Pioneer Talks Crops

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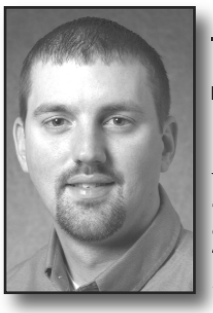

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This continues to be a record year in the upper mid-South. We started with record floods, and by early June, we were experiencing record temperatures. This has caused several issues over the past few weeks as we continue to wrap-up this planting season. We now have lost a significant amount of soil moisture in newly planted fields. Growers are irrigating small corn and planting soybeans deeper to find moisture. We must continue to pay close attention to some key management details as the year progresses.

Later-planted soybean fields have had a difficult time emerging. The most common issue has been lack of soil moisture. The weather patterns in the upper mid-South changed quickly from cool and wet to hot and dry. This intense heat quickly dried the top 2 inches of soil, and in most areas, a hard crust formed on the soil surface creating a challenging environment for soybean emergence. Spotty showers have caused issues in some areas. Typically, fields that have received a hard-packing rain within 48 hours of planting are at more risk to be replanted due to diseases or crusting. These hard-packing rains compact the soil surface making it difficult for hypocotyls to straighten and break through. After several days of trying to break through, hypocotyls swell and eventually break. It is critical to assess the whole field when trying to decide whether to replant regardless of the situation. Some areas of a field may be worse than others are. Uniformity is a critical criterion in this decision. A fairly uniform stand can be lower in population than a stand that is not uniform, yet higher in population. The University of Missouri Corn and Soybean Replant Decision Guide states that uniform soybean stands will maintain nearly full yield potential at 80,000 plants per acre and above.

We are rapidly approaching optimum timing for corn fungicide applications. Fungicide use in corn has become a standard practice for growers wanting to achieve optimum yields. Some growers do not treat every acre of corn but will focus their attention on fields they think will have the greatest benefit from fungicide applications. I recommend growers target fungicide applications on fields with high residue, especially corn following corn. Growers also may want to target fields planted with hybrids that are weak in disease tolerance. Diseases such as gray leaf spot and northern leaf blight seem to be the most common in recent years. Late-planted cornfields also may see a benefit from fungicide applications. In my experience, fields that have a later planting date seem to have higher incidences of disease pressure earlier in the grain-filling period. In addition, it would be wise to consider fungicide applications in areas that have a history of higher disease pressure such as low-lying areas or fields close to rivers where frequent leaf wetting would occur. Δ

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