

SFG Update

Smith Fertilizer & Grain

April 15, 2013

Max Smith General Manager



I just returned from driving to Charlotte, North Carolina to a Spring Conference for our Deicing business. We drove through Indianapolis and West Virginia on the way down and then came back through Louisville, Kentucky on the way home. It was dry and very dry all the way there and back until I ran into the rain we received April 10th. I didn't see one field planted other than spring and winter wheat. Every farm had plant-

ers and equipment hooked up but none of them were working to date. There was no water standing anywhere period! The point is, its still pretty dry and cold most everywhere. Looks like we are caught up on moisture so now it's time to shut the water off for a while. I will look into taking care of that. Ha! It is nice to see green grass, as it seems like forever since we had some.

Last week we had a good run on spring fertilizer and lime. It is now becoming crunch time. We better get our ducks in a row so we can make lots of hay when the sun starts shining. Many years ago Grandpa Smith told us that often. Some things never change as others change a lot. Taylor Banks is our new sales person in Centerville. Jason and Taylor are meshing very well. They will be a great team to the Albia-Centerville area this spring.

Charles has everything at Pleasantville in great shape and continues to get customers taken care of in a timely fashion. Thanks for the positive comments. It is what keeps us going this time of year. At Knoxville we have redesigned our agronomy team with Greg Willer as manager. He is learning our fast paced processes that keep customers satisfied. Both of the "Marks" are keeping us on track! Corey is a joy at work as he always has a smile on and is enjoying his new office. We have organized our agronomy records and are continuing to raise the bar to track all tasks to insure they are completed on time. We want you to have a copy of the same records we have. Then most of the work can be done with a phone call on busy days. New technology is a great improvement to our system and we continue to integrate this with your records at home.

On the feed side, everyone will be in better humor when the grass greens up and helps feed costs. It is very important that you "feed" the grass and hay with proper fertilization to produce as much as possible. This is a "must do" this spring. Don't put it off - make sure you put it on soon! Natasha at Albia has a full line of products to help you keep your feed costs inline this summer.

Give our staff a call to assist you this spring. They will work hard to assist you with the 2013 crop and livestock needs in weeks to come. Call them! You will be glad you did.

Thanks for the recent positive calls in regards to the staff changes. They really help make our days go fast.

Have a safe spring. Practice safety every day.

Max Smith
General Manager SFG



Knoxville Office Open House in honor of Jeanne Smith's 85th Birthday!

Please help us celebrate Jeanne Smith's 85 birthday at the Knoxville office location on: **Sunday, April 28, 2013 from 2:30 p.m.- 4:30p.m.** Come enjoy cake and refreshments while taking a tour of the new Knoxville office addition! Jeanne wishes only the gift of your presence.

Corey Garrington Agronomy Sales



Nitrogen fixation is crucial for soybean yields. For nitrogen fixation to occur, the nitrogen fixing bacteria known as Brady-

hizobia Japonicum must be present in the soil. Soybeans can obtain up to 75% of its nitrogen requirements from the air when nitrogen fixing bacteria have established functioning nodules on the roots.

The question keeps being asked, should I inoculate my soybeans this year? In the past the criteria to inoculate was if:

- 1.) The field has never been planted to soybeans
- 2.) Soybeans have not been grown in the field in the past three to five years
- 3.) The soil pH is below 6.0

- 4.) The soil has a high sand content
- 5.) When there has been severe drought or flood conditions**
- 6.) Soil organic matter levels are less than 1%

With all of the variables from last year, inoculating soybeans is a small investment with the potential of having a high return on investment. There are several different options when it comes to inoculating your soybeans. Make sure you research or contact your SFG agronomy salesmen to make sure you are using the right product on your farm.

Natasha Sadofsky **Albia Location Manager**



Spring is here and it's time to think about starting your fly control program. Flies are a huge nuisance for livestock and can cause devastating problems if there is a significant fly population. Flies can spread diseases ranging from anaplasmosis to pink

eye in addition to causing high stress levels and negatively impacting weight gain. There are a number of fly control methods. A few of the most common are pour-ons, sprays, rubs, feed additives, or blocks. Pour-ons and sprays provide a good initial kill with 2-6 weeks of residual protection. However, rainfall or cattle lingering in stock tanks or ponds will reduce the efficacy and duration of the protection offered by either the pour-on or spray. Rubs are also an effective method of control once cattle realize that the rub will help reduce their fly load. It is best to place the rub near feeders, water sources, loafing areas, or an area that will force the cattle to rub against it. Feed additives, blocks, and lick

tubs are one of the least labor intensive methods for a producer. Many of you are already filling mineral feeders and putting out blocks or tubs containing either Alto-sid® or Rabon®. These control the growth and development of fly larvae, but don't offer protection against adult flies. For this reason, it's important to use more than one method of fly control in your program.

SFG has the pour-ons, sprays, rubs, mineral, blocks, and lick tubs in stock to help you minimize the fly load on your cattle and maximize your bottom line. Please call and speak with an SFG representative if you have questions or would like to learn more about the products mentioned.

Mark Young **Senior Agronomy Manager**



Fieldwork is starting with planting soon to follow. Now is the time to re-evaluate agronomic decisions related to corn planting. Annually, you strive to plant corn at the optimum density for maximizing corn yield potential, managing input costs and minimizing the risks of poor standability and barrenness. Seed germplasm today has shown more consistent ear size under various environmental conditions and can maintain better stalk quality compared to corn as little as ten years ago. These improvements can be attributed to great advances in plant breeding as well as agronomic practices such as fertilization and improved weed control.

