

# Soybean Seed Should Be Excellent In 2009

## MISSISSIPPI STATE, MISS.

Producers getting ready to plant soybeans in 2009 can expect fewer problems than they faced last year when they dealt with shortages, poor quality and small sizes.

Trey Koger, soybean specialist with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, said poor germination and vigor resulted in a significant amount of seed withheld from sale last year.

"This coupled with extreme demand due to high soybean prices resulted in a shortage of good-quality seed to be planted last year for many varieties," Koger said.

Once soybeans came up, many producers found they had more plants per foot of row than they expected.

"A common theme last year was that we planted nine seeds per foot of row and we got 10 to 12 plants up," Koger said. "This happened because seed size last year was extremely small and planters often dropped two seeds instead of one."

Koger said soybean seed for planting usually averages about 2,900 seeds per pound. Last year, seed size was smaller at 3,400 per pound.

"This resulted in some higher than desired plant populations. When this was coupled with later than desired planting, we had some lodging in fields," he said. "Many producers planted more seed than desired to try to lessen their risk of stand failure, knowing there was very little seed available for replanting if needed."

The good news is that none of these problems should be an issue for 2009.

"Overall seed quality for this year's crop is outstanding," Koger said.

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture's Seed Testing Lab in Starkville routinely tests the soybean seed that will be planted and announced results of this year's tests.

"Overall, 96 percent of soybean seed tested had an 80 percent or better germination rate," Koger said. "This compares to only 60 percent of seed planted last year that had an 80 percent or better germination rate."

This year, 77 percent of the seed tested at better than 90 percent germination, while last year, 40 percent of the seed tested was below 80 percent germination.

"Germination levels for seed to be planted in this year's crop are excellent and at near record levels," Koger said.

Vigor is a measure of the seed's health and

vitality. Koger said soybean seed available this year has excellent vigor and is much better than that available last year.

"The quality of the seed for this year's crop is excellent, and we have to go back many years to find testing levels of this quality," Koger said.

With plenty of good-quality seed available this year, he reminded producers to plant according to recommended seeding rates as planting at higher rates will likely produce an inferior crop.

Each year MSU conducts variety trials on several types of seed available for growers, including corn, wheat, oats and soybeans. The complete soybean variety trial information can be found online at <http://msucares.com/pubs/infobulletins/ib0446.pdf>.

Bernie White, operations manager for variety evaluations with the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, said the variety trials are a valuable tool for producers to help match soil types and growing conditions with desirable soybean varieties.

"This is one of the tools producers use to determine which varieties are best adapted to their situation," White said. "It gives them a chance to have a profitable operation."

MAFES researchers plant the seed submitted to them for variety testing by seed companies and public institutions. Varieties are planted mostly on producer fields across the state in Delta and non-Delta locations, and in irrigated and dry-land fields.

"We do these tests under their management system and in their growing environment," White said. "We plant and harvest using specialized equipment and do the herbicide and fertilizer work as needed."

Data are collected along the way and at harvest, and the results are posted online for all to use. Among the information available is yield per acre, disease screening, oil and protein analysis, seed size and plant characteristics. Information given about the test plots include location, soil type, pH, fertilizer use, planting and harvest dates, rainfall and a synopsis of the growing season.

In 2008, MSU tested 256 soybean varieties, and should test more than 260 this year. Seed tested includes Roundup Ready varieties and seed with new technologies.

"We'll be testing some new seed before they are even available to producers," White said. Δ



Link Directly To: **SYNGENTA**