Hello to all,

National No-Till Conference

The 12th annual National No-tillage Conference was held January 7-10, 2004 at Des Moines, Iowa. The conference was well attended by both novice and expert no-tillers from all over the world. It was very interesting to talk to these producers and learn the different type of crops produced and method of doing so.

The presentations were given by various individuals (producers, university and government officials, private agri-businesses, etc.). Some of the main topics covered were strip-till vs. no-till, cover crops, rotations, and nutrient availability. The conclusion I came up with was that no-till will work everywhere but requires more management than strip-till. If strip-till is working, and your happy, stick with it. Cover crops should be used to conserve or use moisture as well as build organic matter. Actively growing crops reduces soil erosion and helps break up compaction layers. Producers need to move away from the traditional corn/soybean rotation and move to a longer rotation to reduce weed tolerance to herbicides and break up insect life cycles. And finally, managing nutrients (N,P,K, etc.) is becoming more and more a factor. Nutrients need to be applied as close to plant up-take as possible to reduce the risk of loss.

If you ever get the chance to attend this conference, do so. This is one of the best ways to meet people throughout the United States that share the same interest in agriculture.

By Greg Stegner, Resource Conservationist

Amazing facts from Surpass

Amazing Fact #1: A single waterhemp plant can scatter 100,000 or more seeds across a field.

Amazing Fact #2: Surpass herbicide for grass can stop it. Soil-applied Surpass not only controls waterhemp, but takes out pigweed, lambsquarters and numerous other broadleaf weeds, too. And it's extremely effective on foxtails, barnyardgrass and crabgrass. Click here for more details:

http://ad.doubleclick.net/clk;6434374;3580514;i?http://www.dowagro.com/usag/prod/045.htm

Cold winter promotes herbicide carryover....

Herbicides in your soils from the past growing season have the potential to linger and cause crop damage next spring. Although moisture, even in the form of snow, will help break down the chemicals, the cold of winter definitely slows the process, according to Glenn Nice, a Purdue University Weed Scientist.

Nice says a wet winter is helpful in avoiding the potential herbicide carryover problems, but the best scenario is a warm, wet spring that is ideal for breaking down the chemicals.

More about Nitrogen Losses….

If you're fertilizing with manure, the amount of nitrogen lost will depend on the form used and the application method. Here are some rules of thumb to consider: Broadcast applications of solid manure will lose about 15 to 30 percent of the nitrogen, while broadcasting liquid manure will reduce the loss to about 10 to 25 percent. However, broadcasting either solid or liquid manure with immediate cultivation drops the nitrogen losses to just 1 to 5 percent. Knifing liquid manure results in potential losses up to just 2 percent, while sprinkler applications of liquid manure stand to lose 15 to 40 percent of the nitrogen. The figures are provided by Midwest Plan Service, a farm consulting group.

2004 Soybean Seed Size

In 2004, growers should anticipate planting adjustments in response to soybean seed size. Throughout the seed industry, certain soybean varieties and selected seed lots have produced very wide ranges of seeds per pound. In general, growers can expect to be planting smaller soybean seed in 2004. In Mycogen Seeds' case, the average number of seeds is 3,300 per pound for all varieties from 2003 production fields. Our average last year was 3,000 seeds per pound across all varieties. This translates into a potential seed savings of about 10% for the grower willing to pay attention to planting rates and make the appropriate planter adjustments.

Soybean seed quality is good for 2004 planting. You can expect to encounter normal germination percentages on the bag tags. Soybean planting rate recommendations in most situations are 200,000, 165,000 and 130,000 seeds per acre for 7.5, 15 and 30 inch rows, respectively. This is equivalent to 3, 4.7 and 7.4 seeds per foot of row. Calibrate drills and planters to deliver the proper number of seeds per foot of row rather than pounds of seed per acre.

Small seed size can be positive when assessing crop inputs and calculating net return on each acre. Most seed companies sell soybean seed in 50 pound units, therefore, smaller seed plants more acres. Theoretically, a small seed takes less soil moisture to germinate and may emerge quicker than a large seed. Also, small seeds have smaller cotyledons to pull through the soil as they emerge. This can potentially develop better stands in crusting soils and high residue no-till fields. Remember that the most profitable seeding rate per acre is always less than the highest yield seeding rate per acre. Think profit per acre.

HUMOR

Turkeys and football

A pro football team had just finished practice when a large turkey strutted onto the field. While the players looked on in wonder, the turkey walked up to the head coach and demanded a tryout. Everyone stared in silence as the turkey caught pass after pass and ran right through the defensive line. When the turkey returned to the sidelines, the coach shouted, "You're terrific! Sign up for the season, and I'll see to it that you get a huge

bonus." To which the turkey, visibly relieved, replied, "Forget the bonus. All I want to know is, does the season go past Thanksgiving?"