What populations achieve optimum yield

potential and how do I get to the next level? Specific populations can vary by geography so it is important to consider your local conditions as well as ear type, row width, and other environmental factors. The following are points to consider when developing population strategies:

1. Refer to ear type for population recommendations. Proper planting populations partially depend on the ear type of the hybrid. A hybrid with a determinate ear requires higher populations to achieve top yields, whereas a hybrid with a flex ear may produce lower yields when planted at a high population. Planting populations for hybrids with semi-flex ears can vary as well. Consult your SFG agronomist for technical production information to determine what population is best for each of your selected hybrids.
2. Understand how yield environment impacts planting populations. Optimum seeding rate increases as the overall field yield potential increases. Higher yield environments demonstrate more yield response from adjusting seeding rates.

3. Understand how the planting date can impact populations. Early planting dates can put more stress on seedlings than later planting dates. A higher seedling rate may be needed if corn is planted before conditions are ideal for emergence and optimum yield potential. Consideration also should be given for uniform planting depth. All plants should emerge at about the same time for optimum yield performance.

4. Consider economic factors, cost of seed and commodity prices. The optimum seeding rate for maximizing return is always lower than the optimum seeding rate for highest yield. The optimum economic seeding rate increases as commodity price increases; seed cost influences seeding rate much less.

Corn products respond differently to populations and environments. It is important to have your SFG agronomist help you observe and evaluate the response of a corn product in many environments to try and optimize placement and planting populations to maximize your yield potential.

Greg Willer **Knoxville Agronomy Manager**



Warm weather is finally here and we are ready to get in the fields. Many growers

are in the fields applying fertilizer and preparing for their pre-chemical sprays. We have been hearing about the issue of glyphosate resistant weeds becoming more and more of a problem. There are a few steps that can be taken so that some of the resistant weeds do not show up in your fields. Full rates should be used when applying herbicides. Using the full rate will help gain control of the weed and prevent hard to control weeds in your field. It is important to use multiple sites of action when applying chemicals to the field, as well as to apply a residual herbicide before the gly-

phosate or mix another herbicide with the glyphosate. Regularly scouting your fields to look for problem weeds is important too. Many times the weeds are not sprayed at the right time. Many herbicides are designed to kill weeds that are four to six inches tall. A four inch waterhemp is much easier to kill than a twelve inch waterhemp. SFG has the equipment and qualified personnel to help you with your chemical needs. Give your SFG agronomist a call with questions regarding your chemical needs.

Mark White Knoxville Location Manager



OUCH! That's about the only way to describe the stocks report that came out on March 28th. All the attention had been focused on the intended planting numbers which turned out to be somewhat neutral or maybe even a bit bullish. Most everyone had bought into the extreme shortage of old crop supplies that the government had been reporting since last fall. Then, on the 28th, they somehow found between 300 and 400 million bushels of corn that wasn't there at the last report. Granted

the old saying, "high prices cure high prices", may have been in play here some recently, but this was a major adjustment in the span of 10 weeks. The trade sold off extremely fast as we lost \$1.00 on the corn in 2 days of trading. Now, instead of a \$1.75 inverse to new crop, we stand at a \$1.00. One thing I noted during the 6 trading days since the report is that farmer selling has been very slow. This tells me the farmers that have corn left to sell aren't bailing like the funds have on the board. This should help keep basis levels strong thru the summer. After dropping big the day of the report, soybeans were holding their own until the Chinese announced the possible outbreak of bird flu. In the past, they might have kept this news quiet, but now that it can impact the soy markets the way it has, they seem more willing to be open about such things. I think the best advice for anyone holding old crop grain is to sell on the rallies as they are presented to us. Same holds true on new crop. We need to get

some priced and not hold all of it waiting for planting delays or drought news to push prices higher.

The CME starting using new hours for the grain trade on April 8th. The electronic trade now opens at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday thru Thursday; there will be a break from 7:45 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. The live call trade will now open at 8:30 a.m. and then both trades will close at 1:15 p.m. We have changed our grain buying schedule to match this change. We will now offer a live bid from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Then we will offer a spot bid once we receive the terminal prices each day. Currently, we have this ready around 3:00 p.m. and hope we can have it earlier since the trade is closing at 1:15 p.m. instead of 2:00 p.m. This spot bid will be good until 4:00 p.m. each day. Holidays will continue to alter our schedule from time to time as the board may be closed or run reduced hours. If you have any questions concerning these times, please ask any location manager or give me a call.

For more articles and market information please visit our website at www.sfgiowa.com.

Brad Kaufman Agronomy Sales



We are definitely off to a later start this Spring. At this time last year, some corn was already in the ground and we were trying to find things to keep us busy so we didn't plant too early. Last year, when April 11th hit we were full bore. Then it got cold and wet for two weeks and dropped the soil temperature below 50 for a few days. This year, the soil temperature is in the mid 40's. You may be wondering where I'm going with this. In my opinion, you need to be using in furrow starter fertilizer when planting corn.

Not too long ago most everyone used a starter fertilizer in furrow. Everyone says

the same thing: "It takes too much time". That may be true but we are in the fields planting earlier each year. It seems like we go through a two week stretch in April where it is cold and wet, when we have we corn already in the ground. Growers in northern Iowa and Minnesota still use starter in furrow for just that reason. The yield benefit of using these products in colder soils has proven it's worth.

We carry a low rate starter product called Riser from Loveland Inc. Riser is a 7-17-3 with a micro nutrient package. Studies have shown a 2 gallon rate does even better

than the higher rates of a 6-24-6 or a 10-34-0. I know many of you are not set up to apply starter through your planters, but Loveland offers an equipment program to help get planters set up for Riser.

I firmly believe that in order to push our corn yields to the next level we need to utilize an in furrow starter with our corn. If you are interested in learning more about Riser or how to get your planter set up for starter fertilizer, more than likely for next year, contact your SFG agronomist and we will be glad to bring our Loveland rep out to you.



RiseR

Untreated