

**Preventing DON in Corn for 2019**

For many producers the words “DON” and “Corn” quickly bring back an emotional response from 2018. More than 2 million acres of corn were planted in Ontario in 2018 and yields were reported to be above average at 181 bushels/acre. But it wasn't a profitable crop for many farmers. High levels of DON, particularly in southwestern Ontario, led to high discounts and outright rejections at the point of delivery. DON is a mycotoxin produced primarily by Gibberella ear rot. Weather conditions during the latter half of the 2018 growing season were favorable for the development of the mould and subsequent DON production. Rainfall, humidity, lingering dews, foggy mornings, temperature, and hybrids all factored into the severity of the problem. Wet conditions also delayed harvest, which increased secondary infections.

So what did we learn in 2018 that might help us this year in the event that similar circumstances arise? One of the biggest decisions was made likely as early as last fall and as late as this spring in choosing hybrids to plant. Screening for ear rot resistance/tolerance is the first step in a successful approach to DON management. We learned last year that hybrids which maintain an upright ear structure and hold their husk tightly to the cob are prime candidates for ear rots under the right environmental conditions. As a general rule, hybrids which tend to have longer shanks allowing the ears to hang out from the plant and whose husks tend to flare open more stand a better chance under the perfect storm of mycotoxin producing weather. The downside of these types of hybrids often can be they are more prone to wildlife damage (aka birds) as the ears become a perch so to speak.

The second key management strategy for ear rot and ultimately DON reduction is foliar fungicides. Keep in mind that not all fungicides are created equal in terms of DON reduction. Both Proline and Caramba are the current market leaders in terms of proven chemistries to tackle this problem. Timing is full silk while the silks are still somewhat green. If you can light the silks on fire then your likely too late for these applications. Based on last year's data fungicides can reduce DON levels by up to 50% so although it's an important part of an overall management strategy it is not the silver bullet alone.

**ALPINE K20S – Feed your Beans**

ALPINE K20S has been in use now for several years in Ontario and continues to help progressive growers push their soybean yields higher. Containing a heavy load of potassium in the K-Tech form, it is the most available form of potassium for foliar feeding soybeans, or any other crop. In addition to being an excellent potassium source, ALPINE K20S also contains 8% Sulphur, and a mixture of micronutrients needed to optimize soybean growth. Keeping soybean plant potassium levels at adequate levels can benefit the plants defense mechanisms against sucking insects such as aphids.

Six years of data from independent researchers has proven that when compared to using no foliar treatment, ALPINE K20S added an average of 2.3 bu/ac to soybean yields when applied at 4 l/ac. With current crop economics this provides around a 2:1 payback on the additional fertilizer investment.

ALPINE K20S is very tank-mixable with common crop protection products as well, which makes it convenient to co-apply in one pass across the field.

Speak to your Holmes Agro agronomist about taking your soybeans to the next level with ALPINE's high quality, made in Canada foliar nutrients.

**Cover Crop Chat**

Cover crops can help improve soil structure, protect the soil from erosion, feed soil life, suppress weeds, cycle nutrients, provide feed for livestock and much more. Cover crops are not a magic solution for your soil problems, but when combined with other soil management practices they can help improve soil health. The first step towards success is having a plan. That plan should include details on what you will grow and when; important to consider establishment, rotation, and soil type. Holmes Agro offers the following as cover crop options:

- Oats – the rapid fall growth paired with winterkill will provide stored nutrients from the fall to be readily available for next season
- Fall Rye – has 5 times the potential root mass of oats to help with erosion control. A burndown application is required.
- Crimson Clover - provides N to the following crop, and can help with building soil and preventing erosion
- Tillage Radish – long taproot able to bust through soil alleviating compaction

Talk to your Holmes Agro agronomist to discuss which one is best suited for your management practices.

**Calendar 2020**

It's never too early to start sending in pictures for the 2020 calendar. We are proud to be able to provide a calendar full of grower pictures year after year – all thanks to your great submissions! Please email your photos to [nicole@holmesagro.com](mailto:nicole@holmesagro.com)



## Soil Sampling

It's time to forecast your soil sampling needs for this fall and create an action plan to get them done. Knowing your soil fertility status will provide meaningful data for a proactive approach to fertilizer management. Regardless of commodity values past, present or future, knowledge of soil nutrient inventory is a benchmark starting point for crop production planning.

