

TECHtalk

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HELPING FARMERS FEED AND FUEL THE WORLD

TECHtalk is published monthly for dealers of Latham Hi-Tech Seeds, focusing on technology, agronomy, trends and news from around the seed industry.

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Answers to Frequently Asked Soybean Questions

by **MARK GRUNDMEIER** SOYBEAN PRODUCT MANAGER

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I want to give special thanks to those dealers and farmers who submit questions via our virtual platforms. Some great questions have come across recently, so I'm going to address them below.

Q: What's the outlook for soybean seed supply in 2021?

I'm certain this concern stems from the uncertainty about the registration of the Xtendimax®, Engenia® and FeXapan® herbicides, as well as the tough time we had this year getting production acres planted, especially in the Dakotas. I'm happy to report that planting went well enough that we expect good supplies of all trait versions. If demand for Xtend soybeans falls off, demand will likely increase for E3's. Order

your E3 soybeans early, so you don't have to worry about supply.

Q: Is it necessary to inoculate soybeans every year?

Since the early 1970s, researchers have believed that inoculating soybean seed isn't necessary unless soybeans haven't been planted in the intended field for four or five years. Today, data shows new products, formulations and even biologicals are consistently increasing yields. This is especially true in areas – like sandy soils, fields that are consistently flooded and even those that are consistently dry – where soil bacteria

have a tougher time getting established. Latham's Northern Product Specialist, Gary Geske, recommends testing some of these newer products in your own fields.

Q: What's the status of Alite™ 27 herbicide?

BASF in April was granted registration of this herbicide, which is intended to be used as a pre-plant or pre-emergent herbicide on LLGT27 or GT27 soybeans only. Originally, BASF was hoping it would also be labeled for post-emergent use, but that will have to wait until there is more information made available. Additionally, South Dakota is the ONLY state within Latham Country where farmers can use Alite 27 and then only in these counties: Aurora, Beadle, Brown, Brule, Buffalo, Clark, Codington, Hand, Harding, Jerauld and Spink. The Alite 27 label mentions Product Bulletins for Minnesota and Wisconsin, but my understanding is these are for counties in those states where soybeans are not normally grown. BASF is hopeful more counties will be added.

Q: How do XtendFlex® soybeans differ from Xtend®?

XtendFlex is the newest trait innovation from Bayer CropScience (formerly Monsanto). These soybeans carry tolerance to glyphosate (Roundup, Glyphos, etc.) and dicamba (Xtendimax, Engenia, etc.) herbicides just like the Xtend soybeans do. In addition, they are tolerant to glufosinate herbicides like Liberty or Ignite. This will be another three-way stacked herbicide tolerant trait that farmers can use to fight weed resistance. Full acceptance is expected soon but is dependent on final clearance by the European Union. All other major soybean-importing countries have given their approval. As a side note: Latham Seeds has an EPA-stewarded XtendFlex plot at our research farm this year. It is similar to the plot we had in 2019 but contains about twice as many XF varieties. Stay tuned for more about this exciting new technology.

Have a SAFE and fun summer! Tune into our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages for more great QA sessions with Latham agronomy experts.

Tips for Assessing Corn Rootworm Populations



by **LYLE MARCUS** CORN PRODUCT MANAGER

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August is a great time to assess potential risks of corn rootworm infestations in the following spring. By looking at the population of adult beetles found in corn fields now, farmers can identify potential problem fields for the following growing season. This can be a useful tool in overall management of corn rootworm.

While walking fields this summer, our product team is seeing populations of corn rootworm adults. Predominantly, we see Northern Corn Rootworm in our market area. (Adult Fig. 1) This season we have seen populations of Western Corn Rootworms, (Adult Fig. 2) as well as a few Southern Corn Rootworms (Adult Fig. 3).

Assessing Corn Fields

Look in corn fields that may be planted to corn next spring, as well as in soybean fields for high beetle populations. If you did not place sticky traps to catch or monitor beetles beginning at pollination time, spend a little time in your fields looking for evidence of adult populations that are still present.

