

SFG UPDATE

Smith Fertilizer & Grain
April 6, 2011
Max Smith
Change, change, change



Spring has arrived and most people are glad to see it come. The spring calf crop is doing great with our near ideal weather. We have missed most of the big storms this spring. One thing for sure, it is our turn for some good weather. I admire all of you who did conservation work last fall and are finishing it up this spring. It looks great!! We have a full line of grass seed available to get new waterways seeded.

How about these markets! We have had good market opportunities all winter. Some think the grand slam will be this summer, but we found out recently there are so many things beyond our control, such as the tsunami in Japan and political unrest in Libya. The best advice I ever received was: "If you can sell for a profit you will never go broke". Good stuff to live by. Keep track of your costs. Check our new crop bids, we are very competitive. We will be there to get you unloaded and back to the field quickly.

Fertilizer and chemical application continues to grow for SFG. We have completed applicator certification & training and have almost everything ready to go. We replaced a toolbar to custom apply NH₃ this spring. Toolbars and wagons have had a thorough inspection to minimize downtime this spring. We added DOT stickers and inspections to comply with the new regulations. It is a big job to keep in compliance with all the new regulations.

The biggest issue this spring will be communication with our sales people to make sure that all driveways, gates and field divides are marked clearly on a current map. Make sure this is done to minimize mistakes. Thank you for taking time to accomplish this. We are prepared for spring and look forward to the opportunity to help you with the 2011 crops you intend to plant. Keep in close contact with the manager and agronomist in your trade area.

On the financial side, our lenders have recently renewed our credit line for the 2011-2012 season. We have been asked to purge our files and update our customer credit line paperwork. We will be talking to you throughout the summer to update all our files by August. I understand for some this is a nuisance and I agree. However, in today's world, it is necessary to keep us current in the electronic world we live in. We will talk more later on this, but I thought I best mention the change. We will collect as many email addresses as we can, cell phone numbers, etc. to make sure we communicate with you the best way possible.

Good luck this spring and practice safety every day. Thank you in advance for your business and the trust you have instilled in us to get your work done this spring.

Max Smith
General Manager

In order to conserve paper, we have decreased the number of articles in the printed newsletter and will now be putting all articles on our website. To view the rest of the articles please go to www.sfgiowa.com.



Casey Cortum Seed Specialist



It's hard to believe in 15 days we will be in the field, especially when I turn around and look out the window at 2" of snow on the 29th of March. Believe it or not, it's going to be spring whether we're ready or not. The planters will be getting tuned up and ready to hit the field. You will want to check the population chain. Everyone has their own beliefs in seed population whether it be due to row spacing, soil type or "that's what dad planted 20 years ago". The truth is we should probably pay more attention to the genetics you chose versus all of the other factors. Some of you probably took that into consideration when you ordered your seed, but when it comes down to it in the spring rush, we all fall in the death trap of setting the planter at 30,000 or 32,000.

In today's market, regardless of the seed company you choose to plant, most research on the hybrids is done at 40,000 plants per acre! That is why we see very few "FLEX" eared hybrids today. With research being done at such high populations, the seed company has lots of information and test results proving why that hybrid should be planted at that population. So, on a fixed ear hybrid it is very easy to increase yield since the ears will all be the same size no matter the population.

I am here to help you determine your population. We may have talked about it last fall but don't be afraid to ask about the hybrids we picked out. If you are still a little uncertain, I will be glad to help you change your sprocket, up the population and do a side by side trial to show you the yield difference on your own farm. In all of the trials I have done, if the hybrid can handle high populations, the gain from bumping your populations by 2000-3000 plants far outweighs the seed cost. I'd like to wish everyone a safe spring. If you need anything or have any questions feel free to call.

Now is the time to start
fertilizing your lawn!

Crabgrass Preventer

Apply by 4-15

Weed & Feed

Apply by 5-15

Available at all locations



Sweet corn is now available
at all locations!

Ambrosia

Bi-color
75 days



Incredible

Yellow
85 days



Brad Kaufman C.C.A. Pleasantville Agronomy Sales

It doesn't look too promising that we will have an early spring this year. As it continues to stay cold and wet we have time to do more preparations to our equipment to be as ready as we can be when the fields dry out. This also gives us more time to think about ways to increase our yields for the 2011 season. One simple and cost effective way of doing this in soybeans is to inoculate them.

