

IMPACT Plots Increase Data For Pioneer Hi-Bred

Plots Allow Specific Environment Targeting

REGINA LAROSE
MidAmerica Farmer Grower

KENTON, TENN.

Mike Hughes, Senior Agronomy Trial Manager, Pioneer Hi-Bred, Huntsville, Alabama, recently explained a new program Pioneer Hi-Bred launched this year to enhance their research efforts. Intensively Managed Product Advancement Characterization and Training (IMPACT) plots for corn and soybeans allows Pioneer Hi-Bred to collect more data than in the past.

"In the past when we brought products forward to our R4 stages; the stages just before we advance products to commercial status, we have been using product advancement trials - large strip plots at multiple locations. We needed to have more data in order to more accurately choose products that would help maximize the productivity of our growers," stated Hughes.

With IMPACT, "we have got a number of crews located across the South. They are fully equipped with high tech planters and combines," explained Hughes.

The IMPACT crews put in multiple plot locations. These plots are located in the key environments in which the products are grown.

Plot design has many advantages according to Hughes. "The plots are eight rows wide by 52 feet long. We harvest the four center rows, we replicate within the plot itself so we get multiple readings on each environment. This allows us, without going to the somewhat smaller plots, to test more products, more technologies and more locations in a much more efficient manner. By the time we finish with the IMPACT data, strip plot data and research data, we have a tremendous degree of confidence in how these products are going to perform as we bring them to our customers for sale."

Environment is a key factor Hughes said. "We deliberately spread our plots around on our key environments. What that means is that within any given geography right down to the sales territory level, there are dominant environments within that small piece of geography. It may be irrigated; it may be dry land, field ground or bottom ground. Dominant environments that exist on farms within that relatively small geographic area are the specific target of all our trials. We are able to capture data from all these key environments."

Pioneer Hi-Bred has numerous research plot trials. "Just in Kentucky and Tennessee, between the IMPACT plots; the sales plots and the product knowledge plots, all our large trial type plots, in 2010, we have 173 corn locations and 107 soybean locations."

Pioneer Hi-Bred also has numerous side by side's added Hughes. "This is where our local

sales professionals work with farmers, provide a key product for that geography and ask them to plant it side-by-side against a competitive product. We come back in the fall and work with the grower to harvest the plot. Just in West Tennessee and the Purchase area of Kentucky, our team now has about 180 soybean side-by-sides comparisons," he outlined. These 360 side-by-side farm trials are in addition to the research trials.

Hughes stated five years ago, Pioneer Hi-Bred had a fraction of the research data trials they do today. "We are putting forth a major effort toward our research in the South. We pride ourselves in the fact that that by the time we bring a product to the commercial stage for sale to the



Intensively Managed Product Advancement Characterization and Training (IMPACT) plots for corn and soybeans allows Pioneer Hi-Bred to collect more data than in the past, explains Mike Hughes, Senior Agronomy Trial Manager, Pioneer Hi-Bred, Huntsville,

grower, we know more about that product than anyone, any competitor or anyone else. This knowledge is how we focus getting the right product on the right acre for our customers. Δ

REGINA LAROSE: Associate Editor, MidAmerica Farmer Grower