



WALKING FIELDS

FROM THE COMBINE SEAT

Many of us are eagerly awaiting those long days in the combine seat to see the fruits of our labor this year. The best part of those days is watching the grain roll in and pile up in the hopper at a very fast pace. Even though most do not look forward to harvesting the poorer areas of a field, they may help to show what improvements can be made for next year. The combine seat is one of my favorite spots to evaluate management decisions that were made throughout the season. I encourage you to have a notebook in the cab and to write notes about the standability, yield, intactness, harvest moisture and ease of harvest for each hybrid or variety that is harvested this fall. Also, make note of how your management decisions paid off. Fungicide applications, herbicide applications, additional fertilizer applications, split fertilizer applications, tillage practices, planting dates; how did these factors change the crop that's being harvested? Having yield and moisture information will help to determine a return on investment for each management decision that was made. Your observations will be invaluable when putting together a crop plan for next year after harvest.

The days will run together and numbers become faint and foggy, but having this information could help make next years' harvest more profitable.

LEAN INTO CORN HARVEST

HARVEST STANDABILITY FACTORS

With excessive soil moisture, limited heat units and the ever-looming frost, harvest season is looking daunting as ever. Many uncontrollable environmental factors are stacking up but there is still an opportunity to manage the factors within your control to have a successful harvest season.

Continued scouting of fields through the black layer or physiological maturity will prove to be invaluable as conditions seem very favorable for harvest standability issues. Begin in fields and areas that have experienced a considerable amount of stress. Identify five representative areas of the field and evaluate the standability of a minimum of 20 plants. Evaluate standability by pushing the stalk at the ear to 45 degrees. Along with pushing the stalk, also pinch the stalk at the first internode above the brace roots and at the first internode below the ear.

When the plant lodges or the stalk collapses the stalk can be split to identify the cause. Use these findings to help prioritize the harvest order of fields or hybrids. Stalk rots are the most common disorders that will be found when splitting a corn stalk. There are many other factors to consider when identifying these diseases. Here are some quick identification keys to start scouting for. Anthracnose Stalk Rot; is one of the most common stalk rots. Black shiny lesions form on the surface of the stalk and rotting pith causes stalk lodging. Diplodia Stalk Rot; shows weakened and shredded pith with many tiny black dots on the stalk. Fusarium Stalk Rot; shredded pith at lower nodes with brown streaks on stalk. Gibberella Stalk Rot; rotted pith will turn pink/red at internodes. Pythium Stalk Rot; decay of pith at first internode above roots with rind still intact.



FALL ALFALFA FERTILITY

SETTING THE TABLE FOR 2020

It can be difficult to look forward to the 2020 growing season with so much work yet to be done in 2019, but doing so can dramatically affect the success of alfalfa seedings. Lime is the most important soil amendment when establishing an alfalfa stand. Fall applied lime will start to react with the soil when seeding starts next spring. The best time to apply lime is one year ahead of stand establishment. Applying and incorporating lime to correct the soil pH to 6.7 to 6.9 is ideal but also consider the yields expected from that stand because each ton of alfalfa harvested uses the calcium and magnesium found in about 100 pounds of ag lime. Benefits of proper soil pH at stand establishment include: increased stand establishment and persistence; more Rhizobium bacteria activity; added calcium and magnesium; increased availability of phosphorus; decreased magnesium, iron and aluminum toxicity; and improved crude protein content and total digestibility of the forage. Other nutrient incorporations that have shown benefits at seeding are: Phosphorus, encourages root growth; Potassium, effects yield and stand survival; and Sulfur, which is used in high amounts in alfalfa.



SOYBEAN HARVEST

HARVEST PRIORITIES FOR A VARIABLE SEASON

Variability has become the new normal in 2019. Managing for variability will pay off dramatically in soybean fields this harvest season. As soybean fields continue to mature unevenly, prioritize harvest order based on field conditions. The past harvest seasons have shown that there is likely no premium for 13% or less moisture beans being delivered to an elevator. That being said, if standability is in question error on the side of harvesting at a higher moisture. This will decrease shatter, splits and harvest loss but could increase dockage for foreign matter or moisture if the grain is not dried. As field variability is evaluated, the more mature areas are often the lower yielding areas. If standability is not in question, it can be advantageous to wait for higher yielding areas to mature and dry in the field. Be aware that grain could be overdry in this situation. Managing for this variability will not be done the same on all farms. Evaluate fields, research dockage rates, prioritize on standability and yield potential and make the best choice for your bottom line.

WHEAT SEEDING RATES

WINTER WHEAT SEEDING RATE CONSIDERATION

Soybean harvest is underway in some areas of the trade territory. This means that winter wheat seeding will soon follow. As adjustments are made to seeding equipment make sure that proper seeding rates are being targeted. As September comes to a soggy close planting rates will also change. For seeding dates from September 15th to October 1st the ideal seeding range is from 1.3 to 1.75 million seeds per acre which results in 30 to 40 seeds per square foot. As we get later into the fall seeding rates adjust to compensate for decreased fall growth and decreased fall tillering. Seeding dates from October 1st through October 10th the ideal seeding range increases from 1.75 to 2.1 million seeds per acre which results in 40 to 50 seeds per square foot. Proper seeding dates, rates and depth are vital to a successful winter wheat crop.

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