The primary/desired food source for corn rootworm beetles are the fresh silks of pollinating corn plants. If we have early flowering, as we have seen this season, we may not see an abundance of feeding at that time. Beetles, however, will feed on leaf tissue of corn plants if the source of fresh green silk is no longer available. The adult phase of the corn rootworm cycle begins at the end of June and can last all the way to the first killing frost. The egg laying period can last from late July through August.

When assessing corn fields at pollination time, focus on beetle counts found on silks of corn plants. When assessing corn fields



in August and early September, focus on beetle populations that remain on any silks and look for leaf feeding. (Fig. 4) Make note of fields with high numbers of adults and significant leaf feeding. Consider rootworm management tools in those fields that will be corn next year.

Assessing Soybean Fields

Rootworm beetles feed on weedy areas: field edges, weedy areas in drowned-out spots, weed escapes etc. including soybean plants, alfalfa and prairie grass fields (CRP). Western Rootworm beetles are more likely to lay eggs in soybean fields, but Northern Rootworm beetles may do the same. Sweep net catches in soybeans or evidence of leaf feeding are best ways to assess populations.

Protocols and population threshold advice can be found on your state's Extension Service website.

If you identify fields that may have potential rootworm problems next spring, consider using hybrids containing rootworm protection traits. Latham Hi-Tech Seeds has an exceptional group of hybrids, ranging in relative maturing from 96 to 115, to manage corn rootworm. We introduced six hybrids with SmartStax® technology to help our customers manage this important corn pest for the 2021 planting season. Visit with your local Latham dealer or visit www.LathamSeeds.com to check out these new hybrids.



Fig. 1

Photo courtesy of Joseph L. Spencer



Fig. 2

Photo courtesy of Winston Beck,
Iowa State University, Bugwood.org



Fig. 3

Photo courtesy of extensiontomology.tamu.edu

Fig. 1
Northern Corn Rootworm
Fig. 2
Western Corn Rootworm
Fig. 3
Southern Corn Rootworm

Optimize Silage Quality with Timely Harvest



by **COREY CATT** FORAGE PRODUCTS MANAGER
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It's more challenging than most people think to achieve optimum harvest timing. Life on the farm would be mighty easy if the weather cooperated, machinery was always in working order, and the custom harvester came right when you called.

Some days farming feels like you've been handed a bent golf club to play a mini golf course full of obstacles, water hazards, and challenges meant to distract, disrupt and impact the result. Fortunately, farmers are the golf pros of the acre. Despite all the craziness tossed at them, they face the adversity with steadfast grit and determination. Farmers keep their eyes fixed on the goal of doing their best.

Timing is everything to harvest the best quality corn silage. With corn silage harvest rapidly approaching, let's review why timing is important.

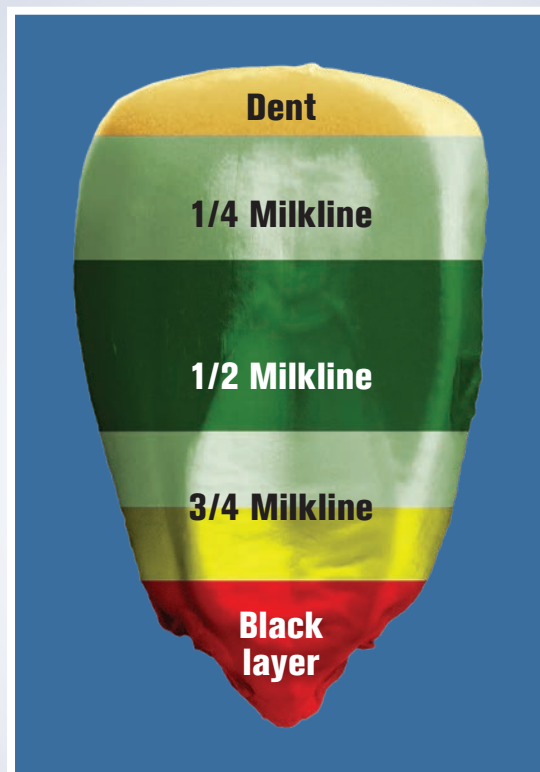
In general, 65 to 70 percent whole-plant moisture is the optimal goal range for harvest moisture. The plant is at this moisture level when the kernel is about 50 percent milk line. The starch in the kernel is like a sponge, absorbing moisture from the plant. Think about this... If you remove the entire ear, the remaining stalk contains a moisture level about 80 to 85 percent moisture. Now, add back in a normal size ear that is half milk line. The new whole-plant moisture will be between 65 and 70 percent as that added starch absorbs some of the plant moisture.

