

# 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.

## Notes from Soybean Observation Travels



by **MARK GRUNDMEIER** SOYBEAN PRODUCT MANAGER

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It's that time of year when Latham Product Teams are looking at SuperStrip™ and other research plots. Our SuperStrip trials are replicated in several plots across multiple locations to help us determine which products to either advance or keep in our lineup.

Below are a few things I am noticing in soybean fields as I travel across Latham Country:

- **Soybean Gall Midge:** The larval stage of this relatively new insect pest can attack soybeans at the base of the plant, weaken it and cause it to break off at ground level. It was first reported in Nebraska in 2011 and South Dakota in 2015. For 2020, it was first spotted June 10 in

Cass County, Nebraska, just east of Lincoln. Farmers in eastern Nebraska, southeast South Dakota, northwest Iowa and southwest Minnesota especially should be on the lookout for this pest. Focus on the edges of soybean fields and look for stunted and/or wilting plants that have a blackened area at the base of the stem. Peel back the outer layer of the stem and use a magnifying glass to see if you can find the white or light-orange colored larvae that look like maggots. State Extension personnel are requesting that all populations of Soybean Gall Midge be reported to them, so they

can better track the spread of this devastating insect.

- **Soybean Aphid:** The dry weather that most of Latham Country has experienced of late has slowed the infestation of this pest. I have seen very few aphids and none of the fields I've walked are even close to threshold for an application of insecticide. There have been, however, a few scattered reports of fields sprayed in south central Minnesota and western Wisconsin. Remember, research has proven that severe damage to soybean plants only comes when aphid levels are at or above 600 aphids per plant! This is significantly higher than the **recommended economic threshold over the entire field of 250 aphids per plant at R5 or earlier with an actively increasing population.** Don't get fooled into thinking that if you estimate you have 300 aphids per plant at the above stage of growth that you have already lost significant yield. It just means that it is probably time to pull the trigger on an insecticide application if all the other factors are in line. Recent rains in some areas may increase the likelihood that Soybean Aphids will increase this year. Levels can change very quickly, so scout early and scout often!

- **Other notes:** I expect we'll see some scattered patches of Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS) and White Mold. Continue to scout your fields all the way to maturity, so you don't have any big surprises come harvest. Although we planted soybean fields earlier than normal in 2020, I'm seeing pod fill begin at a slower pace than normal. I suspect the cold weather we had in mid-May combined with lack of rain in July and early August is to blame.

This year has certainly provided all of us with challenges. As always, we keep putting one foot ahead of the other. **"We were made for this!"** We soon will be accepting seed beans at our Alexander location, and that is always an exciting time of year. As we head into harvest, stay safe!

# Maximize Yield by Reducing Harvest Losses



by **LYLE MARCUS** CORN PRODUCT MANAGER

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We have seen much variability across Latham Country this season. Tough planting weather in the North, drought in Central Iowa, too much moisture in parts of Minnesota and then the huge wind event in central Iowa. With all of that said, we continue to see some great corn crops developing across the area. The Latham corn hybrids look great where Mother Nature did not affect them negatively. Overall, we look forward to a great harvest.

You have put a lot of effort and capital into growing your 2020 corn crop. Maximize what you harvest this season by putting a harvesting plan together that will help you in every field. Below are some tips in putting that plan together.

## Identify fields with potential problems:

- Walk each of your fields and look for any problem areas where your corn may not be standing as well as expected
- Note these fields and make them priorities for harvest
- Remind yourself of hybrids planted in a field and their late season characteristics to aid in creating your harvest schedule

## Check moisture regularly prior to harvest

- Begin harvest at 25% moisture or slightly above in those problem fields

- Best standing/disease free fields can be scheduled for end of harvest

## Prepare equipment well

- Spend time with your machinery in maintenance and proper settings
- Be prepared to adjust equipment for the potential variability between fields
  - Check for field loss frequently
    - Build a one square foot frame and toss it on the ground in multiple areas that have been harvested, (2 kernels in the square = 1 bu/A loss)
  - Check that you are fully shelling each ear (no grain left on cob)

These are just a few tips will help you make the most of your 2020 corn crop. Harvesting is always a good time to look to the future, as well. To maximize yields on your farm every year, each field should be managed for its specific capabilities. As you harvest, identify better and poorer performing areas; don't just focus on poorer areas. Compare the two to see what is different and what may be causing the performance variability. Using the Latham Seeds Data Forward™ tool is a great way to get ahead on your 2021 management by field. It can help you identify water issues, nutrient issues, weed problems etc. Use this information along with hybrid recommendations from your Latham dealer to maximize your 2021 corn production.



