



May 4, 2009
Issue 2

Serving Dallas,
Jasper, Madison,
Marion, Polk,
Poweshiek and
Warren counties

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Across The Fence

Corn begins to emerge – Corn seed appears to be in good shape, even that planted three weeks ago. Corn planted 14 or more days ago is starting to break the surface. Warm soil temperature has allowed the seeds to sprout, but it takes sunshine to get the shoots out of the ground. When we have



warm soils but lack sunshine, as in the past week, the roots can get confused and may grow upwards. This situation generally corrects itself when the clouds clear and the sun reappears.

Left seedling roots are oriented upward while roots are oriented downward (normal) for seedling on right.

Are you sure you are planting at the depth you want? Before the rain last week, the ground was working up beautifully and many acres of corn were planted. I was digging in a field that had been fall chiseled and planted under very good conditions. The corn was planted about 1 ½ inch



deep. However, heavy rains had caused the soil to settle, and now that seed is closer to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch deep. Optimum planting depth is 1½ to 2 inches deep. The link below is to an article discussing the perils of shallow planting depth.

Shallow planting depth after soil settling

www.agronext.iastate.edu/corn/production/management/early/root.html

Scout Early, Scout Often – Soon after seed goes into the ground we need to regularly monitor for insects, diseases and anything else that will interfere with the developing crop. Black cutworm trapping sites reported increased catches in some areas of the state at the end of April. These reports make us aware of the moth populations that are flying around and laying eggs. When we see large catches of moths, models can predict, based on Degree Days, when the eggs will hatch and our scouting efforts should intensify. The link below is to an article by Extension Entomologist Jon Tollefson, discussing the scouting and economics of treating black cutworm.

www.extension.iastate.edu/CropNews/2009/0428tollefson.htm

It is easier to correct planter malfunctions, weed escapes and insect infestations when discovered early. Take a few hours to look over what you've done so far and get the season off to a good start!