Agronomy Profile

Selecting silage fields

Overview

Before planting, producers should carefully select which fields will be used for corn silage in order to maximize quality and yield. Follow these steps to evaluate your fields before deciding where to place silage.

Action steps

1. **Evaluate soil type:** Compaction can limit root growth and crop yields for several years. Soils high in clay content are at greater risk for compaction and take longer to recover. Achieving fast germination and strong, early vigor also are of more concern with heavy-clay soils. Avoid high-sand soils that are sensitive to drought—a particular concern in more arid regions of the country. Wait to plant until soil temperatures reach above 55°F to reduce emergence problems.
2. **Consider crop rotation:** Use crop rotation when feasible. Credit nitrogen (N) as appropriate, and remember to apply enough N to cover soil tie-up from immobilization as the previous crop residue is broken down.
3. **Test soil fertility:** Test soil and manure to develop a comprehensive nutrient management plan and determine if adequate nutrients are available. If you are planting brown midrib (BMR) silage, consider additional fertilizer and increasing potassium (K) 5-20%. Increasing N slightly and split-timing application will improve uptake and plant health. Applying manure can supply a significant amount of N, K and phosphorus (P), as well as organic material.
4. **Monitor herbicide and insecticide programs:** Look over the field history for potential problems, such as herbicide carryover issues, tough perennial weeds and insect pressure. Hybrids with in-plant insect protection reduce insect damage.

To maximize silage performance, evaluate fields to determine ideal placement.

30-Second Summary

- Field selection is vital to maximizing silage yield potential.
- Examine soils and avoid heavy-clay and high-sand areas.
- Rotate crops on silage acres whenever possible.
- Manage nutrients, herbicide and insecticide programs based on current and historical conditions for your selected silage fields.

NOTES:

For more information, contact:

NuTech Seed®

www.nutechseed.com
1-888-647-3478