

Get prepped for planting

Keeping fields healthy is a year-round process that begins as soon as crops are harvested—think no-till practices, fall anhydrous nitrogen applications or cover crops—but this time of year is crucial for getting fields ready for spring planting. Here are four tips to help get fields ready so seed gets its best start.

1 Prepare the soil

Healthy crops need healthy soil, so start the planting season off right. When tilling winter cover crops, make sure heavy equipment isn't compacting soil that's wet. It's also a good time to take soil samples and check the pH and nutrient levels to help make informed fertilizer and crop protection decisions. Fertilizer can help ensure that necessary nutrients are readily available in the soil, and soil test sample results can tell growers what macro- or micronutrients may be missing, so they can be supplemented accordingly.

Pay particular attention to soil nitrogen levels. Was there a fall nitrogen application, was a stabilizer used or do fields need a spring application? Wet spring soil creates a risk of denitrification. N-Serve® nitrogen stabilizer or Instinct NXTGEN® nitrogen stabilizer can help farmers make the most of their nitrogen inputs, which are often the highest input cost for a corn crop.

2 Scout fields

Before spring planting, walk each field in a zig-zag pattern looking for any

weeds. Then walk the perimeter to see if any weeds are encroaching from the fence rows. Scouting ahead of planting allows for flexibility when choosing a pre-planting herbicide. Scout during the growing season as well, looking for weed growth and insect and plant disease issues.

Map any problem areas and document weed, pest and blight species sighted. Then create a plan of action for applying post-emergent herbicides, insecticides or fungicides if needed. Corteva Agriscience agronomists can always be consulted to determine the appropriate treatment.

3 Use a program approach

Choosing plant genetics and herbicides that work together in a weed control system is one of the most effective ways to control weeds and protect a crop's yield potential. For example, Enlist E3® soybeans and PowerCore® Enlist® corn feature tolerance to Enlist herbicides. Enlist Duo® herbicide and Enlist One® herbicide can be applied pre- and/or postemergence for season-long control. These herbicides are also designed to work with hundreds of tank-mix partners to target multiple sites of action,

helping control weeds and prevent the development of herbicide resistance. Include good stewardship practices as part of a program approach, including observing buffer requirements, not spraying toward susceptible crops and using the correct sprayer settings to decrease drift.

4 Evaluate equipment

Before planting or fertilizing, check equipment to make sure it's working properly, replacing any worn or damaged parts. That includes large equipment like the tractor, planter or seed spreader, along with items like pumps and spray nozzles. Make sure those are clean and free of residue—a clogged nozzle could lead to uneven herbicide application. Also check that all lights and safety systems are functioning correctly. Now is also a good time to make sure any field management apps or other technology are updated and ready to use.

Prepping now—including planning tentative planting dates and a treatment schedule—will help get your customers prepared for planting and ready to manage any issues as they come up.

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