

IL STAR – 2023 Field Form

For office use:

Points: _____

STARs: _____



“If you can’t measure it, you can’t improve it.” - Peter Drucker

Farmer/Owner Information:

1. Name: _____ Email: _____
 Phone: (____) _____ - _____ Street/City/Zip: _____
 2. Field name: _____ 3. 2023 Crop: _____ 4. Acres: _____
 5. County: _____ 6. Sec/Township/Range: _____
 7. Owner: _____ 8. Is this field tile-drained? Yes No

I understand this field may be randomly selected for verification. To the best of my knowledge, this information is correct. I also agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy, as posted on the www.starfreetool.com website.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

IMPORTANT - Before proceeding, please review these instructions. Accurate responses will help ensure your field is awarded the correct point total and STAR Rating.

- This form documents field activities beginning immediately after harvest in 2022 and concluding with 2023 harvest.
- Read every item under each category. More than one selection is possible, but sometimes no items will be selected.
Example of multiple selections from the Cover Crops section- You planted a cover crop mix of cereal rye and tillage radish. You would select “Winter hardy- single species” and “Winter kill- single species.”
- Completely read each statement. Several have more than one qualifier that needs to be met.
Example from the Spring Tillage section- “Any full width operation, limited to a single pass, where no fall tillage was performed.”

First, tell us a little bit about the field you have selected.

9. Conservation and Management Practices- (check all that apply on this individual field):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturated Buffer | <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Plan that reduces sheet/rill erosion to “T” |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bioreactor | <input type="checkbox"/> Nitrogen rate study conducted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Constructed Wetland | <input type="checkbox"/> You attended a soil health or nutrient management meeting or field day within the last year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Terraces/Contours/WASCOBs | <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrient management plan and/or field is under CCA advisement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grass Filter Strip/Riparian Buffer | <input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled in Federal/State/Local Conservation Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grass Waterway | <input type="checkbox"/> Completed the 2022 STAR evaluation for this field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pollinator Planting (a ½ acre minimum) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Windbreak | |

Now let’s establish a crop history for this field.

10. Crop Rotation- use an “X” to indicate the 5-year crop history on this field.

Crop	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Corn					
Soybean					
Small Grain: _____					
Hay/Forage: _____					
Other: _____					

Example: A field has been in corn/soybean rotation for over a decade. In 2023 it was planted to corn. Place an “X” adjacent to corn for the years 2023, 2021, 2019. Soybean would have an “X” for 2022, 2020. If your crop is not listed, i.e. Grain Sorghum, write your crop on the line and mark “X” in the year(s) planted. Do not record cover crops here.

11. Cover Crops (Summer 2022-Spring 2023)- Established with NRCS guidelines (must have some growth):

- Winter hardy- single species
- Winter hardy- 2 or more species
- Winter kill- single species
- Winter kill- 2 or more species
- Cover crop was terminated AFTER spring 2023 cash crop planting

Discussion: Time period varies slightly here. Any cover crops established in 2022 either prior to harvest or after a summer crop was harvested count. Examples: aerial application into standing corn or drilling after wheat harvest. Wheat is not considered to be a cover crop.

Continue to Page 2

12. Soil Sampling- Use the previous 4-year field history:

- Not sampled in the last 4 years
- Sampled every 4 years or less
- Spring or Summer sampled
- Fall sampled
- GPS sampled (by grid or zone)

Discussion: Here is a great example of why you should read every item in each category. If a respondent simply marked "Sampled every 4 years or less" they may have missed points if they didn't indicate when the field was sampled or if GPS was used.

Almost done. The next category is tillage practices broken down into Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 categories.

13. Fall Tillage- Starting after harvest of the 2022 crop:

- No tillage or low disturbance fertilizer toolbar
- Strip tillage on field classified as non-HEL
- Shank type fertilizer bar and no other tillage performed
- Any full width operation not exceeding a 3" depth
- Any full width operation exceeding a 3" depth
- Any full width operation on soybean stubble

Discussion: With numerous possibilities for soil preparation, we elected to keep the options fairly simple. No tillage and strip tillage are easily definable. Full-width tillage can be tricky. In the fall, focus on the depth of machine operation and also note if soybean residue was tilled. In the spring, how many passes were made and was fall tillage performed?

14. Spring Tillage- 2023 field operations:

- No tillage or low disturbance fertilizer toolbar
- Strip tillage or Strip freshener on non-HEL field, or shank type fertilizer bar, and no other Spring tillage
- Any full width operation, limited to a single pass, where no fall tillage was performed
- Any full width operation, two or more passes, where no fall tillage was performed
- Any full width operation, one or more passes, where fall tillage was performed

Finally, your nutrient management strategies are a large component of your overall score. Like tillage, we've broken these into two sections defined by specific time periods. A third section reviews activities that may have occurred at any time during the crop year being reviewed.

15. Nutrient Management (Fall 2022 – February 2023):

- No Nitrogen was applied in this time frame other than MAP or DAP
Wheat topdress
- MAP or DAP was applied before December 1st
- NH₃ was applied when the soil temperature was below 50 degrees, and amounted to no more than 50% of the total Nitrogen program, and included an inhibitor
- More than 50% of the nitrogen program was applied during this time frame.
- Manure/Biosolid injected or applied and incorporated when soil temperature was below 50 degrees.
Manure applied, not incorporated

16. Nutrient Management (March 1st - Summer 2023):

- No Nitrogen was applied in this time frame AND no prior Fall 2022-February 2023 Nitrogen other than MAP or DAP
- Spring/Summer nitrogen application(s) amounted to 50% - 74% of the total N Program (from all sources)
- Spring/Summer nitrogen application(s) amounted to at least 75% of the total N Program (from all sources)
- In-season N application (top or sidedress) was at least 25% of the total N Program (from all sources)
- Manure/Biosolid injected or applied and incorporated
- Manure applied, not incorporated

17. Additional Nutrient Activities:

- Total Nitrogen applied on corn that followed a different crop was 181 to 200 lbs./acre,
OR corn-on-corn was 201 to 220 lbs./acre
- Total Nitrogen applied on corn that followed a different crop was 180 lbs. or LESS/acre,
OR corn-on-corn was 200 lbs. or LESS/acre
- Phosphorus and/or Potassium application based on removal rates and/or soil samples (may mean zero applied)
- At least 50% of total applied phosphorus was banded subsurface
- Used Triple Super Phosphate (0-45-0)
- Used Variable Rate Technology application
- Any fertilizer source containing Nitrogen or Phosphorus was broadcast on **frozen** or **snow-covered** ground