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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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Preliminary Trial Results Show It Pays to Use Saltro®



by **MARK GRUNDMEIER** SOYBEAN PRODUCT MANAGER

1-877-465-2842 | markg@lathamseeds.com

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Latham®
HI-TECH SEEDS

131 180th Street
Alexander, IA 50420

CALL 1.877.GO.LATHAM
(1.877.465.2842)
641.692.3258 Office
641.692.3250 Fax

In September 2019 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved Saltro, a new seed treatment product from Syngenta Seed Care to control Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS) and Soybean Cyst Nematode (SCN) in soybeans.

For the 2020 growing season, Latham Hi-Tech Seeds distributed about 50 trials to Latham® dealers and their customers. Each on-farm trial consisted of a Latham® soybean treated with SoyShield Plus™ that was planted side-by-side with that same soybean treated with SoyShield Plus and Saltro. The majority of these trials were conducted within the parameters

of Latham SuperStrip™ plots where a check variety was used to adjust final yield calculations. To date, we have received yield results from 25 of those studies: 16 from Iowa, six from Minnesota and three from South Dakota. I believe it's worthwhile to share preliminary results with you.

Comparing the harvested raw yield data, the 16 trials from Iowa showed an average yield increase from Saltro of 2.01 bushels per acre (bpa). The Minnesota plots gave an increase of 3.85 bpa raw

yield, and the South Dakota plots came in at 2.24 bpa. Overall, there was a 2.30 bpa yield increase from using Saltro in the raw yield column.

The results were very similar when the harvested yields were adjusted to the check. The Iowa plots came in with a 1.84 bpa increase. The Minnesota trials showed a 3.73 bpa increase, and the plots from South Dakota averaged 5.40 bpa better. The overall average in the adjusted yield column came in at 2.31 bpa!

It should be noted here that there were a handful of trials where the seed treated with SoyShield Plus and Saltro actually showed a yield decrease. While it is difficult to understand and even more difficult to explain, results like this are very common when doing research of this type and are usually attributed to experimental error. I also want to note that we did not see widespread infestations of SDS in 2020. Due to variable weather patterns and a fairly widespread drought, SDS didn't show up in a lot of fields. We intend to proceed with a similar Saltro study in 2021.

BOTTOM LINE: While more experiment results will be sent to us yet this year, there is a trend for at least a two bushel per acre yield benefit from using soybean seed treated with Saltro. With a retail cost of approximately \$13 for the Saltro, the added yield benefits in a year where SDS was not widespread are fairly substantial. Using the soybean market price of \$10.50 per bushel as I write this article, the treatment acted as an insurance policy that paid for itself.

Check back with us during and after our Post-Harvest meetings to get the updated yield results from this study.

2020 Corn Harvest Illustrates Importance of Planting Multiple Hybrids



by **LYLE MARCUS** CORN PRODUCT MANAGER

1-877-465-2842 / lylem@lathamseeds.com

This year will provide all of us with great information for positioning Latham® corn hybrids. As we pour over mounds of data from the 2020 corn harvest, “variability” best describes this season. Hybrids that have worked well in Latham Country are rising to the upper 10% or higher in plots, but we are seeing wider variation than in past years across F.I.R.S.T. Trials, SuperStrips™, MiniStrips and showcase plots.

The Latham lineup continued to perform well in F.I.R.S.T. Trials as you have seen or heard from John Latham’s weekly “Made to Win” video broadcast and frequent e-mails. Our F.I.R.S.T. Trials performance shows that, from early to late, the Latham portfolio offers great hybrids for your customers. Although your favorite hybrid may not have placed as high this season as in the past, most likely one of its recommended companion hybrids had a great year in 2020!

Reviewing F.I.R.S.T. data from the past three seasons shows that you have a strong lineup to present to your customers. The F.I.R.S.T. Trials results should provide you the confidence to promote a package of hybrids to each of your customers.

Showcase and SuperStrip performance provides data, showing an edge over our competitors and an improvement in consistency of favored hybrid performance. You might ask, “Why would this occur in these plots?” When planning our Showcase and SuperStrip plot sets, we work to create packages that perform well together. Your Regional Sales Manager has very good knowledge of the environments into which these plots get planted. Your help identifying grower challenges are key in helping your RSM position the best of our lineup in your plots.

These plots in 2020 showed us that fine-tuning the positioning

of the Latham lineup provides strong performance that is widely adaptable with enough flexibility to help with our farmer-customers’ specific needs.

As we complete another season of pre-commercial testing in our MiniStrip plots, we are confirming the strength of our current lineup. The key hybrids that we talked about at Latham Dealer Kickoff, fall field days and early harvest presentations all rose to the upper percentile of our MiniStrips.

The stresses of 2020 provide us with an excellent opportunity to sort through the many options we have in new products. We have our eyes on some new hybrids and look forward to sharing more about them as they progress through the steps to become a Latham brand hybrid.

We will share in greater detail what we learned from our 2020 plot program during our Post Harvest Huddle meetings. We will dig into multi-year data and show trends on hybrid performance across environments. We look forward to introducing you to how we will use Data Forward™ to provide even greater detail on positioning our hybrids.

We also will talk about areas of our territory that experienced such severe weather conditions that some farmers are unsure of what to take away from 2020. In some of those instances, your best plan is likely to repeat the 2020 Field-X-Field™ plan with some minor tweaks of adding a NEW Latham product.

