

Take Time Now to Evaluate Hybrid Plots

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Even though the 2006 growing season is almost eight months away, growers are feeling the urge and, more importantly, the sales pressure to consider their hybrid purchasing decisions now. Obviously, the major objective of hybrid selection by growers should be to identify hybrids with consistent yield performance. The term “consistent performance” simply refers to a hybrid’s ability to yield well across a range of growing conditions.

Identifying consistent hybrid performers requires comparative yield data from a number of locations and, ideally, across several years. Growers should routinely ask for and study such widespread yield performance data from their seed dealers as well as from other public sources of yield data (universities, county Extension plots, and other local trials) before selecting hybrids for next year.

In addition to yield data, growers should take advantage of the opportunities now to walk seed company or on-farm variety trials and evaluate other hybrid characteristics that may be of importance to their purchasing decisions. It seems like you see signed on-farm variety trials every other mile as you drive through the countryside this time of year. Seed corn company field days seem to be happening everywhere you look these last days of August and into early September and every one will highlight their lineup of hybrids with signed plots.

Just don’t walk along the front of these plots, but take the time to walk into the plots and carefully evaluate hybrid characteristics like plant & ear height, late-season leaf & stalk health, standability, relative maturity, brace root development, husk coverage of the ear, and ear size. Just don’t make mental notes, but rather take the effort to record the hybrid numbers and your observations about each. Such information plus that available from seed company literature plus comparative yield performance data will help growers make more informed hybrid purchasing decisions.

Remember that successful corn growers understand the difference between purchasing crop production inputs versus being sold crop production inputs.

Related References

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Don't forget, this and other timely information about corn can be viewed at the Chat 'n Chew Café on the Web at <http://www.kingcorn.org/cafe>. For other information about corn, take a look at the Corn Growers' Guidebook on the Web at <http://www.kingcorn.org>.

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