

December 22, 2010

Choosing the Correct Soybean Variety

Throughout the past year I have listened to several Agronomists answer the question, "What soybeans should I plant on Farm X,". The reply, "I think you should plant another year of corn on Farm X, and this is the hybrid that I would suggest."

In recent years soybeans have not been as profitable as corn; this is part of the reason why Agronomists recommended planting corn. Another reason may be that soybeans are more prone to have plant health issues before the yield is set.

Field history tells you how to pick soybean varieties. Does the field have a history of the following:

- Iron Chrosis (IDC)
- White Mold (SWM)
- Phytophthora Root Rot (PRR)
- Brown Stem Rot (BSR)
- Soybean Cyst Nematodes (SCN)
- Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS)

If a field has had any of these diseases, the soybean variety you plant needs to have a strong rating or score against the disease. Of all the diseases/pests that are listed, Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS) and White Mold (SWM) have been the biggest yield robbers over the last few years, and are the toughest to out-guess or control. Crop rotation away from soybeans for two years can help with all the diseases listed, except SDS or SWM. With the disease/pest pressure we have, you may see your seed recommendations, from Central Valley Agronomists, have three or more soybeans varieties for your farm.

With the tremendous corn crops we have had, there hasn't been enough fertility in the ground to get a 65+ bushel soybean crop. A 60+ bushel corn crop takes:

- 50 lbs. of P2O5
- 78 lbs. of K2O
- 12.6 units of Mg
- 11 units of Sulfur

The "take home": where possible, we need to change our fertility recommendations, increasing our rates, otherwise we aren't putting enough fertility out for the soybean crop. We have seen very positive results utilizing post-emerge applications of secondary or micronutrients during the growing season, to help supplement the broadcast applications of P and K.

Looking at current yield maps we have seen a few common themes on high producing fields. The field has good fertility and weed control, (more than one application of Roundup or a soil applied herbicide), the field was sprayed for aphids prior to the 250 aphid threshold, the field may or may not have had a post-emerge fungicide applied, the field, in most cases, has a post-emerge application of micronutrients, and lastly the seed has a quality seed treatment and inoculants applied. The seed treatments have a low dose seed-safe insecticide to control early season insects and soybean aphids; the inoculants have a growth promoter type of technology that helps the soybeans emerge, and roots put a larger, more vigorous root mass on soybeans.

As always thank you for your business, and from your Sales Staff at Central Valley Coop, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.