

## Planting for Profits: Corn

Too often we are told to start planting by a calendar date which results in this many bushels gained or if we start planting after this date that we lose this many bushels. But, remember bushels are made in ideal conditions, just like last year we had excellent weather and we hauled away more bushels than ever before. So how do you plant for profits?

- ***A plant seed is a living breathing organism.*** Do you like to sit in the cold? A corn seed is most comfortable when soil temperatures are above 50F, with adequate moisture, excellent seed to soil contact, and sufficient oxygen.
- **Planter Calibration and Planter Speed:** A planter is a machine designed to do an important job, but it begins to lose efficiency if it is not maintained; lost efficiency means lost profits. Planters need to be calibrated for proper seed singulation, and not everything about a planter is designed perfectly, therefore slowing down helps improve the machine's efficiency and leads to a more uniform plant stand. ***Research shows that a uniform plant stand is a quick way to put \$10-\$20 more per acre in your pocket.***
- ***Plant your most profitable fields first.*** When conditions are ideal, put the plant in the field with the most potential to give you greatest returns. Seedling germination and early seedling vigor are affected by many factors including: soil temperature, adequate moisture, soil structure, soil calcium levels (soluble calcium builds better roots), and biological activity (there are many other factors which are also important). Building soil will improve your seedling vigor.
- **Hybrid selection:** Put those genetically modified plants in the most productive places. Talk to your seed dealers; ask them where you should plant their product. A corn plant is a corn plant, but there are many traits that make one hybrid better for a certain area than another. ***Balancing and building the soils allows us to pick hybrids that play offense, instead of hybrids that play defense.***