As the milk line of the kernel drops toward the tip, it adds even more starch to the kernel. Each day more starch is added to the kernel, which is absorbing more moisture from the plant. As a really broad general rule of thumb, from about one-fourth milk line stage, corn silage moisture can drop in the field around 0.5 percent each day. Moisture can drop a full percent on those hot, dry, sunny September afternoons when photosynthesis is good and starch is accumulating rapidly. Additionally, there is also some evaporation from the leaf tissues.

Once the kernel drops below half milk line, the moisture will rapidly drop below 65 percent whole-plant moisture, and it becomes more difficult to pack and ensile. Additionally, as the milk line drops, it is exponentially adding a protein called prolamin zein. This particular protein has a negative impact on starch availability and can be linked to higher fecal starch levels.

Hybrids like Latham® 5495 3122 EZR and LH 5742 RR and our leafy hybrids tend to have less of this protein. This softer, lower prolamin starch found in select dual-purpose and leafy corn silage hybrids provides flexibility in the harvest window while still giving peak harvest qualities. They can take away a little stress while you're waiting on weather or the custom harvesting crew.

Bottom line, as harvest approaches, check moistures early and often to develop the best harvest plan to capitalize on yield and quality.





The Power of Precision Data

by **DARIN CHAPMAN** PRECISION AGRONOMY ADVISOR

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What is Big Data? It sounds a little scary, maybe even intimidating. However, it doesn't have to be. Farm data is so important, and Latham's Precision Agronomy Advisors are here to help simplify the process by putting your data to work for you!

At family-owned, independent Latham Hi-Tech Seeds, we help our dealers and their customers by providing the latest technology whether its genetics, traits or programs like Data ForwardSM.

We have a "Dream Team" for picking and choosing the Latham® product lineup, as John Latham said during a recent virtual training held with Latham Dealers. Members of our product team study lots of data when choosing products. They bring forward only the products for specific geographies.

Big data can help you select the very best products for your fields, too. While plot data can help choose products, whole-field average data is even better. Imagine what we could learn from a whole-field average versus plot data alone. We have the capability to anonymously aggregate all this data to see how products are performing across Latham Country. This year we also have entered every one of Latham's SuperStrip™ and MiniStrip™ plot locations into our Data Forward program, so it

will help us monitor product performance across multiple locations throughout the year. This really helps us place products and understand their characteristics.

Farmers also can adapt precision agriculture to gain great insight into their operation. It can help you better manage input costs to be more efficient while still gaining yield. When you have access to all this data, you have the tools and insights to know where and when to place seed or fertilizer down to the micro level.

Better seed and fertilizer placement can increase your profit per acre. Because there are so many variables that factor into figuring profit per acre, it can be complicated. Big Data can simplify the process by helping you analyze your operations. Big Data can help make precision ag users become more efficient and profitable.

Big Data does not have to be scary or intimidating. Just work with people you trust to gather this data and put it to work for you, so you can better understand your fields and your overall operation. **Feel free to reach out to your Latham Precision Agronomy Advisors** to help you gather and organize this data, so you can put it to work on your farm.