

# Learn during this year's harvest

MISSION, Kan. — Farmers can learn several yield-increasing lessons for next year's corn and soybean crop by analyzing plant and soil conditions at harvest time, says Trevor Bower, director of Agronomic Services for AgriPro Seed.

"Many cultural and pest problems, including disease and soil quality, are very visible from the combine this time of year," Bower says. "But farmers must know what to look for, and how to act now to maximize yield in 1985."

Detecting disease or pest problems during the fall is the first step farmers can take toward minimizing present and future yield losses, Bower emphasizes. "Farmers who identify the grayish-green mold caused by corn ear and kernel rot can change harvest procedures to minimize damage and loss, for example," he says. "By carefully setting the combine, many infected kernels will be discarded during harvest, while the rest will experience minimal damage. Careful harvest practices will protect healthy kernels and ears."

Field scouting can also help identify Phytophthora root rot, a soybean disease responsible for annual yield losses in excess of 5 percent, Bower continues. "Look

for short, undeveloped plants with few pods in low lying areas," he says. "These plants were probably victims of Phytophthora. Although this practice won't reduce current losses from Phytophthora, it can help farmers recognize the need to plant one of several varieties which have field or race resistance to the disease."

A good mid Group II variety that exhibits field resistance to this disease is AgriPro's AP-240, according to Bower. "This variety also has good lodging resistance and is well-adapted for narrow rows," he says. "A late Group IV variety we recommend is AP-350, which has a very good level of Phytophthora resistance and is well-adapted to double-cropping," he says. "And, a good Group III soybean variety with field resistance to Phytophthora is AgriPro 26," he says. "This variety has done extremely well in our trials, as well as Ohio State University trials."

### Soil Analysis

Fall soil analysis is an excellent diagnostic tool that all growers should use to avoid future pest and disease problems, Bower notes. "Nitrogen, potassium and potash levels should be determined, as well as soil micronutrients and pH."

Imbalanced soil fertility can cause plant stress, which predisposes crops to disease and pest infestation, Bower points out. "Low potash in relation to nitrogen levels, for example, causes corn plant stress that can lead to stalk rot." One of the worst disease in the Corn Belt, stalk rot is responsible for annual yield losses ranging between 5 and 10 percent, according to USDA estimates.

Soil pH also affects the rate at which plants take up nutrients, Bower points out. "Low pH soils tend to be low in potash availability," he says. "Uncorrected, this could increase stalk rot, lodging and corn leaf blight."

Using soil analysis results as a guide, farmers can change their fertilizer or liming programs, Bower says. "If tests indicate a need for potassium or phosphorus, these can be applied in the fall," he says. "This eliminates one more chore during the busy spring planting season." At present, he adds, it's not advisable to add nitrogen during the early fall, as it leaches from the soil quickly. "However, a one-time fall nitrogen application with a stabilizer is feasible on some soil types. Growers can check with their state university or extension office on

the wisdom of applying nitrogen to their fields in the fall," he adds.

### Crop Rotation

Crop rotation is an excellent tool to reduce next year's pest population and correct soil fertility problems, Bower says. "Soybeans and alfalfa, for example, are good non-host crops for such corn pests as rootworm, earworm and European corn borer. A cover crop like red clover, can increase levels of nitrogen in the soil for the following year," he adds.

"By paying close attention to soil and crop conditions at harvest, and making appropriate adjustments, farmers can reduce pest and disease problems in their fields, and increase yields," Bower concludes.



**THINK AHEAD...**  
Read Futures Markets on Page 3.

# Case tractors

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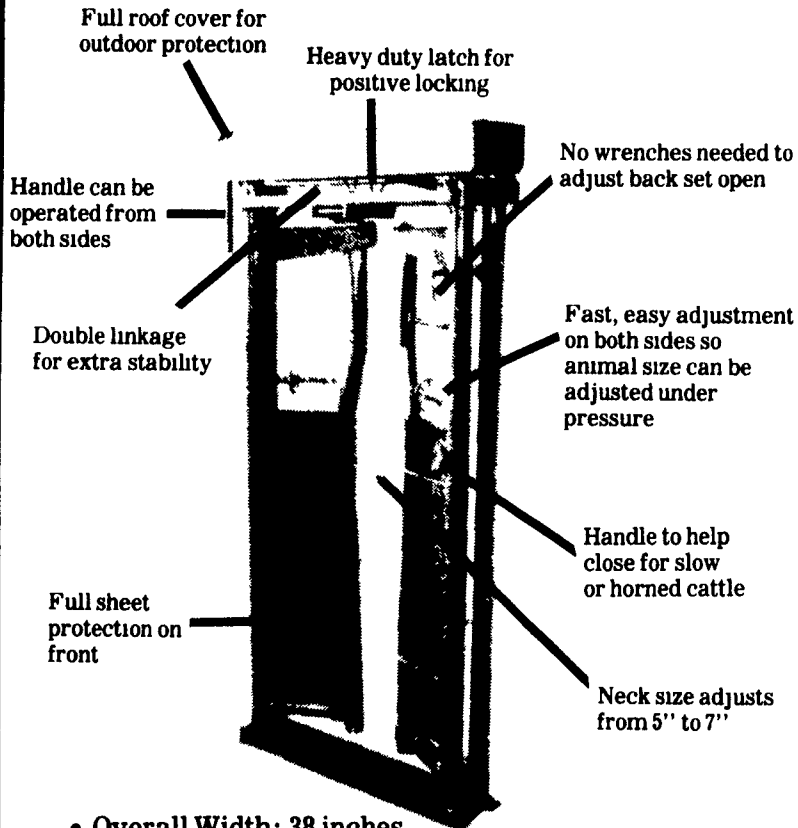


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