

Plant corn, beans through May



Crop Adviser

By ADAM SPELHAUG

HOW late can I plant corn? When should I change maturities? Should I switch to soybeans? These are some of the questions I've received lately.

The first two weeks of May are typically the most optimal planting period for corn. Research supports that it is not recommended to change to an earlier hybrid than initially intended until at least May 20 (in North Dakota). Even though the planting date might be two weeks behind, emergence may only be one week behind due to warmer soil conditions. After May 20, I suggest looking for an earlier-maturing hybrid to minimize the obvious risk of a frost before the corn reaches physiological maturity. The other reason is to minimize the chance of having higher-moisture corn. We know how much fun that is after last fall. I don't have a problem with planting corn through the month of May.

If it gets too late for corn, soybeans are your next viable option. The optimal window for planting soybeans in most of North Dakota really encompasses the entire month of May — without any



need to switch out to an earlier variety. Planting an adapted maturity group soybean for your area, late in the season, will likely provide more yield potential than planting an earlier maturity. Late-planted soybeans go through vegetative stages much faster than earlier-planted soybeans as a result of greater temperatures and day lengths. Keep in mind that an early- versus late-planted soybean will flower up to the same point (photo-period) in the summer.

Also, concerns of a frost next fall should have little impact on your decision because soybeans mature based on day-length, not on heat accumulation or how long they have been growing.

Each year I plant a very-late-maturing soybean plot as part of my Ole and Sven research at Peterson Farms Seed. Usually, it is planted at the very end of

Compare Ole and Sven's field styles

THE premise of my Ole and Sven field plots is to compare farming styles. Ole is progressive. He likes adopting new practices that pay. Sven cuts corners and tries to just get by on what's always worked in the past.

Some of our recent results include:

- 32,000 has been the best plant population for corn.

- 1.5 to 2 inches has been the best planting depth for corn.

- Reducing planting speed added 8 bushels per acre to corn yields.

- New soybean seed outyielded year-old soybean seed from the same variety by 9 bushels per acre.

If you are interested in more Ole and Sven trial results, or have some ideas on other things to compare, contact me at 861-481-7333 or adam@PetersonFarmsSeed.com.

— Adam Spelhaug

June or first part of July. It has yielded right around 30 bushels per acre each year. I would not expect yields quite this high in the field, but most growers will get around 20 to 25 bushels per acre, which is usually better than insurance.

And it is always better to have a crop growing on the land than to let it sit idle.

Spelhaug is an agronomist with Peterson Farms Seeds, Harwood, N.D. See www.petersonfarmsseed.com.

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