

## Crop Happenings

April 20 2009  
Issue 2



Prepared by  
**John Holmes,**  
Extension Field  
Agronomist

*Serving Boone,  
Hamilton, Hardin,  
Humboldt, Marshall,  
Story, Tama, Webster,  
and Wright County*

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.

**Field work update.** Farmers spent much of the week applying anhydrous ammonia, working soybean stubble, leveling stalk ground, and PLANTING corn. The expected nice weather this week will be welcome – hopefully it will also help germinate corn and move it toward emergence.

**Too soon to plant soybeans?** In the “Soybean Planting Date” fact sheet Dr. Palle Pedersen says that the planting date for soybeans should be based on soil conditions and calendar date rather than soil temperature. The optimum time to plant soybean is the last week of April in the southern two thirds of Iowa and the first week of May for the northern one third of Iowa. Seed treatment for both insects and diseases become much more important when soybeans are planted in April. Early planting results in a greater number of main-stem nodes, the potential for earlier flowering, and a longer reproductive period.

**Soil temperature information.** Soil temperatures are available at: <http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/NPKnowledge/> . The [Iowa Observations \(Mesonet\)](#) web page also provides interesting information. Included on this page are links to ISU Ag Climate weather, the School Net weather stations, and average wind speed.

**Deciding on Corn Populations.** Corn planting populations are an ever moving target. Populations are, and have been, moving up for several years now. There is no perfect population target. Hybrid genetics keep that population target moving upward because of better genetics becoming available. However, some hybrids tolerate higher populations better than others. Current ISU data recommends optimal seeding rates in the 32 to 35,000 plant per acre range. This accounts for both grain yield and seed costs. Learn more at the [ISU Corn Production, Planting webpage](#). (This paragraph was taken from the April 13 edition of [Crop Connections Newsletter](#) written by Mark Licht, ISU Extension Field Agronomist.)

**Planting thoughts.** One thought keeps coming to mind: Watch for sidewall compaction. Wet soils are more prone to this. Another thought: plant corn between 1¾ and 2 inches deep. If we receive one hard rain that seed will be at a depth of closer to 1¼ inches after the soil settles. Check continually to insure that seed is where you want it and conditions remain good. It’s early enough we can afford to wait a day or two if necessary.

Prepared by John Holmes, Extension Field Agronomist  
Phone (515) 532-3453, Email: [jdholmes@iastate.edu](mailto:jdholmes@iastate.edu)