Agronomy Profile



Managing corn residue

Overview

Since the adoption of corn hybrids with biotechnology traits, growers have continued to see more consistent 200-bushel-plus corn crops in past seasons. However, increased yields have created the challenge of dealing with increased levels of residue when planting next year's crop. There are several management practices you can use to help alleviate this increased residue.

Action steps

- 1. **Consider alternative tillage practices:** Conventional tillage is one effective way to manage corn residue, but may not always be possible. Two websites, no-tillfarmer.com and strip-till.com (which is sponsored by a strip-till equipment manufacturer), offer information on residue management for these tillage systems. Consult with other no-till and strip-till growers to learn what works best on their operations.
- 2. **Make equipment modifications:** Ask your local equipment dealer or combine manufacturer to recommend combine modifications that can cut and spread crop residue more effectively. Tillage equipment may also need to be adjusted.
- 3. Look into products like humic acid and nitrogen: These products break down plant material and help balance the nitrogen-to-carbon ratio. Talk to your fertilizer retailer for options.
- 4. **Plant cover crops:** Cover crops extract nutrients from the residue. Talk to your local soil and water conservation representative about which cover crops fit best into your crop rotation.
- 5. **Incorporate residue over time with crop rotations:** Rotating soybeans with corn will help to alleviate some of the buildup of plant material.



Managing increased crop residue can be a challenge for today's corn grower.



- Advanced biotech hybrids now enable 200+ bushel corn, but also create increased field residue.
- Several management practices can be used to help reduce residue, including changing your tillage program, using fertilizers to break down nutrients, adjusting equipment settings and planting cover crops.

NOTES:

For more information, contact:



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