

# Field Drying May Be A Thing Of The Past, Industry Experts Say

*Avoid 10- to 15-percent yield loss by harvesting at higher moisture levels and using high-efficiency dryers*

## **ASSUMPTION, ILL.**

**S**uccessful harvest starts with optimal planting. In years like this when farmers have little control over planting, they can still ensure their crop's yield potential is maximized by managing harvest moisture.

An optimal planting date and weather during the growing season are two major factors affecting a crop's yield potential. But, harvest moisture also significantly affects actual yield-harvesting too late can have significant consequences.

Gary Woodruff, grain conditioning technology manager with GSI® says, "The drier corn gets, or the longer it is left in the field, the more susceptible it is to yield loss. When corn hits 15-percent moisture, as it does when harvested late, losses of 10 to 15 percent or more are common. With higher crop prices, drying corn with today's more efficient dryers costs around three percent of the crops value (at an average moisture removal of 10 points). When corn is harvested below 19-percent moisture, harvest losses due to dry grain shatter rise above the three percent, and this doesn't include losses from lodging or storm damage. Due to late planting this season, preventive measures should be taken to avoid these losses."

### **How to avoid harvest-time losses**

Options for handling this problem have been dismal in the past, as drying \$3.00 corn with less efficient dryers has been viewed as too expensive. Previously, only field losses exceeding 10 percent made drying costs worthwhile. With today's higher corn value and lower costs of drying, field losses below 19 percent reduce net income. With advances in dryer technology, the

process has become more economical and easier. Today, the cost of drying is much less than the cost of field loss.

"Starting harvest earlier and drying corn with propane will improve yields when seasonable variables are out of farmer's hands; think of drying as a type of insurance," say Mark Leitman, director, business development & marketing with the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC). "The efficiency of today's dryers allows farmers to harvest without consuming excess fuel. The new technology relies on propane to distribute heat and dry more evenly, increasing quality and productivity while improving fuel efficiency."

Woodruff says the new technology is making a big difference for farmers.

"We are seeing many of our customers increase their drying capacity to harvest at higher moisture levels. The new, high-efficiency dryers improve their profitability and grain quality."

### **Benefits beyond crop management**

PERC has launched the Propane Farm Incentive Program available to GSI customers who purchase the new X-Stream model dryer. Farmers enrolled in the program receive \$5,000 for tracking drying costs on the GSI dryer for one season and sharing the data with PERC.

"This is a great way to reduce the cost of an energy efficient dryer," adds Leitman.

Planning during the summer how to handle higher harvest moisture can ease the stress and uncertainty this season brings. To learn about the PERC Propane Farm Incentive Program, visit <http://www.agpropane.com>. Find more information about GSI dryers at <http://www.grain-systems.com>. Δ