

Nitrogen Issues In Corn

Continuous Corn Presents Special Problems For Growers

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A key issue in no-till continuous corn is nitrogen management, a topic discussed recently by Mike Plumer, University of Illinois extension natural resource management educator.

“Nitrogen management is a key issue in that we need to have nitrogen applied at planting time to compensate for the extra residue that is there and for the fact that the previous corn crop has utilized most of the nitrogen in the soil,” he said. “There is not a good base of nitrogen and, in fact, a small deficit at planting time so we need to compensate for that for the new crop.”

Plumer also discussed fungicides on corn which have to be applied at the right time, particularly at full tassel emergence. The next consideration is whether there’s a potential for disease.

“If there are drought conditions, no, we don’t have much potential,” he said. “If it is wet weather or we are expecting rainy weather then we have a potential for disease on those crops. We also need to make sure we have picked the best quality hybrids because, from the research data, high quality hybrids that are very disease resistant normally don’t have a yield increase for fungicides.”

Plumer discussed multiple topics, including using cereal rye as a cover crop in front of soybeans.

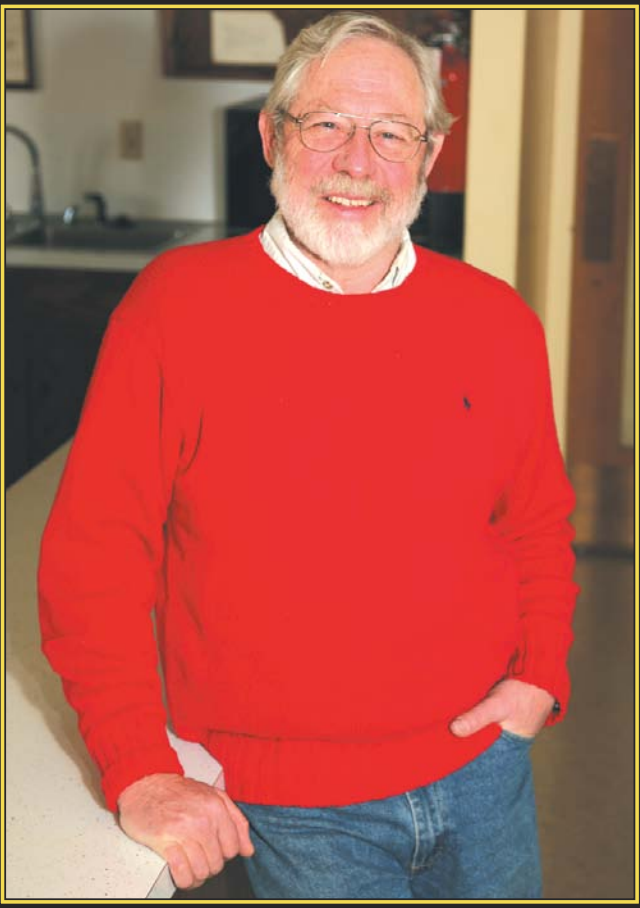
“The big benefit to that is cereal rye is very toxic or allelopathic to maretail and other winter annuals, so if you have a problem with Glyphosate resistant maretail or ALS resistant or PS2 resistance on maretail, then you can utilize a cereal rye cover crop to suppress and keep the maretail from coming up,” he said. “After that, you can plant no till beans in that cereal rye and you won’t have the major issue with the maretail.”

Plumer also discussed the conservation provisions in the new farm bill.

“One of the big things coming up now in the farm bill debate is the concern about world

wide food and the amount of corn that is available,” he explained.

With the ethanol issues, several of the live-stock groups are asking for support to release some CRP land that is not in environmentally sensitive areas that could be farmed under



Nitrogen management is a key issue with no-till continuous corn says Mike Plumer, University of Illinois Extension Natural Resource Management Educator. Photo by John LaRose, Jr.

the conservation plan to allow a lot more acres to go into crop production. That is one issue discussed a lot in Congress, mainly because of the high price of corn.

“It’s something everybody is trying to decide which side to be on and how to look at that,” Plumer said.

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