Corn: What to look for to monitor yield potential

July 25, 2012 Webinar

**Question:** Please talk about how the excessive heat during pollination and early reproductive stages affects corn yield. We welcome your best guess.

Yield is affected during this time by a reduction in both seed numbers and seed weight. Elwynn Taylor’s recent forecast of 153 bushels per acre is about 7 percent below the trend line yield of 180 bu/acre. That is the best estimate we have to date. Obviously some fields will yield reasonably well and some will be reduced by much more than 7 percent of the average. It is too early to tell.

**Question:** How does reduced ear shank size affect yield? We are seeing signs significantly reduced shank size.

Reduced shank diameters could negatively affect ear retention. That means we could see more ear loss before harvest. It will probably vary with hybrid and field. It is wise to monitor shank strength and ear retention at and after maturity, and schedule harvests based on your observations.

**Question:** What are the prospects for seed corn production? How will the drought impact the seed corn crop? Here and in South America?

Currently there is little or no concern among seed industry colleagues about seed production for 2013. Yields and kernel weights may be lower in some areas but there are several positives: i) a good share of the seed crop is produced with irrigation across the Corn Belt; ii) multiple areas for production spreads risk; iii) companies always try to produce more than needed for the upcoming year; iv) winter production areas are available to produce seed of high-demand hybrids if there is a shortage of U.S. production.