

Varieties And Replanting Are On The Minds Of Soybean Farmers

LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

There's enough soybean seed to go around, but not necessarily the varieties that are the farmers' first choice, said Dr. Jeremy Ross, extension soybean specialist with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture.

"Some farmers are getting the varieties they ordered, while others are getting substitutes from the dealer," he said. "Overall, the seed supply seems to be adequate, but growers may not always receive their first choice."

Ross had predicted that would happen earlier this year because of a shortage and that seed dealers would be scrambling to find enough seed to fill farmers' needs.

Another problem is that farmers are getting seed tested, and low germination results are indicating a widespread problem. The Arkansas State Plant Board has reportedly issued more stop-sale orders than it has in several years, according to Ross.

The extension specialist said a project funded by the Arkansas Soybean and Promotion Board will help the university get a better handle on the germination issue and how it affects stands.

"We're asking county agents to get seed samples from farmers, then keep tabs on what kind of stands the seed produces in the field," Ross said.

The low germination issue is related to hot, dry weather in mid-July and August that negatively affected the quality of last year's soybean seed crop, Ross said.

He and county agents are receiving phone calls from farmers asking about replanting. Cold, wet weather and seedling disease are

hurting crop stands, especially in cases where seed wasn't treated.

"A commercial crop consultant in Phillips County told me about a farmer's field that had 80,000 to 90,000 plants per acre," Ross said. "The consultant asked me if the farmer should replant. It's a tough call in a normal year, but with seed supplies like they are this year, I would recommend keeping the current stand. Replanting would be recommended if the soybean plant stands fell below 80,000 plants per acre. For normal plant stands, we recommend 110,000 to 120,000 plants per acre."

Deciding whether to keep some stands also depends on uniformity. "As long as farmers don't have empty spaces in their fields the size of a pickup, 80,000 to 90,000 still should be OK," he said.

Ross said an early survey by the Arkansas Agricultural Statistics Service indicated farmers intended to plant 3.25 million acres of soybeans. That figure could go up, he noted, if farmers switch from corn and grain sorghum to soybeans.

Meanwhile, the weather problems are causing a delay in wheat development. The delay will probably affect double-cropped soybeans, which are planted after wheat is harvested in late May and early June.

"About a third of the soybean acreage is double-cropped. Since wheat is running seven to 10 days late, this will push the date for double-cropped soybeans later. We don't know if that will be a problem for soybeans. It could cause late-season disease and insect problems," Ross said. Δ