

Managing Crop Protection in a Wet Spring

If you are fortunate enough to have seed in the ground this spring, you may now be facing new challenges, as you attempt to control the weeds which are flourishing in these wet conditions.

In a wet weather pattern, it is always better to spray corn and soybeans, proactively, soon after planting when conditions are firm. That is to say, you make a pass with the sprayer before you see problematic weed pressure. Previous field scouting will dictate which groups of chemistry are required. After spraying, residual herbicides will remain on top of the soil, and will activate to prevent weeds from emerging. If you delay spraying, bigger weeds are harder to kill, and a bigger crop is easier to damage.

In all cereal crops, it is crucial to have all weed control completed by early flag leaf to prevent crop injury. While the labels state 'early flag leaf' it is recommended that control measures have been taken by Growth Stage 31 - the earlier the better.

In adverse conditions, it may be better to leave ruts if weed pressures are high. Otherwise, if weed pressures are on the low side, consider pre-harvest burn down, at what we hope will be a drier time of the year.

When to Switch Corn Varieties

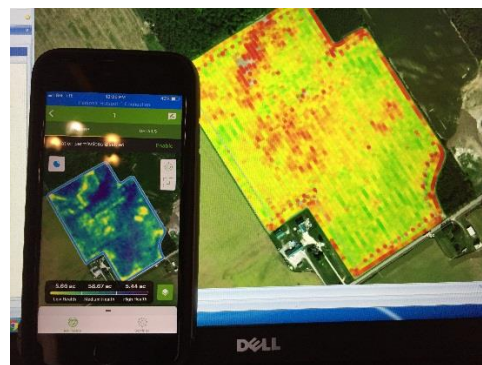
With the cold and wet spring that has been facing Ontario farmers, one of the major concerns on everyone's mind is "When should I be switching out my planned corn hybrids for a shorter season one?" There is no right or wrong answer for this question, but there are plenty of factors which should be considered before making a decision. In Central Ontario, the usual optimum date to plant corn is May 10. While that deadline is long past, there is still reason for optimism. Research done by DuPont Pioneer in the U.S. corn belt has shown that corn planted up to 5 weeks later than optimum can still have 90% yield potential if managed properly. This means that a crop which could have yielded 200 bushels planted on May 10, still has the potential to yield 180 bushels if planted on June 14th. When considering that information, in order to justify switching to a shorter season hybrid, it would need to have 90% or higher of the yield potential of your planned full season hybrid. There is also research which shows that a later planted corn crop needs less heat units in order to reach maturity, at a rate of 10CHU per day planting is delayed. One of the silver linings in this spring is that while it has been wet, it certainly hasn't been warm, meaning your corn crop hasn't missed out on very many heat units while it has stayed in the bag, and it still has a good shot at reaching full maturity with limited delay. The last factor to consider is the Agricorp planting deadlines. In much of the area covered by Holmes Agro, the last day to plant corn, and qualify for crop insurance is June 10. This can provide an additional safety net against unexpected and unwelcome developments that could affect a corn crop already stressed by a less than ideal start on the year.

Satellite Imagery & the Eyes in the Sky that Help Growers Make Better Decisions

Within the digital world that we live in there now exists multiple ways of viewing business performance, one such method is the use of satellite imagery. It must be stressed however that such services are only TOOLS that help us make better decisions and they will never replace boots in the field. The justification here is that the eyes in the sky capture imagery every three days which can be viewed on phone, tablet or desk top computer making access to such information very user friendly.

Having had the opportunity to use this technology in conjunction with active field walking and drone flights it is incredible how accurate it is. The image below shows a mobile phone image of Soybeans in full canopy. The other desktop image is the actual combine yield map of the same field. For years the challenge has always been to retrieve the data from one system to another in a readable format and hope that the combine was both calibrated and recording the correct crop/header widths etc. as these factors have a huge bearing on end results.

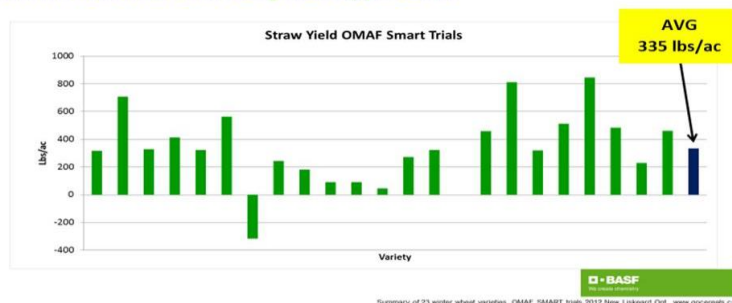
By investing in such technology on your farm and combining it with proven practices based on rotation and soil health huge strides can be made in terms of risk management and projected yield goals. Digital farming is here to stay and should be embraced. It does not have to be confusing and your crop advisor is ideally placed to guide you through the process. Don't stagnate, innovate. Bushels pay bills and farming with the LONG look today is often the best approach for tomorrow!



Increasing Straw Yield

With less wheat acres there is going to be an increase in the return per acre from straw which is good since high wheat yields might be hard to come by. Fungicide applications to cereals keep yield potential by keeping plants healthy. Healthy plants allow for more vegetative growth as well as increased grain fill. Plant material (leaves and stem) also remain intact longer in the season increasing standability and straw yield.

Straw Yield With One Fungicide Application



Weed Facts: Horse Nettle



Horse-nettle is a perennial weed from the nightshade family and all plant parts are considered poisonous. The mature yellow berries would be considered the most palatable part of the plant, they have been known to cause illness and death to livestock. It spreads by underground rhizomes and likes sandy soils in pastures and waste areas usually in southwestern Ontario but has been spotted in Oro-Medonte. At first glance you may think mustard but the spines on the midrib give it away. Being a perennial makes it more difficult to control in non RR crops.

Seed Skid Returns



As we are wrapping up, please have your seed and skids returned to Holmes Agro by June 14th.

“Watch It Grow” Signs

As many of you might have seen in your travels Holmes Agro has “Watch It Grow” signs to help promote awareness of local agriculture and education about the crops grown in our geographic. If you would like a sign, please let us know and we can set something up for you.

CLEANFarms 2019



Welcome back to the jug and seed bag collection program! Holmes Agro is proud to participate in the CleanFarms program as a depot to accept your empty pesticide jugs and seed bags. Just a few guidelines to remember:

Seed/chemical bags – all types of EMPTY pesticide bags as well as paper multi-wall and plastic seed bags can be returned in the clear green plastic bags we have available at our locations.

Seed bulk bags can be returned neatly bundled into rolls of 6.

Chemical jugs – only clean, triple-rinsed jugs with caps and booklets removed will be accepted for recycling

Triple rinsing

1. Drain container into tank 30 seconds
2. Fill container with clean water (1/4 or 1/5 full)
3. Shake, swirl vigorously
4. Drain into spray tank 30 seconds
5. Repeat procedure two more times
6. Puncture bottom

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

Upcoming Events

June 10th – Agricorp corn planting deadline, Area D

June 20th – Agricorp soybean planting deadline, Area D

July 3rd & 4th – South Western Ontario Diagnostic Days, Ridgetown Campus (www.diagnosticdays.ca)

July 9th – Ontario Canola Growers Crop Tour, Holmes Agro Orangeville www.ontariocanolagrowers.ca

July 11th – Farm Smart Expo, Elora Research Station (www.farmsmartconference.com)

August 15th – Stayner Open House

August 22nd – 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/>)

***** Please email nicole@holmesagro.com to sign up for our e-newsletter *****