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Sensible Solutions for Spring

By Travis Christensen *Agronomy Manager* • travis@watertowncoop.com

Your agronomy departments in Watertown, Webster, and Henry are geared up for spring. It's shaping up to be a remarkable season, and we look forward to working with you and providing sensible solutions that achieve optimum returns from your input investments.

If you have not tested your soils yet for 2008, please call us now so we can get your acres sampled and the test results completed. It takes about a week turn-around time to receive results, which is why it needs to be done now. Proper soil fertility is the foundation for higher yields. With today's record fertilizer marketplace, your fertilizer program needs to be precisely managed using soil test results as a benchmark.

Please call now (if you haven't already) to schedule application services or arrange product orders and deliveries. Also, we are aware there may be some uncommitted acres still out there. We urge you to let us know as soon as possible what your additional seed, fertilizer, and crop protection inputs will be.

There is a reason for urgency. Some products may be in tight supply as we progress into spring. Determining your needs as soon as possible will help us secure supplies and allow us to better meet your needs. It's a simple thing, but picking up the phone and booking services well ahead of time will help reduce spring rush scheduling challenges.

We're frequently asked about fertilizer supply and pricing. It remains a volatile and tight marketplace. But your cooperative saw this trend coming, and we've been hard at work sourcing supply for customers. While we

do have product available, it's not the type of marketplace that allows you to wait until late spring before placing a sizable nutrient order. We've also begun planning for fall prepays, which you can read about later in this newsletter. Recently, we updated our software to provide you with much higher quality field maps, which can help with planning and mapping your field rotations. Just stop in if you'd like to take advantage of this tool and we can provide them for you.

Glyphosate is another input that has been affected by today's global markets. The demand for this product has greatly increased worldwide. Additionally, several plants in China that formulate this product have recently closed as a safety measure for the upcoming Olympic Games. Because of these issues and more, we are seeing an increased use of preplants (read more about preplants on page 2). Have a great spring and please call with any questions. ●



A new sprayer and floater have been added to the Watertown fleet. With the recent addition of a tender truck, too, we have never been more ready to take on spring planting.

www.watertowncoop.com

Putting Preplants to Work

Two passes of glyphosate may no longer be your most effective solution for achieving optimum return on your acres. On both corn and soybeans, there are several good preplant options available that may provide a better crop protection fit for your operation.

For soybeans, a variety of good products exist that can be put out in front of beans before emergence. They provide a wide spectrum of weed control, which at today's market levels, can be a reasonably priced value. Corn has even more products available that provide good knockdown with residual control.

Besides economic reasons for using preplants, there are several management reasons to use them as well. Using a different mode of action can help with justified concerns about weed resistance. Preplants also eliminate some weather worries. From a timing standpoint, they take some of the pressure off early spraying. Finally, preplants optimize your costly nutrient investment. You're no longer feeding the weeds with your fertilizer program.

The biggest product consideration is picking ones that best fit your crop rotation. Please give us a call to discuss any available programs and what best fits your situation. As always, please read and follow all label instructions. ●



Evaluating Profitability

With today's strong demand for corn and a record wheat market, we have developed an online calculator to help you evaluate rotation profitability. Go to our home page and click on the profitability calculator link. (Example values are already in the fields.) Make it your own personal calculator by entering your values in the yellow fields. We hope this will help you with the planning and management of your operation. ●

	Estimated Revenue and Cost of Production					
	Corn			Spring Wheat		
\$ Acre Unless Noted	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
Expected Yield (Bu/Acre)	150	160	170	45	55	65
Market Price (\$/Bu)	\$2.75	\$3.60	\$4.70	\$4.00	\$6.12	\$10.00
Loan Deficiency Payment (\$/Bu)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue	\$412.50	-	-	-	-	-
Variable Machinery (Fuel, Oil & Repair)	\$20.22	\$26.50	\$32.00	\$18.90	\$23.00	\$27.85
Diesel Fuel Cost (\$/Gallon)	\$2.30	\$2.85	\$2.90	\$2.00	\$2.85	\$2.90
Seed	\$45.00	\$55.00	\$75.00	\$9.00	\$14.50	\$28.00
Herbicide/Insecticides/Fungicides	\$35.00	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$35.00
Fertilizer	\$57.27	-	-	-	-	-
Fertilizer (\$/Bu)	50.38	-	-	-	-	-
Fertilizer Percent of Variable Cost	20%	-	-	-	-	-
Nitrogen (Bt N)	100	120	140	85	95	100
Bt N from Urea	89	-	-	-	-	-
Bt N from MAP	11	-	-	-	-	-
Phosphate (Bt P2O5 from MAP)	50	50	50	30	45	30
Potash (Bt K2O from MOP)	15	30	40	20	20	20
Urea	\$36.86	-	-	-	-	-
Tons per Acre	0.097	-	-	-	-	-
Price per ton	\$380	\$425	\$560	\$380	\$425	\$560
Monoammonium Phosphate (MAP)	\$17.04	-	-	-	-	-
Tons per Acre	0.048	-	-	-	-	-
Price per ton	\$355	\$485	\$750	\$355	\$485	\$750
Muriate of Potash (MOP)	\$3.37	-	-	-	-	-
Tons per Acre	0.013	-	-	-	-	-
Price per ton	\$259	\$300	\$480	\$259	\$300	\$480
Grain Drying	\$16.50	\$17.70	\$17.70	0	0	0
LP Gas Cost (\$/Gallon)	\$1.45	\$1.45	\$1.85	-	-	-
Other Variable/Direct Costs	\$108.00	\$121.97	\$144.07	\$89.39	\$104.39	\$127.00
Variable/Direct Cost	\$279.99	-	-	-	-	-
Variable/Direct Cost (\$/Bu)	\$1.87	-	-	-	-	-
Revenue After Variable/Direct Cost	\$132.51	-	-	-	-	-

