

SELECT HYBRIDS

ON A *Field-By-Field* BASIS

You're not alone in making the decisions most critical to maximum corn yields

No two fields are identical. When farmers are committed to managing every acre to reach its maximum yield capacity, correctly positioning corn hybrids is key to limiting risk and maximizing yields without increasing input costs. The wide array of genetically diverse hybrid choices – and the fact that the average corn hybrid lifespan is only a few years – gives farmers little time to test a hybrid on their own farms to be sure it's the right fit. Without this on-farm experience, choosing the right hybrid can be overwhelming.

That's where the agronomic expertise of Southern States Cooperative is best put to work. We use performance data from Southern State's annual test-plot program along with crop data from yield maps, field imagery, in-season tissue sampling and other information collected from farmers' fields. All this data combines to give us a clearer picture of each product's performance across a wide variety of conditions.

FIELD-BY-FIELD PLACEMENT

With an understanding of each hybrid's basic production traits and yield potential, we can match the right hybrid to the unique needs and production capacity of individual fields. Each Southern States agronomist begins the recommendation process with a soil map and the latest soil test results. Knowledge of the soil's water-holding capacity and base fertility levels across each field are used to set attainable goals.

SPREADING RISK THROUGH GENETIC DIVERSITY PLUS NEW TECHNOLOGY

Across an operation, we know planting hybrids with similar traits but different genetic backgrounds is a risk-management practice used to prepare for unpredictable environmental stresses on a crop. And planting a range of maturities is a proven practice that improves the odds for successful pollination.

Precision farming technology and newly engineered planters are offering farmers the ability to position two hybrids in one field. Planting the right two hybrids for each field may be another valuable tool and risk-management strategy for farmers to consider.

RIGHT PRODUCT, RIGHT POPULATION

With the hybrid selection process complete, our next step is to adjust the planting population to fit the hybrid and the field. Planting at the optimum population helps maximize yield without leaving potential in the field.

Each year, planting populations continue to increase. Throughout our area, typical seeding rates range from 26,000 to 42,000 plants per acre.

The higher populations are possible because of continually improving stress tolerance of today's corn genetics.

Armed with information from the Southern States database, our agronomy professionals identify soils similar to those in your fields, then evaluate yield data for various hybrids over a range of populations. This allows us to confidently offer a recommended population for your fields. As a rule, corn hybrids with outstanding yield potential perform best in soils with a high production capacity, so fields with very high yield potential should be the first candidates for higher populations.

Stress-tolerant "work-horse" hybrids should be evaluated for soils with more marginal yield potential. In either case, correct nutrition will be needed to support yield goals, as we can't expect high-end yields with only "sufficient" nutrient levels.

RIGHT ON YOUR FARM?

Ultimately, what is the right product and the right population for each field? We're here to help answer this question. As you work with your Southern States expert on hybrid seed selection and field placement for the 2020 crop, be sure to discuss the benefits of higher plant populations and ask about doing some on-farm comparisons. We'll work with you to see what products and populations pay the most on your farm.

And as the growing season progresses, we can follow, track and predict your field's success with our forecasting tools. Using field monitoring, we can tell if your fields are at, above or below average. Then, we can work with you to determine the best fertility and crop protection programs to maximize your ROI.