

Plant Board Approves Bird Repellent For Use In Cornfields

LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

The age-old scarecrow is getting some help in Arkansas' cornfields. Last month, the Arkansas State Plant Board approved a bird repellent for use on Arkansas corn.

"Avipel is a seed treatment bird repellent that reduces blackbird or other bird feeding on newly planted or emerging corn," said Jason Kelley, extension wheat and feed grains agronomist for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. "My counterparts in Mississippi and Louisiana say that it has been effective in reducing bird feeding on corn."

Avipel comes in two forms: a liquid version which is applied with a seed treater, and a dry hopper box treatment.

"The liquid version would likely be the preferred method to apply to help ensure adequate

and uniform coverage on the seed," he said.

Avipel is not toxic to birds – only a repellent to them if they eat the seed. The material degrades in six weeks, giving the young corn a little breathing room to grow.

"Bird feeding has always been a problem, especially with early planting," Kelley said. "In years we plant in late February or early March in south Arkansas, we have more of a problem because the birds don't have a lot of other things to eat at the time."

A few weeks later, insects and other food sources become available, making corn seedlings seem less attractive.

Arkansas growers harvested 690,000 acres in 2012, up from 520,000 acres the previous year.

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