

Does Extra Nitrogen Pay?

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budgets 30 to 40 pounds at planting, then sidedresses 80 pounds when corn is 12 to 15 inches tall. Three weeks before tasseling, he channels another 80 pounds through the center pivot for 250-bushel yields.

"You can rely too much on fertigation," adds Wright. "Some farmers feed the crop by putting 10 to 20 pounds of nitrogen through their pivots every week. But that gives them too much nitrogen during some weeks and not enough during others."

With close timing, 180 pounds of nitrogen often produces nearly the same yields as a 220-pound investment, Wright says.

New technology also allows you to more precisely measure the crop's needs. Soil analysis gives an indication of available N. During the season, tissue analysis also helps indicate the amount of nitrogen being taken up by the plant and whether it requires supplemental feedings.

Setting goals

Your yield target dictates the amount of nitrogen a crop will

receive. So if you set a high goal, be prepared to do more than just buy extra nitrogen.

"By itself, added nitrogen won't produce 100-bushel wheat," specifies Wisconsin's Oplinger. "You must increase other nutrients, as well as balance your seeding rates and row spacings. You also must minimize compaction and disease pressure. Otherwise, you see little or no benefit from stronger fertility. The crop must grow in well-drained soil."

Even in soybeans, extra nitrogen often boosts yields, provided the variety holds up to lodging. Maximum yield tests in Tennessee, Ohio and New Jersey have nudged beans near or past the 100-bushel line, and supplemental N helped the legume push past that triple-digit yield barrier.

As the soybean plant moves through early growth stages, nodules apparently fix sufficient nitrogen for that phase. To aid nodules, the plant provides them with sufficient energy sources. But somewhere in the bloom or early

pod-set period, the plant redirects nutrients to reproduction. At that point, nodules shut down. That drop in nitrogen-fixing capacity, in turn, restricts yield potential.

"Adding nitrogen seems to counter the shutdown," discloses Dr. Larry Parks, a University of Tennessee soil scientist. "The plant utilizes the extra nitrogen and isn't as dependent on nodules."

Parks is working with various levels of nitrogen in soybeans to determine the minimum amount needed for a yield response. In actual field conditions, Parks says, added nitrogen probably isn't necessary if beans have an average yield potential of less than 50 bushels.

"Even then, extra nitrogen might not pay for itself," notes Parks. "With today's commodity prices, you really must weigh the cost of extra nitrogen — or any other input — against the potential gain. That's true in soybeans or whatever crop you plan to grow."

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Beachley-Hardy Introduces

Corn Hybrids

CAMP HILL — Five new corn varieties with excellent stalk strength and disease resistance have been added to Beachley-Hardy's hybrid corn line-up, according to Frank Welch, marketing director.

"We're proud of the performance of our hybrids on farms throughout the Northeast," Welch said, "and we are continually researching and developing new varieties that are well suited to the needs of our customers. With reduced acreage and slimmer profit margins, we feel that it's our job to make every kernel count."

The new varieties include: Hardy 797XS - a 120-day hybrid

with excellent yield, standability, and drydown; Hardy 680XS - 114 days with long ears, and excellent plant health; Hardy 390XS - 100 days with outstanding yield potential and superior stalk strength and fast drydown; Hardy 291XS - 95 days, best choice for an early grain producer, with large ears on a strong stalk; and Hardy 282X - 94 days, a good performer at lower populations than the super crosses.

Additional information, and availability on these varieties, can be obtained from Frank Welch, Beachley-Hardy Seed Company, P.O. Box 336, Camp Hill, PA 17011, or phone 717-737-4529.



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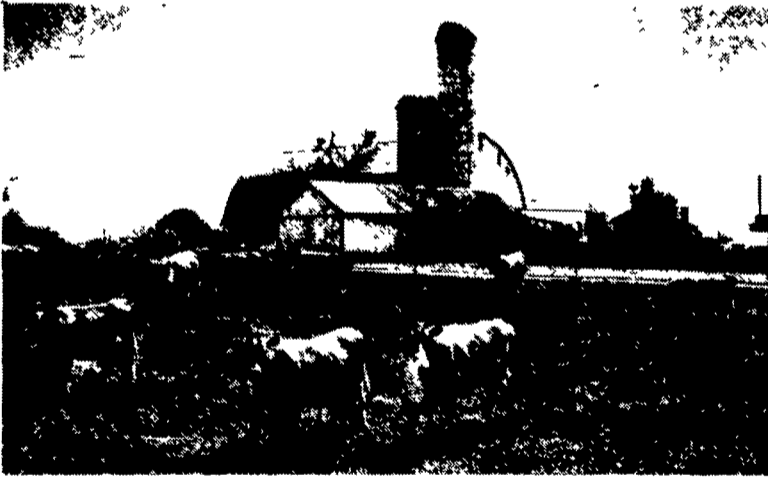
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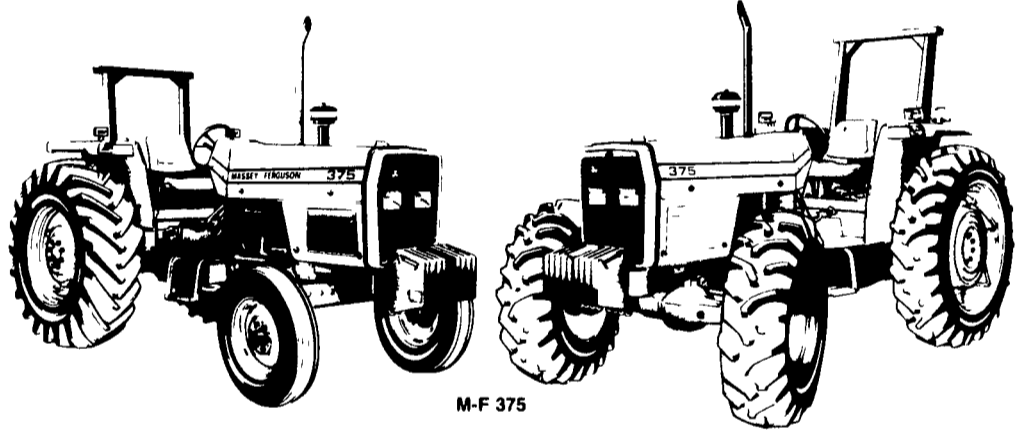
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