

Agronomist Offers Tips for Maximum Sorghum Profits

DEKALB, Ill. — Whether you're producing 2,000 or 12,000 pounds of sorghum per acre, your production goal should be maximum economic yield says Craig Strosnider, regional agronomist for Dekalb-Pfizer Genetics. "Your inputs should be geared toward maximum profitability, which is not always maximum yield."

Hybrid Selection

"Choose a hybrid that fits your maturity and moisture requirements," Strosnider continues. Full-season hybrids can deliver top yields but require additional inputs he said. Short-season hybrids are best suited for low moisture and limited input situations.

"The bulk of your sorghum acres should be planted to the more flexible medium maturing hybrids," he advises. "Regardless of the maturity you choose, make sure the hybrid is area-adapted and carries the disease and insect resistance which best fits your needs."

Fertilizer Rates

One key to maximum profitability is a balanced fertility program of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium Strosnider notes. Use a reliable soil test to determine your soil's nutrient level. Then establish fertilizer rates based upon the soil labs recommendation.

Planting Rates

"The optimum planting rate is governed by moisture and can range from 25,000 to 120,000 seeds per acre," the agronomist observes. "You can expect 70 percent emergence on grain sorghum when the soil temperature is 65°F. at planting." Early planting in cold soil slows germination and reduces the stand.

Under cooler soil conditions Strosnider advises growers to use a planter box seed treatment containing lindane to protect the seed from extended exposure to wireworms, ants and other soil insects. Damage from these pests can be devastating under cool soil conditions, especially in fields with high crop residue.

Determine the number of seeds

per pound from the seed analysis tag and match your planting rate to your growing conditions based upon 70 percent emergence. Rates up to 170,000 seeds per acre are advised under full irrigation or high rainfall. Talk with your dealer for special planting advice.

Weed Control

Excessive weed competition is a leading cause of poor yields the Dekalb-Pfizer official said. "Broadleaf weeds can be controlled with herbicides like atrazine or propazine, and grassy weed control is best achieved with the use of safened seed and Bicep,

Dual or Lasso herbicides." Tougher weeds can be controlled with tank mixes.

Irrigation Scheduling

Strosnider adds water usage peaks during the boot stage. "Adequate moisture during the rapid vegetative growth and reproduction stages will increase yields. Maintain soil moisture above 50 percent of field capacity for optimum yield."

Insect Control

Along with controlling wireworm and other soil insects at planting the successful sorghum producer also needs to control damaging levels of greenbugs, spidermites and midges he said. "Some hybrids carry excellent resistance to greenbugs and avoid the need for costly spray schedules. Check hybrid literature for the plant characteristics you need."

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Eastern National

At a recent Executive Board meeting, the Eastern National Livestock Show announced that premiums have been increased for most departments for the 1986 show. All Open Show cattle exhibitions will receive a 20% increase in premium awards over 1985. In the Junior steer and heifer classes, premiums will be raised on the average of 12%. The Junior market lambs and breeding sheep departments will receive an average of 25% increase in

premiums. James Moxley, Jr., Chairman of the Board, said, "This is one way to show our exhibitors that we want to help off-set the high costs of exhibiting and to attract more exhibitors." The 1986 Eastern National Livestock Show will be held September 27 - October 1 at the Maryland State Fair Grounds, Timonium, Maryland. For a Premium List catalogue write Box 32, West Friendship, MD 21794.

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