Treating Makes Cents

By **Brian Kohlenberg** Retail Seed Sales Manager • bkohlenberg@landolakes.com

Once again, it's time to evaluate the economics and benefits of treating seed. With today's price levels, the timing has never been better to invest in seed treatments to protect and enhance your yields.

Treating soybean seed greatly aids in the establishment of a uniform stand, particularly if you're planting early or in cool, wet soils. It's a practice that has been proven to add yield at harvest.

This season, we are using and recommending Warden® CZ as our seed treatment of choice. It's a premix that provides optimum insect and disease protection for your beans. New this year, this product consists of:

- Cruiser®
- Warden® RTA

Cruiser protects soybean seed and seedlings against pests like aphids, bean leaf beetles, and wireworms. Warden fungicide provides protection from Pythium, Fusarium, and other common early-season diseases. Coupled together, your fields will have added protection against disease, insects, poor soil conditions, and weather changes, all the while

improving germination and vigor to increase yields.

We are also recommending the use of Otimize,™ a soybean growth promoter. Its plant gene technology activates early season growth processes and other activities such as:

- Earlier nodule initiation, enabling earlier nitrogen fixation
- Improved root system development for facilitating nutrient and water uptake
- Earlier canopy closure for decreased weed competition and moisture conservation
- Increased pod set

All of these benefits result in increased plant health and resilience, which leads to higher yields. Please call for more detailed information about these products. ●



Too Soon to Think Fall?

Not in today's fertilizer marketplace. Due to challenges such as sourcing fertilizer supplies, we will be announcing our fall fertilizer prepay programs earlier than ever before. Using our prepay program will ensure supply, price, and the best value in this market. Watch our web site for more announcements or keep in touch with your local agronomy department about upcoming programs. ●

The Time is Now for Variable Rate Technology

Trevor Stieg Sales & Marketing Manager • trevorstieg.wce@midconetwork.com



In farming, there are plenty of factors we have no control over. Weather is the big one, but we can't really change or control soil types or the different topography features of our fields. But with variable rate technology, at least we can manage different areas of fields with different levels of inputs for better utilization of your seed and nutrient dollars.

The time is now to get on board with variable rate technology. Please call to see how we can write a variable rate map for your seeding and application acres. I've said it before, but it's worth saying again: Why feed high-priced fertilizer to areas of a field with production issues? Give us a call today and see how variable rate can work for your operation. ●



Feed Department News

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

The entire staff at the feed mill hopes that you and your family have had a great winter. It's been a good one here, but I know we're all a little tired of the cold weather. We are anxiously awaiting those moderate springtime temperatures to return once again to this country. There's nothing like spending time outside, watching those new calves hit the ground.



With calving well underway, make sure your mineral program provides high quality nutritional value. The correct mineral blends will help with the health and reproduction of your cow herd—and we have the right mineral blends right here. We stock loose mineral and have liquid tubs for your management convenience. Stop in and ask about our mineral programs. We make it right here at the mill, which adds to its quality and value.

Not got milk? We have what you need—colostrums, for those circumstances when your calves don't get that initial, all-important first milk from their mothers. We also have a terrific lineup of milk replacement products for bottle calves.

Creep prices are now being set. As soon as we have booking prices, we'll make an announcement.

For our sheep producers, we have lamb milk replacer and starter feeds available. We carry both a texturized feed and starter pellets for lambs. We also have pellets that can be mixed with your own grain, if you prefer.

As you can see, whatever is in your corrals, we have the products and nutrition services that can add value to your livestock enterprise. Have a great spring and please don't hesitate to call with any questions. ●

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



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