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## **Making Fall Seed Decisions**

**By Trevor Stieg** *Sales & Marketing Manager • [trevorstieg.wce@midconetwork.com](mailto:trevorstieg.wce@midconetwork.com)*  
**By Travis Christensen** *Agronomy Manager • [travis@watertowncoop.com](mailto:travis@watertowncoop.com)*



We know the timing is tough—making decisions about seed when you have barely begun combining.

However, we've got a few reasons why it really pays to solidify at least some of your 2011 seed inputs.

If there's even a slight challenge to supply issues, it will become very hard to source some of the select varieties

you want for your fields as time goes by. Last year, a customer had a specific variety request. Fortunately, this customer talked to us during harvest about this variety, and we placed the order. We turned out to be the only ones in the state to receive this variety, despite many others subsequently wanting this same seed later that spring.

This is a fairly extreme example. At this point, supply of corn and soybeans looks good. But seed production issues are very subject to weather fluctuations and other conditioning factors. The retailing side of seed has also changed: inventories from our supplies are purposely tight because surplus anything in a warehouse is costly overhead. Seed, period, is a more risky input than equipment parts or crop protection products: seed is a product of Mother Nature, not a factory.

There are also many programs available right now that enable you to get the most seed value for your dollar. This in itself is a great reason for at least finalizing some of your seed order right now—the cost savings are substantial.

We know you are extremely busy. How can we help? Give us a call and at least start the conversation with your sales agronomist. Talk to us about the maturities you may be wanting for your 2011 crop. We want to do all we can to help with your success. Thanks so much for all your business. ●



# Fall Services Save Time and Money

Every fall and spring, producers face weather and time challenges. That's where we can help: we can do some of the work for you. We can bring out the air flow, chisel plow, or strip tiller and get some 2011 field work out of your way...in 2010. It'll be one less thing on your plate this spring.

## Fertilizer dilemma

We urge you to at least seriously consider applying some of your fertility needs in the fall—especially phosphorus and potassium. Why consider fall application of P and K? They are of much more benefit to your crops in the spring when fall-applied. They do not leach out.

Putting them in the ground now starts the soil biology breakdown process, turning them into available plant food for your valuable spring seedlings. Also,

there is usually some cost advantage to fall-applied nutrients.

## Strip-till advantages

Every year, more no-till acres are being transitioned into strip-till management. The research clearly shows its benefits. As growers continue to push the envelope of earlier planting times, there are clear advantages of planting into the warmer strip-till furrows. This helps seedling vigor, getting the plant up earlier, and having it placed in the hot zone for localized root uptake of nutrients.

Interested yet? Make the call to your agronomy department. We'll get you on the list, and as soon as the combines are off your field, we'll go to work with the fall service that works best for your operation. ●

## Harvesting Safely

At Watertown Co-op, safety is a priority ingrained in all we do. Managing that program and putting it into action is safety coordinator Andy Hanson.

He has been at Watertown Co-op since 1987, beginning in the agronomy department. The size of the equipment, says Andy, is one of the more noticeable changes he has seen through the years.

"I remember driving an Ag-Chem 1603 Terra-Gator® with 50-foot booms," he says. It maybe hit 20 mph tops, he recalls. That's a long ways from today's 120-foot booms, he notes. "Pickups and single axles were the vehicles of choice not too long ago," he says. "Now it's one semi after another in the elevator and out in the fields."

Safety has had to evolve accordingly, too. In the early '90s, Andy was tasked with coordinating the Watertown Co-op safety program. "We are heavily monitored by our insurance company, to be sure," he says. "But it's also become part of our workplace culture. Not because an accident is costly to the cooperative, but because it's the right thing to do for our employees and those that conduct business with the co-op."

With fall upon us, Andy urges all customers and employees to be watchful on county roads during harvest and mindful of hazards that sometimes get taken for granted during combining. "Be alert and don't take risks," he says. "You may have gotten by with some risky shortcuts in the past. But it's the one split second where it all catches up to you that becomes the accident or tragedy."



Andy and his wife, Mary, live on an acreage. Their children are grown and life is good, says Andy, with five grandchildren they see frequently. For hobbies, Andy calls himself a "fishoholic" and his wife a "horseoholic." "We do a lot of things together, but she really enjoys her horses and I can't get enough of fishing," he says with a laugh.

