

February 2, 2011

## PLANTING POPULATIONS

# AGRONOMY TOPIC OF THE WEEK

### **CORN:**

In the past, there used to be one standard seeding rate for corn and that is what growers set their planters at in the spring for planting. In recent years seed costs have gone up and we now have a better understanding of each hybrids' background. A hybrid of corn is either classified as having a fixed ear, flex ear, or a mix of both. A fixed-ear type of hybrid is one where if placed on high producing soil types with proper fertility, can maximize yield by increasing the populations due to fact the ear is the same size no matter what the population is. A flex-ear hybrid can be placed on more variable soils and can handle mid-to lower populations due to the corn plants' ability to increase the ear size based on the distance of the plants apart from each other. A combination of both ear types allows flexibility in planting.

Variable rate planting is catching on in our area and can be a great tool to maximize each hybrids' genetic potential. Central Valley has the ability to provide growers with Response to Population (RTP) score for each hybrid. This data has been collected from Answer Plot's throughout the area and is a good tool to plan for each field based on what hybrid is planned for that field.

### **SOYBEANS:**

There is no 'perfect' seeding rate for soybeans. Each situation is different. Seed treatments are important to determine seeding rates: generally seeding rates can be reduced 10 to 15K seeds/ac. if a quality seed treatment is applied. The general rule of thumb is: 30" rows which have a seed treatment should be seeded at 140 to 150K seeds/ac. Drilled rows should be sowed in at a rate of 160 to 175K seeds/ac. with seed

treatment due to the seeds being spaced out more. No-till situations require aggressive seeding rates due to more residue and cooler soil temps. In the future there will be more research done by each variety to provide an RTP score.

