

Seed quality trumps traits, genetics



By TOM J. BECHMAN

SEED that won't grow doesn't help anyone, no matter how many traits the seed carries. Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc.

just invested \$1.3 million to expand a seed-testing facility at Tipton, Ind. The newly expanded facility became operational this summer.

The 10,000-foot expansion allows this single facility to handle 125,000 germination, vigor and purity-quality tests samples per year. However, it's not just corn and soybeans that's tested there. Employees also evaluate wheat and sorghum samples. Very little sorghum grows in that part of the Corn Belt.

What's key is that this lab is one of a series of Pioneer labs around the world. The company also operates seed-quality facilities in:

- Johnston, Iowa
- Urbandale, Iowa
- Chatham, Ontario, Canada
- Asussonne, France
- Pandorf, Austria

All labs are ISO 9001:2000 certified to guarantee that quality-assurance practices are followed.

"With the completion of this expansion, we will be able to move samples quickly among labs to help balance our testing needs more efficiently around the world," according to Tom Bockhaus, director of supply planning and logistics.

Trimble fine-tunes GPS systems

One of the leaders in precision farming equipment, Trimble, has introduced updates to the AgGPS EZ-Guide 500 lightbar system. The system now supports the AgGPS EZ-Boom 2010 application. It also supports the EZ-Steer 500-assisted steering system, and Trimble's Autopilot.

To use the EZ-Boom function, you can download firmware version 2.00 from the Trimble Web site. E-Z Boom controls up to 10 spray boom sections automatically. The goal is avoiding overspraying or underspraying.

For information, call 800-865-7438 or visit www.EZ-GUIDE.com.

Monsanto, Bayer news

Two ag giants entered long-term business and licensing agreements that leaders of both companies believe will help each other.

Monsanto gets a non-exclusive license to market LibertyLink herbicide tolerance in the U.S., including the option to market hybrids with both Roundup Ready and LibertyLink technologies. In return, Bayer receives rights under certain Monsanto intellectual properties. Monsanto will also have access to Bayer's Dual *Bt* technology.

The rest of the agreement takes lawyers, geneticists and business executives to figure out. The bottom line is that the two companies will cooperate to develop new technologies and maximize existing ones.

Precision gene placement

Blindly shooting genes into plants with a "gene gun" might soon become an antique technique. Dow AgroSciences and Sangamo Biosciences recently entered into an agreement that allows Dow AgroSciences to use Sangamo's ZFP technology.

Reportedly, the process allows scientists to place genes of interest precisely into specific genes of corn. It will make genome editing possible, and it's

another milestone with far-reaching implications.

Tractors run on B100

A Midwest farm couple who started running older tractors and combines on nearly pure B100 two years ago were ahead of their time. Word from Penn State University is that two new, unmodified New Holland tractors have run on B100 (pure manufactured soy biodiesel) for a year with no ill effects. It's a co-

operative study between Penn State's College of Ag Sciences and Case New Holland. Neither tractor shows signs of extra wear, says Glen Cauffmann, Penn State's manager of farm operations and services.

Case New Holland added a third tractor to the Penn State study this spring. It's a larger, 150-horsepower tractor — a new model with a Tier III emissions rated engine. It's a study worth watching.



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¹Some states require an individual be licensed if involved in the recommendation, handling or application of any pesticide. Consult your local extension office for information regarding licensing requirements.

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