

4waRd Thinking Conversations

Top 4 – July Edition

Conversations in the first half of July need to focus on remediating problems in the field that will impact yield as a crop moves closer to maturity. As we approach the end of the month, however, the ability to make applications lessens and conversations shift to talking through what can and should be done in future years to make positive changes on the farm – changes that will boost nutrient uptake, yield and profitability.



Why it's important...

How to start the conversation...

1 Prepare for Late Season Corn Management

Grey Leaf Spot, Tar Spot and Northern Corn Leaf Blight can cause serious economic losses in corn if they are not managed properly. Scout fields regularly to determine a need for action. If action is justified, take a plant sample to see if any nutrient applications are needed.

Let's talk about the disease pressure in your corn. As pressure increases the disease will reduce photosynthetic ability of the plant and may shorten its lifecycle. That causes 2 problems – less accumulated starch in the plant to drive grain fill and less time to transfer starch to the seed. Aside from reducing yield, it will reduce your phosphorus removal and nitrogen use efficiency.

2 Manage Soybeans for White Mold

White Mold infects soybeans in the early flowering stages and can significantly reduce yield in certain areas of the state. Fields with historical white mold issues need to be protected to preserve yield potential, maximize nutrient use efficiency & profitability.

White mold was a serious problem the last time you planted beans at the Smith Farm and it really reduced yields. Plan on a fungicide + foliar fertilizer to protect the plant and address mid-season nutrient needs.

3 Track Nitrogen Modeling

Corn is in an exponential growth phase, accumulating nitrogen at an astounding pace. Shoulder-high corn can uptake 6.5 lbs/acre/day. Tasseled corn can still uptake almost 4 lbs/acre/day and have 38,000 miles of roots present in that acre! Regularly monitor your nitrogen modeling program to ensure adequate nitrogen is available for growth and grain fill.

Here's your latest report from our Nitrogen Modeling Service. Look at both projected mineralization and calculated losses. We should add a stabilizer to next year's fertilizer program to address that leaching loss.

4 Double Crop Beans after Wheat?

For southern PA farms, the answer is almost always "Yes!" while the answer for northern PA farms is almost always "No!" Do the math on double crop soybean production – if double crop beans will not be profitable, pivot to a cover crop that will provide benefit for next year.

What's your 3-year average for double crop beans? How about your break even yield for this year? Let's spend a few minutes calculating this. If it doesn't pencil out, cover cropping for next year's nitrogen needs may be a better option.



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