

# Pre-Season Management Extremely Important In Fight Against Disease

**LITTLE ROCK, ARK.**

**T**here are no easy answers to preventing corn diseases, according to specialists with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture.

"I have been asked several times since the year began: 'What now?'" said Scott Monfort, extension plant pathologist for the U of A Division of Agriculture. "The answer to this question is neither easy nor always straightforward."

Monfort and Jason Kelley, extension wheat and feed grains agronomist for the division, have a menu of pre-season and within-season management options that can help corn growers beat the disease problems.

The pre-season options include:

- Having good water and fertility – Don't plant dry land corn or in fertility-stricken fields
- Take soil samples and fertilize appropriately for your yield potential
- Know and understand your fields' history with diseases
- Choose the correct hybrid
- Plant early – planting before April 15 will help crop beat most disease and aflatoxin

- Choose appropriate seed treatment
- Root-knot nematode not a factor on corn planted early

However, "once you have planted the corn crop, you have used up most of your bullets for managing diseases and aflatoxin," Monfort said. "This is not meant to scare anyone from growing corn, just a harsh reality if you miss the opportunity to start the season off on the right foot."

The menu of in-season management options includes:

- Maintain a healthy crop, including timely fertilization, irrigation and weed management
- Know disease package of your hybrid
- Scout your entire field weekly, not just the edge

If disease is present or you have increased risk for disease development, apply the correct fungicide at the proper rate.

Monfort and Kelley issue a corn disease newsletter that offers the complete menu as well as images to help producers spot problems in the field. The latest issue can be found at <http://www.aragriculture.org/corn.htm>. Δ



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