



Green snap

Overview

Green snap in corn occurs when wind causes stem breakage. It is most prevalent in the Western Corn Belt, where high winds are common. Severe stalk damage can occur if the plant is at a susceptible stage of development, so the timing and intensity of windstorms will determine the severity of the damage.

What you should know

- Corn is most susceptible to green snap during the five- to eight-leaf stages, as well as from the 12th-leaf stage until one week after silking. Corn becomes susceptible to green snap during these rapid growth stages because lignin is not deposited into new cells, leaving stalks brittle and vulnerable.
- Breakage usually occurs on the lower portion of the corn plant, before tasseling. Plants that have been snapped will not produce an ear.
- If damage occurs early in the growing season, remaining plants may compensate, though yield potential could be impacted. For example, a 25% stand loss means an estimated 10% yield loss. If damage occurs late in the growing season, loss is irreversible.
- Corn plants can compensate by initiating a secondary ear. The level of yield compensation will depend on a corn hybrid's ability to double-ear and the amount of growing season remaining.

Action steps

1. **Select hybrids with high green snap ratings:** Choose a 10-day range of maturity to ensure plants will be at different developmental stages when windy conditions occur. Try 50-55% hybrids in mid-maturity range, 15-20% early maturity and 25-35% in the full-season range.
2. **Monitor fertilizer application:** High-nitrogen fertilizers, including manure, can encourage green snap damage. Excess nitrogen increases growth rates through rapid cell division/elongation, producing weak cell walls.
3. **Manage herbicides:** Application of growth regulator herbicides increases injury risk, so don't apply beyond the three-leaf stage.

For more information, contact:



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Corn stalks that have been snapped will not produce an ear.



30-Second Summary

- Green snap is prevalent in the high-wind Western Corn Belt.
- Green snap is most common during rapid corn growth stages before stems mature and are lignified.
- Nitrogen fertilizers can encourage green snap damage.
- Green snap can significantly reduce yields. The loss percentage depends on the stage of growth when it occurs.

NOTES:
