

For what it's worth...

Starting things out for a new growing season, I have also decided to give my newsletter a fresh look. I hope you like it. The other thing I have done is put an official name to my opening comments. I hope you like that as well. Anyway here's to the 2008 growing season...

I'm sure nearly all the seed decisions have been finalized and likely all decisions for nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium have been finalized as well. But there are several things I call 'optional decisions' that still need to be made. These 'optional decisions' are even more crucial with high land prices, high input costs and strong commodity prices. I'm talking about planting dates, seeding rates, and the use of fungicides and insecticides.

Let's start with planting dates. Recommendations for corn and soybean planting dates have been inching earlier and earlier. Anymore corn planting starts as soon as crop insurance allows or the risk of frost is minimal. Soybean planting date recommendation have been moved earlier; ISU Extension now recommends planting soybean beginning April 25 for west-central Iowa. The stipulation here is that warmer weather is forecasted. The truth is with earlier planting we have a higher yield potential than with later planting. However don't be fooled, early planting can bring with it the potential for lower yield potential. Typically, early means cool, wet soils and this translates into lower seed germination, higher seedling disease, and poor early root growth.

The recommended planting population for soybean is 125 to 140,000 seeds per acre with the expectation of getting a final population of 100,000 plants per acre. The need for seeding rates higher than 150,000 is no longer there. This reduction could result in lower seed costs. On the flip side, corn seeding rates are on the rise but success lies within hybrid genetics and environmental conditions. For example higher corn seeding rates in dry years will result in plants competing for available soil moisture with the outcome of unhealthy, barren plants.

Switching to mid-season decisions, it is known that both fungicides and insecticides are effective products. That is they do what they were intended to do... suppress disease and insects. There is a cost to applying these products and it is imperative to get enough of a yield response to pay for the application. It is not good enough to just get higher yields. One glimpse of what type of response to expect is to know what genetics are out there. Is the hybrid disease susceptible or disease tolerant? A second glimpse is the know how much disease or insect pressure there is. If disease and insects are lacking, yield response from a fungicide or insecticide will be minimal. My final thought on the use of fungicides and insecticides is to scout the field and know what is there and how much pressure there is.

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Webpage's to View:

[Corn Nitrogen Rate Calculator](#)

[Soybean Disease & Pest Management Field Guide](#)

[Farmland Values Increase](#)

[Estimated Costs of Production in Iowa 2008](#)

[2008 Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey](#)

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NEW, FRESH OFF THE PRESS... Soybean Disease and Pest Management Field Guide

Get yours today. The ISU College of Agriculture and Life Science and Iowa Soybean Association have teamed up to bring you this wonderful field guide. Take full color pictures of plant disease and insect to the field. This rugged field guide has pest descriptions and color picture on laminated pages and spiral bound.

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- Call ISU Extension Distribution Center at 515-294-5247 and ask for publication number CSI 10.

Seed Treatments ... by Aaron Saeugling, ISU Extension Field Agronomist

Treating seeds is not a new concept. Higher soybean prices and increased insect and disease pressure might have you asking, "Should I treat my soybeans?" You can find information to help answer this question at:

www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/icm/2007/3-26/fungicide.html.

If you're a dealer who wants to treat seed for your customers, you might be asking, "Where can I find the manual?" You need Category 4 Seed Treatment information from the Iowa Commercial Pesticide Applicator Manual,

www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/CS16.pdf.

Dates to Remember:

Mar 19, 2008 RUSLE2 and P-Index Workshop, Carroll Co. Extension, Carroll, IA

Private Pesticide Applicator Training ...

Mar 7, 2008 Western Iowa Research Farm, Castana, IA

Mar 11, 2008 Carroll Recreation Center, Carroll, IA

Mar 12, 2008 Community Rec Center, Ida Grove, IA

Mar 18, 2008 FC Community Room, Farnhamville, IA

Mar 19, 2008 Clover Hall, Greene Co Fairgrounds, Jefferson, IA