

Resolve To Keep Better Crop Records

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Most farmers enjoy farming much more than record keeping. They are well aware that accurate and complete records are useful in enterprise analysis, essential for tax purposes, and required by law for restricted-use pesticide application.

Accurate crop records become more important each season. The actual records can be traditional paper or the more modern digital/electronic. The important issue is the information and how it can be of help in both the short term as well as the longer term.

Hopefully, you are able to build on an existing base. A single soil test is of limited value, but a series of soil tests should indicate trends, progress, and fertility levels. Remember to record lime and fertilizer applications, rates, and dates of application. Cover crops and manure applications should also be noted.

Some of the crop information might include hybrid or variety, yield goal and actual yield, planting date, planted population and emerged population, planter settings, tillage practices,

crop residue, weed maps, and harvest data.

Do not overlook the need and opportunity to record transgenic crop plantings. If a refuge area is planted, record the size and location of that area. Make special note of crops that are herbicide tolerant. Additional field markers or GPS locations may prove to be helpful later in the season.

Information for federal restricted-use pesticide application includes brand name, EPA registration number, total amount used, date applied, location of treated area, crop, size of area treated, name of applicator, and certification number. These records must be completed within two weeks of application and kept for two years. If the restricted-use pesticide is applied by a commercial applicator, the applicator is required to provide their clients with a copy of the record within 30 days.

Troubleshooting a problem is easier and more likely to be successful with accurate records. Technology will permit a much more site-specific agriculture in the future. Farmers can begin to benefit by keeping complete and accurate crop production records. Δ

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