

Learning Center

Syngenta's Learning Centers Bring Innovations To Customers

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INA, ILL.

The concept for Syngenta's Learning Centers is to present Syngenta's innovations for customers to view, according to Vern Hawkins, vice president of Syngenta's U.S. commercial operations, based out of Greensboro, NC. Hawkins explained the Learning Centers' goals during a Learning Center Field Day at Ina, Ill.

"The Learning Center is a concept that we started about five years ago to bring our customers in to see all the innovations that we have across crop protection, seed, seed care, traits and the inventions that we're bringing to help farmers improve productivity on the acres that they grow," he said. "It's an opportunity for us to show multiple technologies, hands on in the field."

Syngenta has 10 such centers in the country, running from Pennsylvania to Colorado, however they're present in only seven states. Only the one at Rend Lake in Ina is located on a college campus. Some are just fields that Syngenta has rented and they are run by third party independent researchers. This is the fifth year for the Learning Center program.

"We do work with our university folks as part of our speaker network and for training and education during the summer," Hawkins explained. "We don't have Learning Centers in the south at this time. We are looking at whether we should expand the learning center concept into southern agriculture which is growing more corn as well as soybean."

The Learning Centers operate on the belief that it's not one technology that can help a farmer solve his problems and get the most out of every acre. It's showing them that the use of multiple technologies really does give them opportunities to put their yields at their highest performance potential. So the Learning Centers show them the different technology benefits of seeds and crop protection, and conveys the message that working with multiple technologies can help them manage resistance while maximizing yield potential.

"The size of our locations are approximately 40 acres, primarily corn and soybeans, so it's an opportunity for us to put together demonstration trials on agronomic production practices utilizing our products, technologies, and hopefully solutions on how growers can raise more productive corn and soybeans and ultimately reap higher yields and have more profitable farms," he said.

Syngenta has added seed lines in the recent years, primarily through the acquisition of different companies.

"About four or five years ago we acquired the Golden Harvest business, the Garst business and, of course, we have the NK seed business," Hawkins explained. "We are present in other crops - vegetables, sugar beets - as well under the Rogers seed and Hilleshog seed brand. We have a little bit of a wheat seed line under AgriPro, but the bulk of our business through the acquisitions is focused on corn and soybeans through those three brands. AgriSure Traits is our new bio-tech traits brand and line."

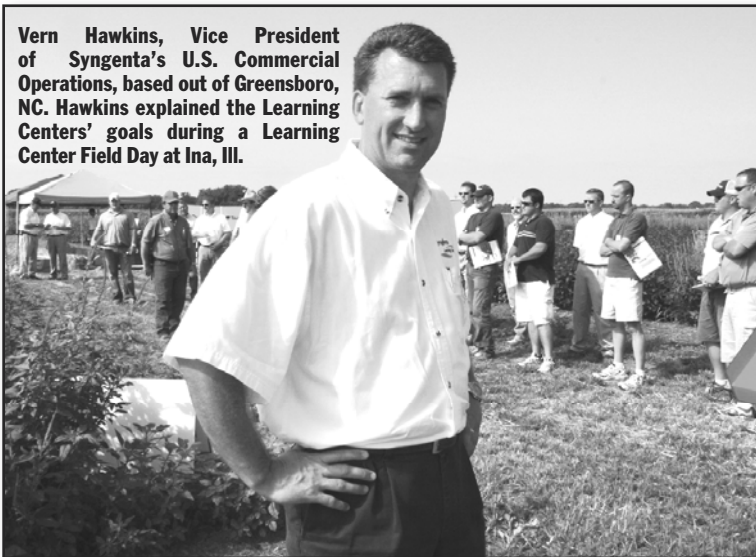
Syngenta's latest offerings are competitive and they are centered on next generation technology.

"We already have what we call GT technology which is glyphosate tolerant, so we sell products now where you can put glyphosate over the top and it doesn't affect the crop," he said. "What we're really investing in now is better yielding germ plasm and additional traits to give growers

more options on their overall pest control and yield productivity program."

Syngenta has always been a seed and crop protection company, however now the company

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has doubled in size in the seed and trait business. Syngenta was in NK seeds from the beginning, however, the acquisitions and growth have created the doubling.

Some 150 to 200 customers were present for the Learning Center program, with one bus of

Jim Elliott, AgriEdge Agronomic Solutions Manager for Brand Marketing and Seeds, gave his take on the importance of the Learning Center Field Day.



about 50 people arriving early in the morning. Visitors came primarily from Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky.

"I think the main thing that we're trying to help farmers understand is that we're committed to agriculture, and research and development is our strength," Hawkins said. "We think our investing in multiple technologies is important to help the growers have options as yield and productivity become more important."

Jim Elliott, AgriEdge Agronomic Solutions Manager for Brand Marketing and Seeds located in Fishers, Ind., gave his take on the importance of the Learning Center Field Day.

"The most exciting thing is that with our traits, our technology and our diverse germ plasm, we are on the verge of bringing forth a tremendous volume of new products and technologies more quickly," he said. "We can bring forth seed more quickly than we ever have before. We have gone from screening over 20,000 corn products to over 120,000 a day, so over the next four to five years we're going to be advancing a significant number of new products in corn and beans. This year alone in 2009, 25 percent of our soybean product line-up will be new introductory products. So we're very excited about that and what we have coming in both our corn and soybean pipeline."

Syngenta will continue with the Roundup Ready technology.

"We recently announced an agreement with Monsanto in which we have access to its new product, Roundup Ready 2," Elliott said. "So we will be able to incorporate that into our corn and soybean lines and we have the flexibility to do that."

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