

Pioneer Talks Crops

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The 2008 corn crop in the mid-South should be very good come harvest. Most areas in the mid-South report an average to above-average corn crop as of mid-August. However, it should be noted there are areas reporting drought conditions that have

affected the corn crop. Combines will tell which hybrids responded best to the overall challenging conditions.

Harvest is an excellent time for taking notes. This is the time for growers to evaluate what worked and what did not. This goes for variety and hybrid performance (yield and harvest ease), population, standability, weed-control measures and soil fertility, among other things. Monitoring weed control from the combine is an excellent way to note which weeds escaped 2008 weed-control measures and what to expect for 2009 weed problems. Additionally, weak-yielding areas in the field are especially evident from the operator's seat during harvest. By concentrating on these poor-producing areas during fall soil sampling, growers can understand what makes the area weak and try to solve that problem during fertilization applications.

It is time to start planning for wheat. Listed below are some fall management steps for maximizing wheat production.

1. Take soil samples. Soil tests are necessary for determining fertilizer and lime requirements. Soil samples should be taken as soon as possi-

ble to allow for fertilization and liming strategies.

2. Select more than one variety to spread environmental and disease risks. Know the strengths and weaknesses of the varieties to be grown before making a purchase decision. Select the best combination of varieties that maximizes yield and minimizes the risk of a complete crop failure.

3. Plant good-quality, treated seed. Do not let poor quality seed be the weak link in the chain of events needed for maximum yields. Treated seed helps ensure adequate stands and protects the wheat seedlings from seed-borne diseases.

4. Plant wheat 1 to 1.5 inches deep. Do not plant deeper than 2 inches for best results. Seed at a rate equivalent to 17 to 23 seeds per foot of row in 7-inch rows.

5. To choose the best variety for an area, growers should check with their local county Extension agent for official state variety trial information and use two- to three-year data to find the most consistent varieties.

Soybeans need late-summer rainfall to maximize seed size. Seed-weight accumulation continues even after the leaves begin to turn yellow. Maximum weight generally occurs when almost all of the leaves are yellow and about half of them have fallen from the plant. A soybean seed is considered physiologically mature when it has lost its green color completely (about 60 percent moisture). Irrigation can be terminated when more than half the pods in the four uppermost nodes on the plant have seeds touching in those pods and excellent soil moisture is present. Δ



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