

Planting Populations

Overview

To maximize your soybean crop yield potential, make sure it is planted at an ideal population. Once you select the right variety for the yield environment, determine the appropriate planting population to maximize yield potential. The right population for each variety should be based on the plant type, row spacing, seed treatments, date of planting, disease factors and experience with the variety.

What you should know

- Select soybean varieties appropriate for your environment. Varieties vary on yield potential, disease tolerance and other agronomic characteristics. Increased yield potential is a consideration when new varieties are released, but higher plant populations may not deliver additional yield.
- How soybeans will be planted, including planting depth, can help determine planting populations. Choose the appropriate row width for the variety and its canopy type. Narrow rows generally require higher plant populations than wider rows.
- Seed treatments, especially fungicide-based treatments, have been shown to improve emergence by helping plants emerge more uniformly regardless of in-row spacing.

Action steps

1. **Fewer plants per acre may not be better:** Evaluate pros and cons of different population rates before making planting decisions. Certain varieties can be planted too thin in the wrong environment. Higher populations produce a tighter canopy, which enhances weed control, but may increase disease pressure.
2. **Planting date can impact populations:** Early planting can put more stress on seedlings than later planting, so consider higher seeding rates, but keep in mind that planting can have less impact on yield potential than using seed treatments and higher-yielding genetics.



The ideal soybean planting population varies by variety type.



30-Second Summary

- Plant populations vary by geography. Consider local conditions as well as the variety, row width, seed treatments and other factors.
- Consider seed treatments to achieve uniform emergence regardless of row spacing.
- Consider higher seeding rates for early planting.

NOTES:

For more information, contact:



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