

For what it's worth...

I spent this fine morning taking some soil samples in the glorious Loess Hills. This after a fine weekend where I observed pastures and alfalfa fields greening. And my bubble of hope for spring to finely arrive was burst by a dreadful weather report indicating rain or rain/snow mix for tomorrow. That's not how we move towards spring planting.

Anyhow, back to soil sampling. There was plenty of moisture in the top foot and likely conditions are a couple of days from field work (and even more if rain/snow mix hits). One my drive back to the office I saw some cattle feedlot manure and anhydrous ammonia being applied. My observation was it was still a little wet for that too as tracks were being left and the anhydrous knife was not sealing effectively. Remember, be patient as to avoid making planting conditions worse.

Steps to Attain a Desired Final Plant Population.

1. Plant into a proper seedbed: it's like the Goldie Locks story... not too cold, not too wet!
2. Plant at a proper seeding depths: 1-1.5 inches for soybean and 1.5-2 inches for corn.
3. Plant uniformly: Use a newer planter (< 5 yr old) at moderate planting speeds (< 6 mph).
4. Select seed quality where you can and adjust seeding rates where you cannot.

Go for Even Seed Spacing

Last week I mentioned several things regarding even corn emergence and things that could be done to achieve emergence uniformity. Remember that uneven plant spacing can also reduce yield potential. Plants next to gaps typically result in a bigger, better ear because of less competition. But skips of 1 to 3 feet can result in a yield loss of 2 percent and gaps 4 to 6 feet can result in a yield loss of up to 5 percent. Skips or gaps result in yield loss because the per acre plant population is cut back and is especially a problem in fields that are at or below intended plant populations. More information at "Planter Tips" link on the right.

Here are some tips to help with planter settings and accuracy;

- Keep the planter speed at those recommended in the manual.
- Match seed grade with the planter plate.
- If your planter has finger pickup, check for wear on the back plate and brush.
- Check for wear on the double-disc openers and seed tubes.
- Double check the sprocket settings on the planter transmission.
- Look for worn chains, stiff links and tire pressure
- Clean out seed drop tubes.
- If using a planter monitor, clean seed tube sensors.
- Align coulters and disc openers.
- If using an air planter, match the air pressure with the seed weight.

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Serving: Calhoun,
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Webpage's to View:

- [Planter Tips](#)
- [Soybean Factsheets](#)
- [Iowa 4-Inch Soil Temperatures By County](#)
- [Calculate Corn Yield Loss Due to Uneven Emergence/Height](#)
- [Corn Nitrogen Rate Calculator](#)
- [Soybean Disease & Pest Management Field Guide](#)
- [Farmland Values Increase](#)
- [2008 Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey](#)

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