LEGACY Seeds
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AGRONOMY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2020

WALKING FIELDS

SPRING TIME SOIL MOISTURE

In many areas soil moisture levels are very high. Warmer temperatures are helping to allow moisture to move through the soil profile. With Spring approaching and a back log of field work created by a poor Fall in 2019, many may be tempted to get into fields before soils are fit. Tilling soils before they are fit can create even more issues. Often times soil that is turned over will be wet, blocky and cloddy. This will then form a hard crust on the soil surface that can be very difficult for moisture, nutrients and emerging seedlings to penetrate. This crust will form because the soil structure was destroyed by the tillage operation in poor conditions. When using tillage in an attempt to relieve compaction in wet soil conditions the compaction layer can be pushed deeper in the soil profile. Even when there is not much surface disturbance, like in the case of an inline ripper, soil compaction is not being relieved when the soil is wet. In this instance the compaction is released when the soil is squeezed between the shanks of the plow then quickly released causing that section of soil to « shatter » . If the soil profile is saturated with moisture, the section of soil between the shanks of the plow is squeezed like a sponge and does not shatter once the plow passes. This only results in wasted fuel and time with no relief to comapction. Waiting until the soil is fit to work will save many struggles in 2020 and down the road.

PLANTER MAINTENANCE

IS YOUR PLANTING EQUIPMENT FIELD READY?

Practices during planting season can dramatically affect the yield potential of a crop. With so many variables outside of our control, growers need to seize the opportunity to make decisions to preserve yield potential. This process starts before the planting equipment is pulled out of the shed. Planting equipment maintenance is vital to a well-established crop.

Checking wear parts such as coulters and disc openers and replacing worn parts is a good place to start. Other parts such as drive chains, cables, seed tubes and fertilizer units should also be inspected.

Seed opening discs create a consistent trench for the seed to drop into. This happens when opening discs touch each other for about 1.5 inches along the edges of the discs where they enter the soil. Worn discs that do not contact each other will result in a poor W shaped seed trench.

Planting depth should be adjusted according to soil moisture and soil conditions. Proper seedbed preparation creates more consistent seeding depth. Stop the planter frequently when changing planting conditions to ensure proper seeding depth. Gauge wheel maintenance and planter down pressure can also alter the seeding depth. Properly maintained gauges wheels will give more consistent planting depth. Too much down pressure will cause compaction near the seed. Planter down pressure can improve the seed to soil contact when used correctly.

Covering the seed and closing the seed trench creates seed to soil contact. Closing wheels that are selected for and set to your soil conditions will help the seed imbibe moisture to begin the germination process. Poorly adjusted closing wheels can cause compaction near the seed or too little seed to soil contact.

Calibrating the planter to ensure the proper amount of seed is being planted is something that is often overlooked. Be aware that monitors can be off and it pays to double check planting populations to avoid any mistakes.

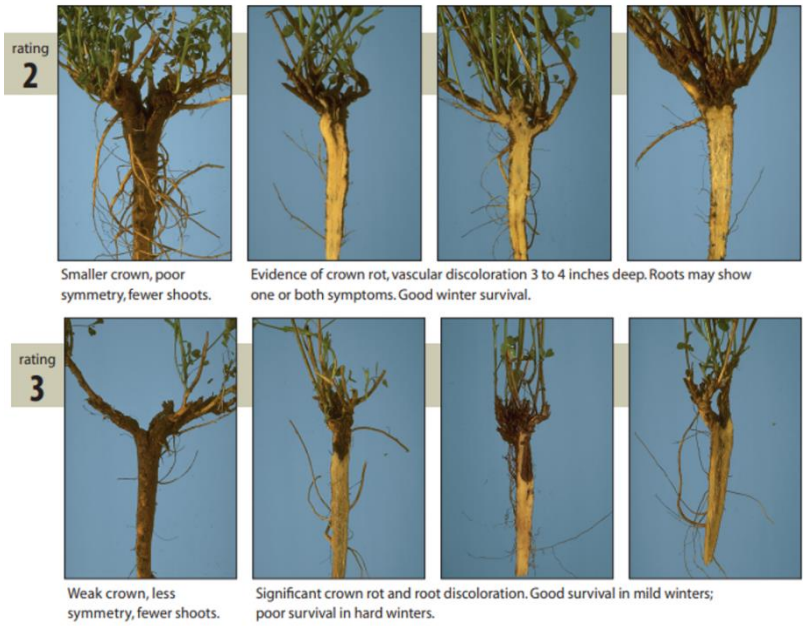
Consult with your equipment dealership for more specific information on planter maintenance and settings. Planning and preparing now will pay off when yield is not compromised by planting equipment.

