



Mark Licht
Extension Field Agronomist
1205 West U.S. Highway 30,
Suite G
Carroll, IA 51401
Tel: 712-792-2364
Cell: 712-790-7233
Fax: 712-792-2366
Email: lichtma@iastate.edu

Serving: Calhoun, Carroll,
Crawford, Greene, Ida, Monona
and Sac counties.

Quick Links

[Univ. of Wisc., Evaluating Alfalfa](#)
[Soybean Seed Treatments](#)
[Current Soil Temperatures](#)
[Corn Production, Planting](#)
[Alfalfa, University of Wisconsin](#)
[Elwynn Taylor's Twitter](#)
[Boosting Pasture Production](#)
[ICM News](#)
[Center for Ag Law and Taxation](#)
[Ag Decision Maker](#)
[2008 Farm Bill Information](#)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Many materials can be made available in alternative formats for ADA clients. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964.

Crop Update

The last couple of weeks have been a roller coaster for corn planting. The last fourteen days there have been sporadic rains across West Central Iowa with a three to four day planting window. The planting window helped get corn planting 80 to 90% complete. And some soybeans were put in the ground as well; about 15 to 20%.

Corn emergence has been uneventful in the sense that there has been relatively few problems due to good planting conditions. However, I suspect that corn planted in the last 10 days or so have the potential for problems due to less than ideal soil conditions at planting. One of those issues could be sidewall compaction. Some timely rains could help this corn emerge without problems.

That brings me to the point on when to plant soybeans and how many seeds per acre. This has been the premier question the last seven days.

Soybean Planting Considerations

Three questions come up when talk turns to soybean planting; 1) how early is too early, 2) what seeding rate should I be at and 3) will seed treatments pay off?

Planting date is critical, but not as critical as planting conditions. ISU recommends planting soybeans as early as April 25 for the southern two-thirds of Iowa and May 1 for the northern third. That is with the caveat of waiting for ideal soil conditions. The advantages of planting soybeans results in more main stem pods, greater potential for earlier flowering and a longer reproductive period. Higher productive fields are going to benefit more than lower productive fields.

Seeding rates, in some respects, are

affected by planting date. Earlier planting dates in marginal soil conditions may justify a seeding rate on the upper end of the ISU recommendation of 125,000 to 140,000 seeds per acre. Other justifications for planting on the higher end of the spectrum include fields with low productivity or high disease history. Dr. Palle Pedersen has good research that indicates 100,000 plants per acre at harvest results in optimum yields.

And finally on to soybean seed treatments, which are dependent on both planting date and seeding rate; at least in my mind. In short, we know that seed treatments do work to hold back seedling disease and early season insects. This does not mean that they should or should not be used. Inoculants are not worth the money paid to add them if soybeans have been planted in the field within 5 years. Early planting in marginal conditions, high disease or insect risk, and low planting populations are all good cases for soybean seed treatments to be used. However, planting in mid-May with warm soil conditions at 140,000 seeds per acre may not result in enough yield bump to pay for the treatment.

When looking at soybean planting date, seeding rate, and seed treatment use consider what the trade-offs are. For example, if you cut the seeding rate by 25% to save \$12 per acre and a seed treatment only costs \$9 per acre, you would save \$3 per acre and likely not hurt yield potential. Look at the trade-offs and aim for 100,000 harvestable plants per acre.

Black Cutworm Scouting

There was a significant flight of black cutworm moths roughly 10 days ago. Because of that significant flight, scouting should begin in roughly 300 base 51°F growing degree days. As of Sunday, May 11 there has been roughly 120 accumulated growing degree days. With current temperatures, growing degree days are accumulating at a rate of 10 to 15 per day.

With that knowledge scouting for black cutworm should begin in 12 to 18 days. Having said that, Rich Pope, ISU pest monitoring coordinator, will be posting an advisory on the ICM News webpage when a more solid scouting date is being predicted.

Extension Re-Structuring

Jack Payne, VP for ISU Extension, announced on April 30 that extension will reorganize. The reorganization is in response to reduced state revenues. This re-structuring changes Extension from a geographically based organization to an issue based organization. Jack Payne is has said this re-structuring is “changing our methods, not our mission.”

The most visible change will occur at the county level where County Extension Councils will decide how to direct the funding of programs for the county. Therefore, there may not be a staff person that has been known as a County Extension Education Director. There may be a person in the county office that will focus on specific programs as directed by the County Extension Council. More information on the ISU Extension re-structuring can be found on the [ISU Extension webpage](#).

Extension field agronomists (my position) will remain in place. However, our geographic area will likely change. That change will likely occur in late summer.