

Time to think about seed choices

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Following harvest, it's time to think about next year's seed choices. Regardless whether the crop is corn, soybean, sorghum or others, new seed will need to be ordered from a dealer representing a seed company. A farm manager's best strategy for choosing hybrids or varieties is relatively simple: place the correct product to the field's circumstances.

Communication is key. Communicate to seed dealers the field's characteristics; such as pH level, past gross's, wilt issues, soil type, irrigation management strategies, desired hybrid maturity range and end market targets. Hybrids are currently more specialized than ever and the wrong product on a field can mean disappointing results. Communicate to a dealer in as much detail as possible all production concerns, field by field. A well trained seeds person will place specialized products according to a field's needs.

In addition, deciding on which traits are needed also is important. Current trait decisions for corn involve herbicide and insect protection. Communicate which herbicide package is needed and then decide on the insect protection package. Again, be specific and do this on a field by field basis. Forgetting to place rootworm traits in a "hot" field can lead to a bad experience.

Keep in mind also that in the case of crops listed above, maturity level is important. Early, medium, and late maturities are choices a farm manager needs to make to fit the operation. No one should know a farm's crop maturity needs better than the operator. Again, a well trained seeds person can recommend correct hybrids for this need.

Make sound hybrid decisions based on local test plot data. Trying a new hybrid across the farm without local yield information is risky. Spread the risk by planting multiple hybrids using test plot data to make the choices. Test plots from both university and company sites make good comparisons. Find the sites closest to the farm where planting is intended. Company web sites as well as Colorado State University's CSUAG.COM post research results.

Finally, always do business with dealers you know and trust. If an issue arises during the growing season, this person is your liason to the company and can assist you with addressing the problem.

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Field Checklist: Disease concerns, weed concerns, soil type, adequate irrigation or dryland production, pH level, previous crop and maturity desired.