# Latham's On-Farm Research Program Studies More Than Yield



by **COREY CATT** FORAGE PRODUCTS MANAGER  
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## **Brand X has yield. Brand Y has more yield. Brand Z yields the most.**

Various television and radio advertisements tout the virtues of any given corn hybrid brand. Quite honestly, farmers need more than yield. That's why, at Latham Hi-Tech Seeds, we select products for yield plus other attributes that will help leverage and form additional efficiencies. This ultimately provides you with more value.

One reason I joined Latham Hi-Tech Seeds is because I respected the Latham's commitment to their Seed-to-Soil® program. That program has continued to grow and evolve. Today we're helping our customers select products Field-X-Field®, and our DataForward™ precision agriculture allows for variable rate seeding and fertilizer application. Users can drop pins where they're seeing weed or disease pressure. They can note insect pressure. All of this information – collected and organized for years – helps make better management decisions.

That's why Latham Seeds' on-farm research program includes projects that can be applied to your own. Here is a brief overview of projects underway on our research farm:

- **Soils:** There is a special project we have been researching that is simply fascinating. I'm blown away by the science of our soils. Connecting this information can lead to risk reduction, more yield and better corn silage quality.
- **Corn Silage:** We continue to test hybrids to find amazing yields, as well as better digestibility in the fiber and starch. Remember, about 50% of the dry matter is grain and 50% is stover. For every one point of better Neutral Detergent Fiber Digestibility (NDFD), you can roughly figure on one-half pounds MORE milk per head per day. Additionally, softer starch equals

better utilization in the animal and less starch in manure. The indexes for each Latham® silage hybrid is in our product guide corn silage section.

- **Corn Silage Row Spacing:** This is so exciting! I have many years of data showing positive results. By changing plant spacing, we add plants per acre and more tonnage. We vastly improve forage quality just by changing the spacing.
- **Grain Quality:** Increasing grain quality is a passion of mine. We can test for so many things that add depth to our knowledge. Most importantly, our research projects add feed value. When selecting hybrids for Latham's lineup, we test for prolamin zein, which is a fancy word for starch digestions. We want low levels of this protein in the kernel because it correlates with better digestibility properties and better feed utilization. We also get fatty acids and amino acid indexes. Some hybrids in our research program have shown 20% MORE of specific amino acids. This is awesome and exciting because specific amino acids help create healthier animals and ultimately healthier meat, milk, and eggs.

There are many more things that we are working on, but I wanted to highlight a few projects to help provide optimism for the future. Our goals are to reduce risk on the acre, as well as to improve efficiency and quality grain.

We have learned so much from the fulfilled dreams of past generations, and we have gained momentum by fulfilling our own dreams and visions. I remain optimistic about the future of agriculture. Know that you have a strong advocate, who is continually fighting for more solutions for the future. We're here to help you to build upon the past and forge a legacy. **We – you, me and the entire Latham Team – are made for this!**

NEW

LH 4989 SS RIB

99  
RM

SILAGE RATING	1.5
STARCH DIGESTIBILITY	2.0
FIBER DIGESTIBILITY	2.0
GROWTH IN STRESS, SANDY SOILS	2.0

Example of starch/digestibility information from our product guide



## Collecting Accurate Harvest Data is Key to Making Future Management Decisions

by **DARIN CHAPMAN** PRECISION AGRONOMY ADVISOR

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Trying to be a more efficient manager is a common goal among farmers. How we manage our farming operations, from choosing seed trait options to herbicides, has changed greatly in recent years.

We can only squeeze costs so far to achieve higher profitability. As the old saying goes, you can't save your way to prosperity. You also need to drive higher yields. Whether you are producing low, moderate, or high yields, many costs are fixed and stay the same. That's why return on investment (ROI) is such a popular topic of conversation these days.

There is no better way to measure profitability than by measuring the agronomics of an operation. We do this by using Precision Ag technology to measure changes across a field. One part of the field may show us that it needs higher management and more investment while another part of the field may show there is no need to waste time and money.

Agronomics in farming leads to economics. While much time is devoted to discussing "Big Data," I believe "Small Data" is equally important. Phil Long and I get lots of calls asking for data we

have that shows response to fungicide treatments or nitrogen trials. My response is, "There is no better farm to do these trials on than your own." Let's see what works on your farm by using on-farm trials to measure and manage your agronomics and economics. Information about what your neighbor did on similar soils is still good information, but as you know, you run your operation differently than he does.

As we go into harvest, keep in mind the importance of gathering good data. Yield data is key to measuring agronomics and economics. Take some time to inspect your yield monitoring system. Yield monitors have mass flow, temperature, moisture, and speed sensors that require inspections and may need calibration.

Calibrating your yield monitor to start harvest can be somewhat time consuming. If you do not take the time to do this, it could affect the usefulness of the yield data you gather. Always think of the end game. We are gathering this data to measure and manage for the future.

Call your Latham Precision Agronomy Advisors and ask how we can help get you started measuring your operation this fall!