

# Rainy day? Break out JackPlot!

By JOSH FLINT

**R**ICHARD Martin, a 2005 Illinois Master Farmer, cringed when he realized he'd just made a mistake and sprayed glyphosate on conventional corn.

Luckily, Richard was playing JackPlot, a board game for farmers produced by Croplan Genetics. On a rainy day in mid-May, Richard and his son and fellow farmer, Larry Martin, joined Brandt Consolidated personnel in Lincoln to compete in a friendly game.

"If I'd actually done that, it would have been a really bad deal," Richard says as he gives 20 bushels of corn back to the bank, his punishment for landing on the glyphosate square.

JackPlot is an amalgamation of several popular board games, including Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit and Life. Players roll the dice, move their game piece, and answer questions about corn and soybeans. Throw in a monetary system based on bushels of corn and soybeans and you've got an entertaining,

### Key Points

- JackPlot! is a board game created for farmers.
- Questions are tough even for agronomists.
- After playing the game, visit an Answer Plot to learn more.

yet challenging game. "It's a fun game and it's very educational," Richard notes.

Even though the game borrows facets from popular board games, it's not designed for family-fun night. Questions are designed to challenge farmers, a feat it accomplishes very easily.

"I think it would be fun to get a bunch of farmers together to

play this sometime," Larry says. "It's definitely too tough for the whole family."

### Learning can be fun

At first glance, some farmers may think of a board game as a childish medium for learning the intricacies of agronomic practices. However, there are plenty of opportunities for good-natured ribbing. Just ask Eric Gordon, plant manager for Brandt Consolidated. Early on, Gordon landed on a square that allowed him to take 2 bushels of soybeans from each player. For the remainder of the game, everyone seemed to enjoy taking bushels from Gordon.

"It's a lot more fun than you initially might think," Larry adds.

Chris Becker, a Brandt seed specialist, endured flak anytime he took his time on seed-related questions. In fact, Richard says beating

**NEXT MOVE:** Larry Martin (left) reads his fate as Richard Martin and Chris Becker look on.



your local agronomist would definitely warrant bragging rights.

The game has a challenging and a standard mode. While challenging questions offer a higher rate of return, the standard questions may be plenty difficult for novice or aspiring farmers.

The game board is structured around the four seasons. Players start in winter, progress through planting, and finish by delivering grain to the elevator after harvest. Each square's penalty or reward is tailored to the specific season. For example, a spring penalty square reads: "Planter broke down. Part won't arrive for three days. Lose 1 turn."

### From the game to the field

Brett Barnard, Croplan Genetics district sales manager, explains how the game dovetails with Croplan's Answer Plots. "The game provides an avenue for us to talk to growers about our Answer Plot network," he notes.

Whereas some test plots focus solely on yield numbers, Barnard says the goal of Answer Plot is to provide growers with the genetics behind various hybrids and varieties.



### Play competitively

**T**HINK you're pretty good at JackPlot!?

Visit [www.answerplot.com](http://www.answerplot.com) and enter the 2008 JackPlot! National Competition and Sweepstakes.

Sixteen pre-registered growers and their local agronomists will be randomly selected to participate in a JackPlot! Game playoff in Las Vegas this winter.

Prizes include \$3,000 seed packages and 48-inch flat-screen televisions.

"What are the individual strengths and weaknesses between the various plants, and how does that fit in with your farm? Those are the questions we're out to answer," Barnard explains.

This year, Croplan will host approximately 120 Answer Plot locations throughout the U.S., and Barnard estimates 10,000 farmers will visit this year. Typically, three sessions are held at each location: just after emergence, mid-growing season and just before harvest.

■ To find the closest Answer Plot location, visit [www.answerplot.com](http://www.answerplot.com).

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