He gets serious again, though, reflecting on the upcoming harvest. "Please take a few extra minutes to complete each of your tasks safely," he says. "It only takes an instant for an accident to occur. Most happen because of choices we made—or didn't make." ●

## Safety Matters

**Watertown Co-op believes safety matters most. A special safety insert will now be included in all upcoming newsletters. Please read it, share it, and most of all, safely do your work.**

## About Corn



So far, we've generally had a phenomenal corn year. It looks like our die-hard hybrids are having a strong finish. That, combined with manageable moisture levels, is really pushing optimism as harvest nears. We've also seen the seed companies we work with listen to growers in this area. They have done a good job of introducing some options specifically developed for this countryside.

One of those options is SmartStax.™ It has more above- and below-ground protection than any seed on the market. We believe it is an excellent option for corn-on-corn acres and those managing high yielding environments. We'll have a wide range of maturity levels, from 91- to 104-day. For growers with less concerns about pests and below-ground protection, Genuity® VT Double Pro corn could be an extremely cost-effective choice.

Questions are already coming in about maturity selections for 2011. Certainly, we had a swing to shorter-day hybrids for the 2010 growing year because of past weather challenges. By the first of September, we had already had as many GDUs as we had all of last year, total.

Here are a few highlighted products that stand out to us:

**DKC 50-66 VT3 (100-day):** This is just a very solid hybrid. It dries down equal to or better than most 95-day corns.

**CROPLAN 3424 VT3 (94-day):** Despite a difficult growing environment (dry conditions at planting, then very wet), this number had tremendous emergence and seedling vigor. It looks to be the hybrid to beat for its maturity. ●

## About Soybeans



The industry transition to Roundup Ready 2 Yield® soybeans is underway. Why the push? Simply put, Roundup Ready 2s are producing more yield.

There are several ways to add more yield to a soybean field. Soybean geneticists and researchers have targeted more beans per pod with their plant breeding. With Roundup Ready 2 Yield soybeans, we are seeing more four-bean pods than in the past.

As your Watertown agronomists, we have stepped through and researched a lot of fields through the years. But stepping into Roundup Ready 2 fields pretty much hit us all the same way: "Wow." We've all waited a long time for increased yields to occur in soybeans—and with this technology and breeding, we are finally here. We feel very good about offering the new soybean varieties and what they can bring to Watertown Co-op-area soybean production.

Are you going to be paying a huge amount for them? We don't think so. Despite what we'd been hearing, it appears there won't be a huge cost difference between the newer and older technologies. From what we have seen, the value of Roundup Ready 2 Yield soybeans will be very much offset by the increased yield.

From all seed supply indications, we will have a range of early to late maturities going into our bulk bean tanks. As indicated on the front page, call now and provide a general idea of the soybean varieties and maturities you would like to use in 2011. ●

## Before Anything: Soil Test

Soil testing annually is a minor investment in the grand scheme of your overall farming operation. For what it costs to soil test, there is huge return-on-investment, compared to losses sustained by under- or over-fertilizing.

This year, we already anticipate seeing the results of sporadic soil testing. This is a year when under-fertilizing did not fully maximize the capabilities of fields, seed, and weather conditions.

A fall soil test confirms what your soil contains. It can then be the foundation for your annual fertility management plan. Samples need to be taken annually—not every few years or so—to maximize crop potential. All growers know the importance of nitrogen. But nitrate levels fluctuate annually, because of many factors, including rainfall, heat, and organic matter levels. That is why the test needs to be done annually.

We are also emphasizing fall as the season of choice for testing. How to proceed when you still have crops on the field? Call us now and get on the list. We'll get you on the schedule and will head for your field as soon as the crop is off. It's a great way to start the 2011 season, with your fall soil sample results in hand. ●





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*Mission Statement: To profitably enhance the success of our patrons.*

## Feed Department News

By Jon Hegge *Feed Department Manager • jon.wce@midconetwork.com*



It's the time of year to put Rangeland® HCP Stress Care Tubs into action. We continue to receive positive feedback from customers that know the special challenges of receiving calves that have been on a truck for long distances. They swear by the Stress Care Tub protocol.

