LEGACY Seeds
Integrity. Performance. Solutions.

AGRONOMY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2019

WALKING FIELDS

TRAIT EVALUATIONS

With the crazy weather that the 2019 growing season has given us it can be difficult to evaluate pest pressure throughout the area. With more conventional and single traited herbicide resistant corn hybrids planted do to input cost concerns pest damage has been elevated in 2019 compared to recent years. European corn borer feeding from earlier in the season will turn reddish-purple due to sugar accumulation and the top of the plant will begin to die. This can easily be mistaken for greensnap storm damage at harvest time. Second generation corn borer will bore through ear husks and ear shanks. This can also be misidentified as wind and hail damage. With high winds and moist soils there was widespread root lodging. Dig roots to access rootworm feeding scores to evaluate if plants were in trouble before the winds came. Pollination weather conditions were close to ideal in 2019. If you see sporadic kernel placement and fill, access corn rootworm beetle and other pest pressure that may have clipped silks or fed on pollen. Evaluating management decisions should happen through the entire season. In many cases where above or below ground pests are present, corn traits offered by Legacy Seeds do offer a stable return on investment by protecting your crop. Scout, evaluate and prioritize corn traits by being aware of what is happening in your fields.

CORN SILAGE HARVEST

SILAGE HARVEST MANAGEMENT

With corn tasseled, pollenated and kernels filling we are approaching corn silage harvest. Even though some thought this time would never come we need to prepare for a successful corn silage harvest especially in times of forage shortages.

Harvesting corn silage at an appropriate moisture helps preserve the best feed quality and yield and ensures good storage characteristics. You can follow these guidelines for target harvest moistures based on the storage structure being used: upright silo, 60-65%; bunker silo, 65-70%; silage bag, 60-70%. To estimate harvest moisture, begin by remembering the date that tassels emerged in the field. Silks will emerge shortly after tassels; from silk emergence 45 days are needed for the corn kernels to reach 50% milkline. While kernel milkline and whole plant moisture are not necessarily connected it is a good indication to begin moisture testing. Once the whole plant moisture is known, an average moisture dry down rate of 0.5% per day can be used to predict when to begin harvesting. Harvested silage moisture content can be estimated using a “grab test.” When a handful of silage is squeezed for 20-30 seconds and holds it shape, the moisture content is over 75%. If the squeezed silage ball quickly falls apart the moisture content is likely between 60 and 70%. Silage that will not stay together when squeezed is dryer than 60% moisture. Silage that is too wet may have issues with fermentation and seep nutrient rich juices when packed. Where as silage harvested too dry is difficult to pack causing air pockets where mold can develop. Digestibility and crude protein can also decline when harvest is delayed. Corn silage should be cut into 0.5 to 0.75-inch-long pieces for improved packing and storage qualities. Silage particles of this length can be packed firmly, ferment more evenly and are more palatable.

Legacy Seeds’ Ration Choice Leafy Corn Hybrids offer an extended harvest window because they are selectively bred for a slower rate of dry down in both the plant and ear. The Leafy Corn Hybrids will stay near 65% whole plant moisture and 50% milkline for a longer period than a typical dual-purpose corn silage hybrid. This helps the odds of harvesting and storing the best quality feed.

LATE SOYBEAN DISEASES

WHITE MOLD PRESSURE INCREASES

White Mold has become the poster child as one of the most wide spread and devasting soybean diseases. We have touched on some of the varietal selection, cultural practices and management decisions that can affect the white mold pressure in the field. With the rate at which the soybean crop has grown and how conditions have recently changed, white mold is again at the front of my mind. Pod set and pod fill has been taking place in many areas but there has also been new flowers that continue to emerge towards the tops of the plant. These flowers present a suitable host for spores to land on and infect the plant. This coupled with the dense crop canopy in many areas that has allowed Apothecia to continue to fruit and disperse spores has me on the look out for white mold. With decreasing economic return on fungicide applications made this late, I am focusing on identifying, scouting and making adjustments for 2020. Watch for white, puffy, cotton-like fungal growth on the outside of the stem and pods, wilted leaves and "bleached" stems. When you find this split the stem of the plant to find the sclerotia, the overwintering body, to confirm white mold pressure. https://ipcm.wisc.edu/apps/sporecaster/

WHEAT SEEDING TIMING

PROPER TIMING TO MAXIMIZE YIELD

The spring of 2019 and prevented planting has presented some available acres across the trade area. This is a great opportunity to seed wheat early to maximize yields. These acres should not be planted before September 12th to avoid Hessian Fly and aphid pressure. These pests can transmit Cereal Yellow Dwarf Virus which can stunt growth and decrease winter survival and yield. On acres to be seeded following other crops, be aware that soybean and other crop harvests will likely be delayed in 2019. In this situation, varieties with good disease tolerance and the Fusarium Head blight gene will have higher yield potential as well as increased grain test weight at harvest. Like any crop, planting depth is critical. Wheat planted from one inch to 1.5 inches deep with good seed to soil contact will have a reduced risk of winter injury and heaving. Seeding rates should be between 30 and 40 seeds per square foot. This would equate to 1.3 to 1.75 million seeds per acre. This rate can be adjusted based on planting date as well. Be aware of seed size when adjusting seeding equipment.

"SHOULD I CUT IT?"

LATE SEASON ALFALFA CUTTING MANAGEMENT

Every year around the first part of September Legacy's alfalfa team always gets asked the same question, "should I cut my alfalfa?" My instant gut reaction is "NO!" but a series of questions likely clears things up for the grower. "What is the "normal" frost date in your area?" The "average" frost date in the trade territory is anywhere from September 10th to the 20th. An alfalfa plant will continue to deplete the root reserves for up to ten days after cutting, and it will take about four weeks to replenish those reserves. Depleting these reserves dramatically affects the winter survival of the plant. "Do you need the feed?" If feed is needed, grower should cut after a killing frost, which is 23° for several hours and leave four to six inches of stubble. Five to six weeks of uninterrupted growth leading up to a killing frost, good fertility and pest management and proper varietal selection will give you the best winter survival.

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