We only used to inoculate soybeans when we were putting them into ground that was coming out of CRP or hay. Then we were inoculating beans in these circumstances because we were afraid that the populations of the Brady rhizobia bacteria were too low to produce adequate nodules for the bean crop. However, that's not the only way to reduce the number of bacteria in the soil. Just think back over the last two years. We were extremely wet. Since the Brady rhizobia bacteria is a living organism, all the moisture we have reduced their populations due to the lack of oxygen in the soil.

So what can we do to help increase the populations? We need to inoculate with the Brady rhizobia bacteria. At SFG we offer a product called Dyna Start Pro which will help bring the bacteria populations back up. It also provides you with a biological fungicide, which along with a seed treatment, will protect the beans from Fusarium and Rhizoctonia. Inoculating with Dyna Start Pro is showing an average of 2.5 bushel increase over the untreated trials of corn/bean rotations. If we can increase our soybean yield by 2.5 bushel per acre by just spending \$3.50 per bag, well you can do the math on it.

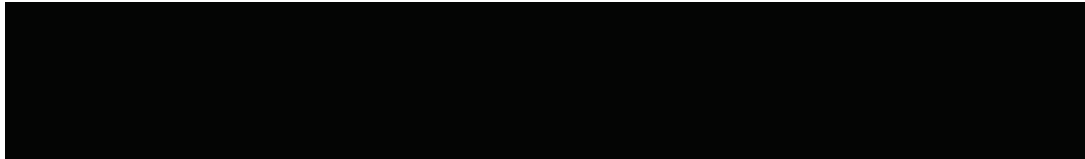
I recommend changing our way of thinking about inoculating soybeans, especially after how wet we have been the last few years. With beans hovering around the \$13 plus range, inoculating makes sense, and hopefully a few more dollars in your pockets at the end of the year.



Amanda Swarts **Agronomy Assistant**

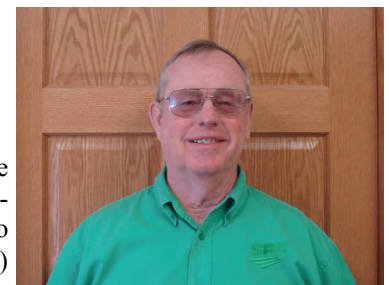
It's that time of the year again. Time to decide what will be in the research plot. If you have any suggestions, feel free to tell your SFG agronomy salesman. Last year's wet conditions made it hard to have accurate tests on the research plot. This year we hope the weather will cooperate so we can have great results from our many tests. To start things off, some of the farm has been tilled to help with the wetness that seemed to be such a big issue last year. We will have a variety of plots of both corn and beans, showing the varieties of Garst/NK and DeKalb/Asgrow. We will also do numerous chemical tests, an insect test and a fungicide test. The insect test will be interesting to see how well the traits stack up against the insects.

Syngenta will be helping with some of the tests. There will be an inexpensive option and a higher price option. We will be doing two passes with each of these options on 7 varieties of corn. Also on top of the chemical test we will have fungicide test on those varieties. We will see if two passes with fungicide increases your yield. We will do one pass on 8 rows each at V5, R1, V5 & R1 and 8 rows untreated. If you would like to see a specific test, contact your agronomy salesman.



Gary Sterling **Albia Location Manager**

As many of you have heard, Larry Baker has left Smith Fertilizer & Grain to pursue other interests. We wish him the best. During his time with SFG he did a good job of sharing his knowledge with our customers to help them better manage their feeding program. All questions on feed should now be directed to Mark Jacobs at the Albia office (641-932-2100) or Rodger Maletta at the Centerville office (641-856-2828)



Now is the time to think about lush pastures and how to best manage the livestock on them. The time is right to start feeding mag mineral for grass tetany. We have loose mineral, 50# mol-mag blocks and Crystalyx super mag tubs (12% protein and 4.4% magnesium) all can be fed free choice.

We are now offering creep feed (16% with rumensin) which can be contracted through December of 2011. Prices change every Tuesday. If you are signed up for Hubbard's 0% financing any Hubbard product can be applied to it. Any questions about Hubbard or Kent financing can be answered at any of the SFG offices. All feed prices are subject to big swings this summer due to the grain market volatility. If the USDA comes out with a report that we have plenty of stocks on hand, the prices should go down but any weather problems could drive the cost of feed up. Who knows what the weather is going to do until it is over.

April promotion: When you buy 10 bags of Kent Home Fresh chicken feed you will receive one bag free.