The calves get off the semi and pretty much go straight for the tubs. Providing them access to a product developed for this critical time helps re-establish rumen

function, which is key to keeping calves out of the sick pen. It works for calves that have been shipped long distances—and it works for calves that are simply undergoing the stress of weaning.

Got stalks? Then get the Ration Manager program. It's an efficient way for supplementing corn stalks or wheat stubble. Ration Manager pellets provide controlled consumption feeding while meeting protein requirements and maximizing animal performance with economical cost of gain. Your cattle are self-fed, yet digestive disorders are minimized with them getting the necessary nutrition they need every day. Call us today and talk about either of these programs or any other animal nutrition question. ●



### Listening in:

Co-op and ag news are live on the radio with Jon Hegge every Tuesday morning at 7:45 on 96.9 KDLO radio.

### Finishing Off Flies

Continue feeding Altosid® products 30 days after a killing frost. This ensures that adult fly numbers are minimized, with egg populations as low as possible. In turn, this strategy helps avoid that first early flush of spring flies.



# SAFETY MATTERS

## TALKING POINTS FOR SUPERVISORS



## Tips for Teens in Agriculture

Every year, thousands of farm workers are injured and hundreds more die in farming accidents. According to the National Safety Council, agriculture is the most hazardous industry in the nation. You need to be aware of the hazards and safety practices when working on a farm.

### Hazards

The most common dangers teen farm workers are exposed to are:

- **Tractors** – Studies show that tractors are involved in a high proportion of farm fatalities and injuries.
- **Struck-by** – Many fatal farm accidents occur when someone is struck by farm machinery, but you can also get hurt if you get struck by livestock.
- **Chemicals and Pesticides** – Pesticides can enter your body in many ways, including breathing, contact with skin, and clothes. You can even poison yourself if you eat with unwashed hands.
- **Organic Dust** – This comes from hay, grain, fuel chips, straw, and livestock. It includes molds, pollens, bacteria, pesticides, chemicals, feed and bedding particles, and animal particles.
- **Overexertion** – Prolonged reaching, bending, and lifting can lead to muscle aches, strains, and sprains.
- **Confined Spaces** – You can be at risk of being overcome by gases when entering sites without proper ventilation, such as a manure pit, silo, or grain bin. Workers entering grain bins while the bin is being emptied are also at risk of being crushed or suffocated by flowing grain.
- **Electrocution** – It is quick and deadly, and one of the most overlooked hazards of farm work. The most common cause of electrocutions are portable grain augers, oversized wagons, large combines, and other tall equipment that comes into contact with overhead power lines.
- **Falls** – These are the most common accidents in agriculture. Falls of just 12 feet can kill you. Many occur because of slips and trips that can be avoided by wearing proper shoes.

### Safety Solutions

You are responsible for following the company's safe work practices. Here are some things you should do:

- Pay attention to Child Labor Laws – If you are under age 16, you cannot: operate a tractor and certain types of machinery; handle certain classes of chemicals; work inside a fruit, forage, or grain storage structure; work in a manure pit; work on a ladder or scaffold over 20 feet high; and/or work in a yard or stall with a bull, boar, or stud horse.
- Get proper training before operating any machinery.
- Ensure all loose clothing or long hair has been secured to prevent entanglement in machinery.
- Use safe practices when hitching and unhitching wagons.
- Use care and common sense when working with animals. Never try to hurry an angry animal.
- Wash your hands before using the bathroom or consuming anything.
- Wear any provided personal protective equipment (PPE), such as a NIOSH-approved N95 air-purifying disposable particulate respirator, especially when working with grains or silage in enclosed areas that may contain dust.
- Maintain good back posture while working.
- Take frequent stretch breaks to avoid overusing muscles.
- Never enter a confined space without a respirator before confirming the space has sufficient oxygen.
- Always have at least one other person with you and aware of where you are at all times when working in confined spaces.
- Watch out for overhead electrical lines. Treat them all as though they are bare and uninsulated.
- Wear shoes and boots with slip-resistant soles and heels.
- When working on a ladder, lock a leg around it if you need to use both hands. ●

**Most farm accidents and fatalities involve machinery. Using protective equipment and being aware of your surroundings can help decrease your chances of being hurt.**