Some key areas of soil tests that can impact your bottom line include:

1. Managing soil pH and optimizing nutrient uptake by variable rate liming
2. Soil organic matter and noticing the importance of cover crops
3. Balancing soil nutrient levels for improved yield through using base saturation levels and CEC.
4. Monitoring secondary elements such as Sulfur and Magnesium for improving Nitrogen and Phosphorus uptake
5. Assisting in making better decisions regarding the right time, right placement, right product and the right application of nutrients to grow the best product.



Thousands of dollars are spent every year on fertilizer and limestone in our area. The cost of soil testing is relatively inexpensive in comparison in the cost of the fertilizer. Holmes Agro offers a variety of soil sampling services including bulk, grid, zone or site-specific sampling and can follow up with prescriptions to custom fit your field requirements. Larger fields with more variability should be sampled more strategically, which is where zone and grid sampling can be best utilized. These grids and zones can help identify changes in pH, fertility and soil type. These maps can then be used in combination with yield data, NDVI images, drone images, and grower experience. These tools can then be used to create plans for variable rate lime, fertilizer and even seeding rates. Please make time to sit down with your agronomist to create a soil testing strategy to meet your cropping expectations.

## CLEANFarms 2019

As the fall approaches, there are a couple Clean Farms reminders to keep in mind: triple rinsed jugs with booklets and caps removed, paper seed bags and the seed totes bags are all still being collected until October 15, 2019. Please bundle the totes in no more than 6, and there are lots of free bags at the locations for jugs and paper seed bags.

**Obsolete Chemical Collection** – 2019 is a collection year and this year Holmes is proud to support the program by having 2 locations available to the agriculture community. Our Flamborough location will be hosting a day September 20 from 9 am to 4pm and the Redickville location will both be hosting one September 30 from 9 am to 4 pm. Please visit [www.holmesagro.com](http://www.holmesagro.com) for location addresses.

WHAT'S IN	WHAT'S OUT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwanted (or "obsolete" agricultural pesticides (identified with a Pest Control Product number on the label).</li> <li>• Livestock medications that are used by primary producers in the rearing of animals in an agricultural context (identified with a DIN number, Ser. Number or Pest Control Product number on the label).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fertilizer, diluted solution, large quantities of unopened product, and treated seed.</li> <li>• Needles/sharps, medicated feed, aerosol containers, premises disinfectants/sanitizers, veterinary clinic waste and medications, ear tags, and aerosols</li> <li>• Any other household hazardous waste.</li> </ul>

For more information visit <https://cleanfarms.ca/materials/unwanted-pesticides-animal-meds/#unwanted-whats-in-out>

## Social Media

Holmes Agro is pleased to announce the continuation of our social media contests for the 2019 growing and harvest seasons! If you enjoy taking photos, and enjoy free swag, this is just the thing for you. We want to see your farming photos throughout 2019! Upload them to social media (Twitter & Facebook) and tag **@HolmesAgro** with **#WatchitGrow19**. We also want to see pictures of how Holmes Agro's lawn and garden products are helping you achieve that happy and healthy landscape! At the end of the year we will randomly pick the contest winners, and they will win a Holmes Agro prize pack! Be sure to check out Holmes Agro's website for updates as well!



## Upcoming Events

August 15<sup>th</sup> – Stayner Open House

August 22<sup>nd</sup> – Orangeville Open House

September 10,11,12 – Canada's Outdoor Farm Show, Woodstock (<https://www.outdoorfarmshow.com/>)

September 17-21 – International Plowing Match – Verner, West Nipissing (<https://www.plowingmatch.org/ipm2019/>)

September 20<sup>th</sup> – Obsolete Chemical Day, Flamborough location

September 30<sup>th</sup> – Obsolete Chemical Day, Redickville Location

\*\*\*\*\* **Please email [nicole@holmesagro.com](mailto:nicole@holmesagro.com) to sign up for our e-newsletter** \*\*\*\*\*

