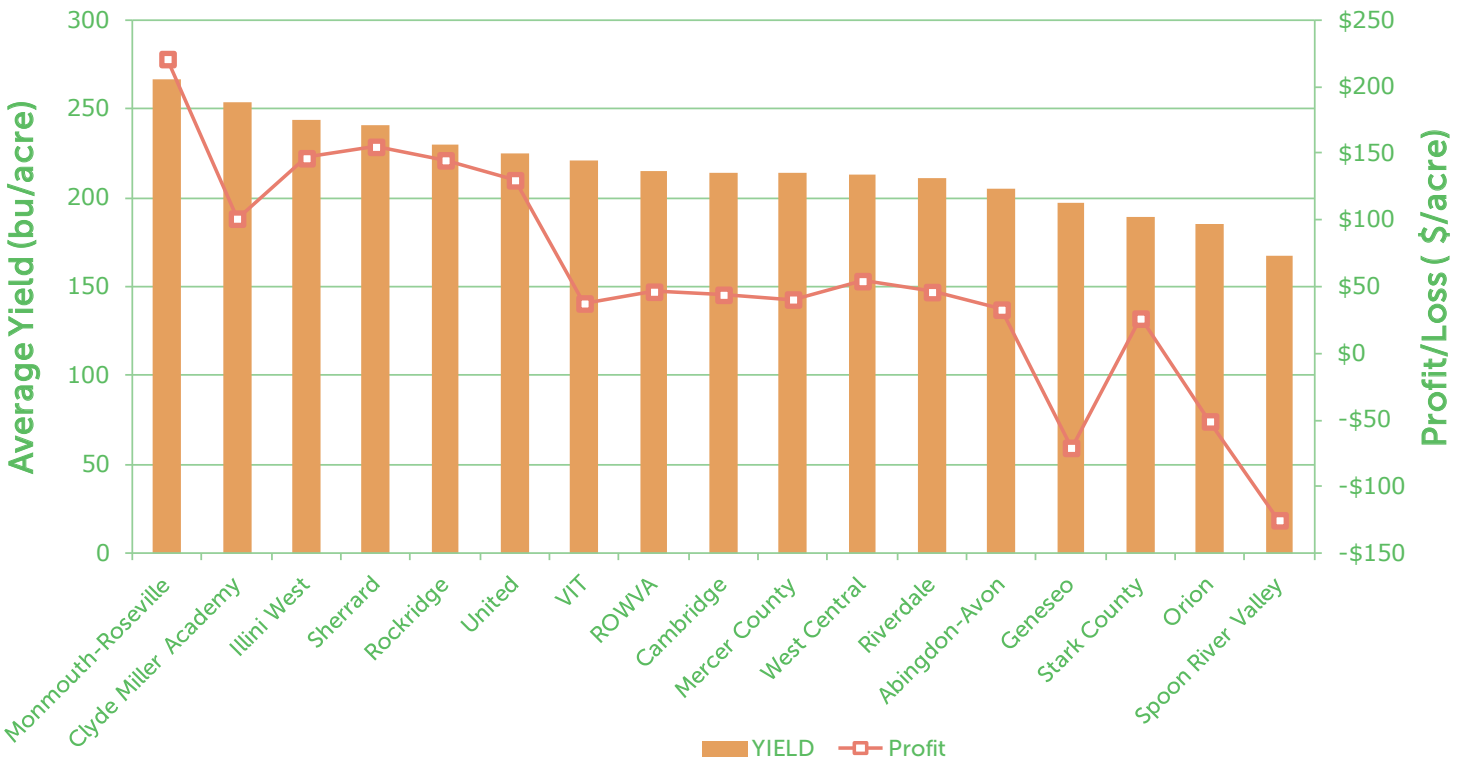


Figure 1. Average yield and profit/loss per acre for 17 Fantasy Farming Challenge corn plots in 2015.



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also to the school that returned the highest profit based on their decisions. In 2016, for the first time, one school (Monmouth-Roseville High School in Monmouth, IL) won in both categories.

Observations

- This is the first time in this competition that the top yield winner was also the most profitable. Obviously yield is tremendously important, but it is not the only factor in profitability. The second highest yielding plot placed sixth for profitability. This is proof that farmers must be efficient with their input costs.
- The most profitable plot did not use the least expensive seed, cut way back on nitrogen fertilizer or eliminate other important inputs.
- The most profitable plot was also the fourth most expensive to produce. This emphasizes that it is generally not possible to cut your way

to profitability. It is important to find the most efficient combination of inputs for each field.

- Congratulations to the FFA students at Monmouth-Roseville high School in Monmouth, IL for their outstanding performance, resulting in first place for both highest yield and highest profit in 2015 Fantasy Farming Program Challenge.
- MLC staff looks forward to offering this challenge to area schools again in 2016.

Legals

Individual results may vary, and performance may vary from location to location and from year to year. This result may not be an indicator of results you may obtain as local growing, soil and weather conditions may vary. Growers should evaluate data from multiple locations and years whenever possible.

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Figure 2. All Fantasy Farming Challenge corn plots were planted and managed by Monsanto Learning Center staff.