

Look for high return, corn growers urged

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Herbicides and Yields

Can a herbicide alone deliver high yields for a grower? "As far as any correlation between higher and lower yield with any one herbicide, we haven't seen it at the universities that I have been at," said Dr. Michael Barrett, department of agronomy at the University of Kentucky.

Barrett also has done research at Michigan State University on the safety of herbicides. "We found that the leading corn herbicides look very safe in corn at rates much higher than anybody would conceive of using. And I don't envision doing much more research because that's been the story through everybody's trails at many universities."

Dr. Marshal McGlamery, agronomist at the University of Illinois, said you can't look at one part of the puzzle to determine why one field outperforms another. "You've got to put the whole package together—what a herbicide will do. Yield is just part of the story. We've talked about its

performance and what it will do—will it control the weeds? We've talked about its safety—personal safety, environmental safety. We've also, of course, got to bring in the concept of convenience. Does it fit his needs? Hid equipment? The cost is also part of it. So, no, yield's not the total picture. You've got to have a better package than that."

The correlation between herbicide use and yield is effective weed control, said Doersch. But he pointed out two other factors that he considers equally important as growers evaluate their herbicide performance: potential for crop injury and environmental symptoms that are often confused for herbicide injury.

"I look at the possibility of crop injury more critically than I do weed control," Doersch said. "If I see some herbicide injury, particularly early in the season, I'm going to be very wary and look analytically at the yields coming out of those particular treatments. If no injury shows up, I don't see any advantage of one corn herbicide over another."

"Mother Nature can, at times, cause symptoms on developing corn seedlings that will mimic the effects of herbicide injury," he continued. "One of the most difficult challenges I find each year is trying to differentiate between herbicide injury and injury caused by the environment. I've often made the comment to growers that I wonder what they blamed strange looking corn plants on before herbicide treatments were used. I'm not saying herbicides are always innocent, but I think many times herbicides are falsely accused of producing symptoms in the field which in actual practice, Mother Nature is responsible for."

Herbicide Performance Goals
A grower should base his herbicide performance goals upon the "economic level of control," said Barrett. "We sometimes say in

some crops if we don't have a few weeds out there you probably used too much herbicide. We have to look at the long-term vs. short-term answers and problems in that area, too. But, basically you want to get the weed population down below the point that you are going to see a yield reduction."

Doersch said growers need to be aware of which herbicides will perform better than others in certain soil types, which will perform under their particular conditions, and which will perform better under their particular conditions, and which will perform better under reduced tillage. "Most importantly, the grower has to look at adapting a herbicide treatment that's going to come closest to solving his particular weed problems. Get the weed identified, consider the intensity of

that problem, and select the right herbicide treatment."

Excerpts from the videotape symposium are being made available to growers throughout the Corn Belt. Dr. Jack Ellis, director of biological research for Ciba-Geigy, makers of Dual herbicide, said the symposium was conducted to help growers "pay more attention to the inputs that go into high yields. We thought that the economic environment at this particular time was conducive to a program like this. It fits into our theme of support for the American Farmer."

To obtain a transcript of the Video Symposium on Corn Productivity, contact your local Ciba-Geigy Representative or write to: "Video Symposium," Ciba-Geigy Corporation, P.O. Box 18862, Greensboro, NC 27419-18862.

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