Test Strips for On-Farm Demonstration

UC DAVIS
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fact sheet

What is a test strip?

Test Strips are a type of field demonstration involving a narrow band of land running across a farmer's field where
1. (Typically) a single treatment is applied – such as a factor added (e.g., herbicide), omitted (e.g., no early spray) or modified (e.g., variety), and
2. The farmer manages the strip along with the rest of the field.

Include a sign so the treatment difference is obvious.

Why have a test strip?

Test strips are easy to implement and offer a simple way to assess and demonstrate a treatment under farmers' current practices.

To establish test strips

Note: Test strips are easiest to interpret when just a single factor is changed in each strip. They are superimposed on what the farmer is already doing.

1. **Representative.** Make sure the test area is representative of the rest of the field (and other fields in the district).
2. **Believable.** Mark out a test strip area wide enough to be believable (4 to 5 m width is generally adequate).
3. **Visibility.** Place test strip plots for high visibility (e.g., near a road), and such that easy side-by-side comparison with current farmers practices is possible.
4. **Collaborative.** The test strip is established with the farmer. If it is variety, it may be established at planting. Other treatments (e.g., herbicide) may be applied later.
5. **Management.** Except for the factor being demonstrated, the farmer manages the whole field including the test strip with their usual practices.
6. **Promotion.** Place a sign telling the treatment and who to contact for more information.

Limitations of Test Strips

1. Test strips are best to highlight the effect of just one treatment at a time.
2. If the part of the field used is not typical of the rest of the field or region, then any conclusions on treatment effects may be incorrect.