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Increasing Soybean Yields *Just how do we do it?*

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As I talk to growers, one of the most frequent questions that I here is “How can I get my soybean yields to increase? I have had a lot of success in getting increases in my corn yields but I don’t seem able to increase my soybean yields?” I think we can look at these statements and dissect them a little bit to better understand what may help us get to higher soybean yields.

Most growers will agree that corn yields have increased over the last few years. **What has driven corn yield increases?** Some would say new traits, new germplasm, adoption of fungicides, better cultural practices (new tillage tools, fertility, etc.), or possibly more aggressive management of the crop. *All of these have helped grow our corn yields over the years.*

So what differs in our soybean production scheme:

1. **New traits/New Germplasm** – **Traits:** We now have the opportunity to utilize Genuity Roundup Ready 2 Yield soybeans on a large amount of acres in 2010. These beans were developed through extensive gene mapping that identified specific DNA regions in soybeans that have a positive impact on yield. **Germplasm:** [It] is like breeding in thoroughbred race horses - just as breeders select for the fastest race horse, seed breeders look to pair the best pool of genes for the strongest yielding seed. Germplasm pools allow breeders to target key physiological traits for increasing yield, disease resistance, stress tolerance and even grain quality. (source: http://www.monsanto.com/pdf/investors/2009/global_germplasm.pdf).
2. **Adoption of Fungicides/insecticides** - Seed treatments have allowed us to plant soybeans earlier than we traditionally have and helped us achieve better, stronger and healthier plant stands. Foliar fungicides have been popular in corn management systems for the past several years and are now becoming more popular in soybean systems.
3. **Fertility** – As we look to increase soybean yields, growers will need to evaluate their fertility needs. This will require more scrutiny to the soybean crop. With the high potash prices last year, I believe that economics may have led to some acres being under fertilized or not fertilized at all. It is crucial that we get good soil samples to give us a benchmark for future fertility needs.
4. **Aggressive management of the crop** - This really is a culmination of all the things listed above. It is my view that we have to become more responsive to our soybean system. This may mean to adopt treated seed, Genuity RR2Y soybeans, decrease our planting populations or use foliar fungicides. **I challenge each of you to embrace some if not all of these on a portion of your soybean acres. We have to think outside of the box in regards to soybean production. Once we do that I am confident we will begin to move the bar in soybean production.**

Thank you!

ISA 2010 Yield Challenge



For growers in Illinois, I challenge you to take the Illinois Soybean Association yield challenge. Go to www.soyyieldchallenge.com

**Yield
Challenge**

ILLINOIS

Here’s your chance to become a part of an event that will make a difference in your soybean yields for many years to come! The ISA’s 2010 Yield Challenge has been designed to help make you one of the global leaders in soybean yields. The 2010 Yield Challenge kicks off after Labor Day and continues through next year’s growing season. **There are several other yield challenges in states outside of**

Illinois. To learn more call your state Corn and Soybean Association office or contact Kimberly Boccardi, Marketing Manager here at Lewis Hybrids. She’s happy to help get you the info you need for your particular state.