

Seed Sizing Brings Growers First Choices

DES MOINES, Iowa — Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc's Precision Designed™ Seed Sizing System will offer corn growers greater convenience during planting along with improved availability of the right corn genetics in the size appropriate for their needs, according to Bob Heimbaugh, Pioneer corn product manager.

"The Precision Designed system will allow corn growers to get their top choices in superior corn hybrids without the limitation of seed size. In addition, these standardized sizes will reduce or eliminate the time required to adjust the planter when changing hybrids, so producers can plant more acres per day," said Heimbaugh.

"The Precision Designed system is exclusive to Pioneer and will replace the company's traditional Custom Design (CD) method of sizing seed," said Heimbaugh. The new system is based on seed shape (medium rounds and medium flats). Seed will be labeled as Precision Designed Flats (PDF™) flats or

Precision Designed Rounds (PDR™) rounds.

The Precision Designed system standardizes and consolidates the number of kernel sizes from the current seven sizes common for most hybrids to four sizes, with potentially 75 to 95 percent of the volume in the new PDF flats and PDR rounds sizes. The new system also will offer some hybrids in F13 and R22.

More than 26,000 corn growers and crop consultants across the U.S. and Canada evaluated the plantability of corn seed that was sized using the Precision Designed system. Some 655,000 80K bags were evaluated using all types of planters.

Paul McPherson of New Park, Pa., found the Precision Designed seed worked well in his 7200 series John Deere planter. Because of his machine has a finger-picked seed metering system, he didn't expect to have any problems with the new seed size.

"The Precision Designed seed worked well. We got a good, consistent stand," McPherson

reported. For this York County grower, the greatest benefit to the precision Designed Seed system may very well be getting the majority of this hybrids in the same standardized size. McPherson raises 700 acres of corn in 180 fields. He typically has his planter units set by his local John Deere dealer each spring and fine tunes it as needed. With standardized seed size, the time needed to fine tune planter settings across 180 fields will be reduced.

Seed sized as CD2 is what Dan Magnus of White Hall, Md., typically plants. In 1997, Magnus planted eight units of PDR rounds using a Kinze eight-row planter which has been modified to 22-inch rows. Picket fence plant spacing is even more critical in narrow rows, and for Magnus, the new seed size met his expectations.

"I usually do a stand check as I'm respraying after emergence. I shoot for a population of 30,000," Magnus said. "Using the PDR rounds, I got a good, even stand. I was very pleased

with the new size."

Reconditioning and calibrating planter meters are services Gregg Sauder offers from Precision Planting, his farm-based business near Tremont, Ill. Using his specially designed test stand to calibrate meters last spring, Sauder had the opportunity to use both PDF flats and PDR rounds brought to him by customers. He successfully set meters to plant either size.

"With the planters I have set, the new sizing system has been very plantable. I've been setting planters for five years, and Pioneer's seed is always consistent," Sauder said. "I think they have very good quality control on seed sizing, and I don't expect there will be any concerns with these new sizes in the future." Sauder sets nearly 1,000 planter meters each year and also farms 1,300 acres.

The Precision Designed system will offer more planter flexibility than the current CD system. Because the new sizes are separated by shape, both will

accurately meter through planter plates. Planting characteristics for PDF flats are similar to F14 and F15 with PDR rounds similar to R23 and R24.

Exchangeability between PDF flats and PDR rounds or vice versa will be very acceptable, helping reduce the number of planter disc changes required during planting. Both PDF flats and PDR rounds will utilize the same disk with slight adjustments in vacuum or air-pressure settings, Heimbaugh said.

Exchangeability will be an added boost in years with delayed planting as seed exchange will be faster and more efficient. This, in turn, will help ensure growers receive the hybrids they prefer on a timely basis.

For more information about the Precision Designed seed sizing system and assistance in selecting the appropriate genetic package, Heimbaugh advises growers to visit with their local Pioneer seed provider.



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