Select seed carefully when using narrow soybean rows

TIPTON, IN — In today's competitive farm market any production management step which increases yields while decreasing costs is highly desirable.

Narrow row soybean production is one management practice gaining attention as field trial results come in showing five to seven percent increases in yield in southern states and 10 to 15 percent increases in yield in northern states.

"In field trials across the southern states, the greatest increases in yield result when changing from 42 inch wide rows down to 30 inches or less. Under 15 inch rows, the yield increases become smaller. However, increases of six to eight percent can be seen when shifting from 15 to 7 ½ inch rows or solid seeding in the northern states," says Charles Hendrix, Soybean Product Manager for the Eastern Division of Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc.

Many factors can influence actual narrow row soybean yield performance. But selecting a variety that is adapted to narrower row production greatly increases success potential.

Standability and seeding rates go hand in hand for successful narrow row soybean production and are the first criteria for selection.

"When selecting for optimum yield in narrow row production, standability is the primary concern. Lodging potential increases as the row width narrows. Therefore, selecting a variety that withstands lodging in higher populations will increase the yield potential from narrow rows," says Hendrix.

Hendrix adds, "It's important to realize that pounds per acre is not the same as seeds per acre."

Reducing the row spacing in soybeans requires increasing plant population because the rows are closer together. Changing to narrow row beans can also mean shifting to a different seed size.

"When selecting a soybean variety compare seeds per acre. A shift could mean the difference between planting 51 pounds per acre and 60 pounds per acre. In order to ensure an adequate stand without over-seeding, it's important to plant at a population recommended for narrower row beans," Hendrix advises.

Another consideration is canopy type.

"Competition for available sunlight increases when beans are planted in narrow rows. Selecting a variety with a smaller canopy will help achieve that higher yield potential," he explains.

Hardiness and seedling vigor are crucial features of narrow bean varieties. In the first 30 days of growth, soybean seedlings encounter many stresses–weather, chemical treatments, diseases, insects, etc. Selecting a hardy variety that resists or is tolerant to as many of these stresses as possible boosts the chances of the seedling producing a normal vigorous plant.

Even the soil can be a stress factor for emerging soybeans. In wider row production the seed spacing is closer, so the emerging seedlings "help" each other through the soil. But in narrower rows, the seed spacing increases and the seedlings can't work together as well to break through the soil surface.

Assuring that soybean seeds emerge to become a profitable crop takes careful management. "When selecting the best seed varieties suited for narrow row production, key elements to consider are resistance to stress, seedling vigor, hardiness and standability," explains Hendrix.

USDA to control movement of biologics

WASHINGTON — U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) minimum standards for safety, purity, potency and effectiveness that now apply to veterinary biological products manufactured for sale interstate will also apply to those products sold intrastate and for export.

Veterinary biologists include vaccines, bacterins, toxids, antiserums, antitoxins, diagnostics and similar products used to diagnose, prevent or treat animal diseases.

This new authority is part of the 1985 Farm Bill containing amendments to the Virus-Serum-Toxin Act of 1913 that established federal standards for biologics sold across state lines.

"The amendments establish a 4-year exemption period to the provisions to provide time for manufacturers to bring all their products up to federal standards," said Bert W. Hawkins, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). "Even during the changeover, however, producers are not permitted to make biologics that are shown to be ineffective, contaminated, dangerous or harmful," he said.

To be eligible for the 4-year exemption, manufacturers must register with APHIS before January 1, 1987. They should write to Dr. David Espeseth, Veterinary Biologics Staff, Federal Bldg., Room 829, APHIS, USDA, 6505 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, Md. 20782, or call Area Code (301) 436-8245. Manufacturers have until January 1, 1990, to become licensed.

Firms and individuals that produce products solely for use in their own animals and state-licensed firms that manufacture and distribute a product in a state with an acceptable biologics control program are exempt from USDA regulation. Licensed veterinarians who produce biologics strictly for their own use in a veterinarian-client-patient relationship are also exempted.

The amendment also adds authority for USDA to enter and inspect unlicensed establishments that prepare a virus, serum, toxin or similar product. Additional enforcement authorities, including the detention and seizure of unsafe products, are also provided.

Farm Talk

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mechanical production and harvest. The time will come when migrant workers will virtually disappear. In a way I suppose that solves the migrant worker problem.

But what about the migrant worker? What happens to him? I suspect many of them are brought into the regular work force. Others go back to where they came from to do what they did before they hit the road. And others become welfare problems in the states where they are stranded.

Many lack the skills to do other things, the motivation to fit into a strange surrounding, or the money to get back home. And so welfare agencies and private organizations help them as best they can.

Is society or are farmers to blame for the migrant worker's dilemma? From an economic point of view, I think not. Sure there are social obligations and these must be met to some degree regardless of the economics, but migrant workers exist to fill an economic need and when that need disppears the workers disappear also. Just like barrel makers, wagon builders, horseshoe manufacturers, and all of those other industries that fell victim to progress, the migrant worker is being phased out. That in no way excuses their abuse by opportunists, nor does it condemn the farmers who still use them.