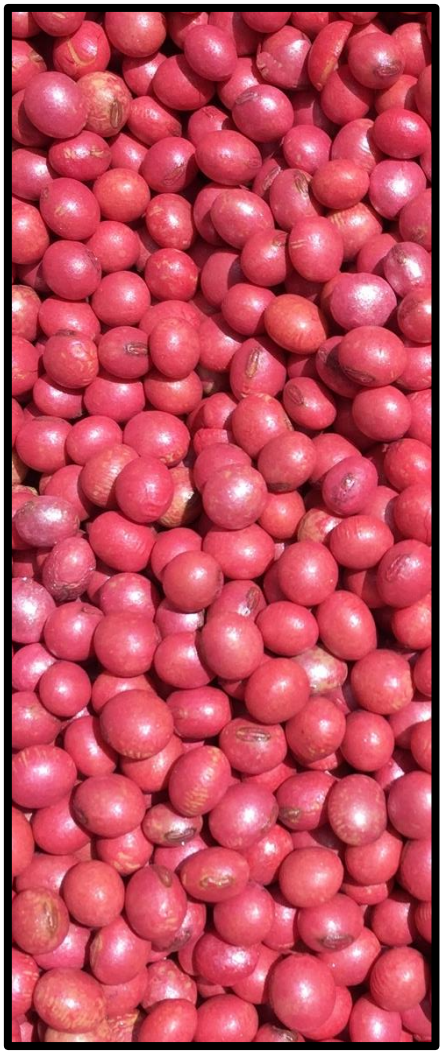
ALFALFA WINTERKILL

ACCESSING WINTER DAMAGE

After a very difficult year forage producing year in many areas, the last thing that many producers want to discuss is the possibility of alfalfa winter injury. Excessive soil moisture heading into the fall and winter of 2019 had many nervous about winter injury. A lack of very cold temperatures and frost along with ample snow cover in many areas relaxed those fears. Warmer temperatures in March have erased the snow and allow much of the moisture to filter through the thawed soil. However, we are not out of danger just yet. Extended periods of extreme cold temperatures look unlikely but Spring snow or ice can still cause damage to alfalfa stands.

Now is a great time to begin scouting stands that were the highest risk of winter injury. These areas include; fields with lower soil pH and lower nutrient levels, particularly potassium; fields that do not drain well; fields that may have been harvested late in 2019 for forage needs; and older stands of alfalfa. The University of Wisconsin has put together a great resource for helping producers make decisions when accessing winter injury in alfalfa. Follow the link to see this publication: [Evaluating and Managing Alfalfa Stands for Winter Injury]





SOYBEAN SEED TREATMENT

BENEFITS OF SOYBEAN SEED TREATMENTS

Poorly drained fields, heavy soils, no-til or minimum till fields and early planted soybeans see the best ROI for seed treatments. Much of the value in these situations comes from the fungicide components of the treatment. There are two general types of seed treatment funigicides that are available. One being effective against water-mold pathogens such as Phytophthoa and Pythium and the other group is most effective against other fungal pathogens. Seed treatment inoculant is a great way to ensure proper nodulation of each plant. Areas that have experienced drought, flooding, a long rotation away from soybeans and have lighter soils will benefit the most from inoculants in the treatment. Recent studies have shown that neonicotinoid insecticides in seed treatment do not provide as much of an ROI as once thought. However, when insect pests are present this component of seed treatment is vital. Seed treatments can help seedling emerge through tough conditions and ultimately improve the stand of the crop. With soybean seeding rates being lowered protecting every seed is that much more important. Contact your Legacy dealer or DSM for more information on L-Coat Total seed treatment.

CORN EMERGENCE

IMPORTANCE OF EVEN CORN EMERGENCE

Seeds planted germinating at the same time and emerging evenly is an ideal situation for corn production. The reality is that many factors can delay this timing : planting depth, soil temperature, seed bed preparation and residue management are just to name a few. Not managing for these factors can result in 20% or greater yield loss. There is a simple project you can do to track this timing of the emergence and the effect it has on yield. When the first seedlings are spiking through the soil surface take one color of marking flag and place it next to the plant. Return to the same spot 24 hours later with a different color flag. Repeat this process for four consectutive days or until all seedling have emerged. At harvest time, collect the ears based on the color of the flag and calculate the yield. Compare yields by the emergence day and compare the overall yield versus the potential yield if all plants had emerged more evenly.

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