

# MESSENGER-INQUIRER



**November 19, 2022**

## **Seed Selection Decisions**

Harvest is over and the bins and bank accounts are refilled. As we know in grain farming, there is no break from spending with fertilizer application, seed orders, and tax planning prepayment for the 2023 crop beginning as soon as the combines are put away. A massive amount of fertilizer has been applied this fall due to dry conditions, a slight price decline, and good yields overall. With the fertilizer application window closing, the next task is selecting seed companies and brands for next year.

Throughout this article, I'll refer to seed "brand" as its company product identification. Often the words variety or hybrid are interchanged for this brand identification but the variety is a different identification listed on all seed tags in Kentucky. Most know that the same variety of corn, soybean, or other seeds may be available by more than one seed company who will assign it their own brand. I'll refrain from sharing examples but it is important to do your research if purchasing from more than one company to ensure the corn or soybean brands from either company are not indeed the same variety. Caution should be exercised with corn of same days to maturity rating or soybeans in the same relative maturity group. The most important reason to be aware of this is for knowledge pertaining to disease ratings and in particular, soybean cyst

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nematode tolerance to continuous use of the same soybean variety. There are five considerations for selecting the right corn or soybean seed for your farm.

**Yield.** With risk in crop production as high as it has ever been when considering cost of production relative to revenue there is no forgiveness for poor yield performance. It is critical to study as much yield information from your own farms and yield plots as possible to determine the potential one brand has relative to the next. Multiple years of data is always best but certainly not always available. Any data from production in our area with similar soils and climate is a better resource than data from farther away. There is no shortage of data to study. All of the seed companies perform regional yield demonstration plots with their preferred brands for our area. The University of Kentucky has an intensive corn and soybean brand performance test conducted at multiple locations throughout the state. Of course, the Daviess County yield demonstration plots are available and made possible by the seed companies and the host farms who volunteer time and resources to provide this valuable information. The farms meet each winter to select the companies and the seed companies select the entries they feel have the greatest potential in our environment.

**Maturity.** Maturity of corn or soybeans is a critical decision. Quite frankly, corn brands in the medium 112-115 and later 116-118 relative maturity range outperform earlier maturity hybrids in our area. There are situations when an early maturity brand selection can be justified, but you can expect the likelihood of lower yield compared to later maturity.

**Disease and Agronomics.** I expect you will find very good or excellent disease and agronomic packages on just about any brand you'll find in any seed company catalog. Yet, don't gloss over the importance of products with high disease ratings and agronomic performance that

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fits your management. Certainly, if you have a failure such as wind lodging, leaf disease, or seedling disorders, don't give that brand a second chance. There are too many products that will perform in those environments to plant it twice with fingers crossed.

Price/Incentives. Of course, price and incentives are a decision when shopping for seed. I know many are in multi-year agreements with specific companies, and that is fine. But that does require even greater diligence to ensure the brands you select are the absolute best the company can offer you for your management. Going back to the variety discussion from earlier- do your homework. If you are not loyal to any specific company, you might find your brand variety is available from a different company at a better price.

Dealer Service/Company Support. In my experience relationships between farms and their suppliers is a very important consideration in purchasing decisions. I completely understand that but do have this category at the bottom of my list, not because it isn't important, but because I know all of them well and they are all great to work with. When there are problems, service and support are critical, fortunately all provide great service in our area.

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