This season showed us just how important getting that third or fourth hybrid on a customer’s farm can be for their success and yours. Remember, planting a package of Latham product helps reduce your customers’ risk and increases your chances of staying on his farm the following year.



Select Silage Hybrids That Fit Your Soils



by **COREY CATT** FORAGE PRODUCTS MANAGER
1-877-465-2842 | coreyc@lathamseeds.com

A cold northwest wind is howling, indicating one season is coming to an end and another is about to begin. These rhythms of nature remind me of the corn silage cycle: plan, plant, manage, harvest and feed.

Now we are in the feeding and planning phase of corn silage. As you finalize your seed product selections for 2021, I'd like to once again share with you the largest factors on corn products as outlined by University of Illinois researcher Dr. Fred Below in his 7 Wonders of Corn Production:

RANK	FACTOR	VALUE	
		bu/acre	%
1	Weather	70+	27
2	Nitrogen	70	26
3	Hybrid	50	19
4	Previous Crop	25	10
5	Plant Population	20	8
6	Tillage	15	6
7	Growth Regulators	10	4
TOTAL=		260 bu	100%

What happens in the field has the biggest impact on the quality we put into the silo, bag or bunk. Below are a few more considerations:

- 1 Weather.** If moisture in the field is a limiting factor, consider DroughtGard® or Artesian®. It's a delicate balance as these specific hybrids may not have the best corn silage yield rating but are the best genetic fit for the acre. Many areas in 2020 suffered from lack of moisture and intense heat, so those areas would have benefited from these traits.
- 2 Nitrogen.** Plant food balance is critical. Because corn silage hybrids tend to be much larger in stature, they require additional plant food. A study done in Pennsylvania

suggests adding 20 pounds of nitrogen above normal nitrogen usage for grain. Larger plants need more food.

- 3 Hybrid.** There are silage-specific hybrids and dual-purpose hybrids. Each has their winning attributes. The nutritionist wants a hybrid for best forage quality. The agronomist wants the best emerging, drought tolerant, hybrid you can find. With so much at stake, I tend to plant the hybrid that is best suited for the soil. There are ways to improve quality from plant spacing, raising the cutter head at chopping time, to using fungicides. If the hybrid is on the wrong soil, however, it's difficult to manage around that.

- 4 Previous Crop.** Root worm control is important, especially for corn on corn. Huge silage hybrids need a solid foundation and an intact, healthy root system. I believe the best corn silage is on alfalfa ground rotated to corn silage because there is a good nitrogen credit from the alfalfa, and the corn can develop a better root system following the tap root of the alfalfa.

- 5 Plant Population.** For best results, read and follow all label instructions. Some hybrids, like leafy hybrids, do better under 28,000. Each hybrid has a distinct recommendation listed in the product guide.

- 6 Tillage.** My philosophy is do what's best for the soil, and the soil will do what's best for you.

- 7 Growth Regulators.** Talc USA has shown positive benefits to corn silage yield and quality. Fungicide research has shown 3 tons more corn silage per acre with the application of a specific brand of fungicide. BASF has a new fungicide that shows longer term residual benefits, which hopefully translates into healthier plants and fewer mycotoxins in the corn silage.

In summary, the hybrid that performs best in your specific soils likely will deliver the best end result. Use Latham's performance data, as well as data from universities and on-farm research, to help you plan for 2021.



Use Yield Data to Negotiate with Landlords

by **DARIN CHAPMAN** PRECISION AGRONOMY ADVISOR
1-877-465-2842 | darinc@lathamseeds.com



Yield data can give us valuable information to analyze hybrid/variety performance when developing crop plans. Did you know it also can be used to show a correlation between soil types and yield, which also helps determine if drainage tile would improve crop production?

With Latham's Data Forward™ program, you have two options to soil sample: **(1) Do it yourself with our Data Forward App.** Make your own grid or zone maps. Once you send soil samples to the lab and your soil analysis is complete, it will show up in your Data Forward app. **(2) Our Data Forward team can soil sample for you!**

Whichever you choose to soil sample, be sure to pair your yield data with soil maps. **Latham's Data Forward app allows you to put SSURGO soil data beside your yield data (pictured above).** Nothing tells you more about a field than a soil analysis. Maybe the field needs lime. If your PH isn't where it should be, you could be wasting money on fertilizer.

Look at the drainage tile function in Latham's Data Forward app. This is a great tool to maintain records of new or existing tile on each farm. You also can map where you need to add tile.

Talking about improvements and negotiating rents with your landlord can be difficult.

I like to start the conversation by showing appreciation for the opportunity to rent the land. Then I talk about some of the farm details, including improvements that have been made. You can show your value as a tenant by applying minimum/no-till tillage program or by adding cover crops. Cover crops add nutrients, break up compaction, and can suppress weeds. It shows the landowner you care about long-term soil health. In the short term, you will save fuel cost and prevent soil moisture loss.

You can further support the negotiation by ranking each field by profitability, which also is available in Latham's Data Forward app. We recommend reviewing at least three years' worth of data, and our precision software helps organize years' worth of data.

Keep in mind that using precision ag and data management tools can be valuable when obtaining more land or to showing value in a crop-share situation. If you have a farm management tool like Data Forward and an agronomy team backing you, you look stronger as a prospective tenant.

Latham's Precision Ag Team wants to be an asset to your overall operation. Give us a call to discuss how we can help!