



Selecting Quality Corn Hybrids ~

Corn hybrid selection is not always easy and seed catalogs can be confusing. All the hybrids that are available, compounded with the variety of traits and seed treatments,

create a scenario for many options. After paging through a seed catalog, how do you select a hybrid without making a guess or flipping a coin? And how do you select several hybrids that complement your entire planting (and nutrition) program?

It is important to keep things simple and remember these three points:

- ◆ **Ask questions**
- ◆ **Genetics first**
- ◆ **Traits second**

When considering corn hybrids, it is important to ask a lot of questions and make sure you get satisfactory answers before making a selection. Identify the characteristics and expectations you have. You might even consider approaching each field separately. Some typical questions you need to ask yourself may include:

1. What is the end use of your corn (corn silage, shelled grain or high moisture)?
2. What is your typical or average yield goal?
3. How many bushels/acre do you fertilize for?
4. Besides yield, what is the next most important characteristic you want in your corn crop?
5. What are the limiting factors to growing a good crop?
 - a. Corn genetics are capable of producing 400(+) bushels/acre and 35(+) ton/acre (of corn silage) ~ so what's keeping the genetics from maximizing the potential?
 - b. Limiting factors may include drought conditions, excessive soil moisture, heavy soils, light soils, insects, diseases, etc.
6. What plant population works best for you?
7. What is your harvest time frame/window?

In the selection process, desirable characteristics will depend on the situations and expectations unique to your farm. Once you've discovered what you want, it will be easier to determine what group of hybrids will provide the genetic characteristics that best match your farm's needs and goals in order to maximize the potential for both the your farm and the hybrid(s) you select.

Next, based on the answers regarding your farm/field performance expectations, it is important to determine what genetic characteristics will best meet these goals. There is sure to be a hybrid to meet your expectations. Here are some of the characteristics you should be looking for as you try to select what is best for your farm:

- Yield ~ offensive/defensive; racehorse/workhorse; or dependable/top-end risk
- Emergence/Vigor ~ germination fast/slow; ability to get out the ground
- Stalk quality ~ staygreen; greensnap; disease tolerance/resistance
- Insects ~ corn borer; cutworm; rootworm; armyworm; grubs; wireworms; seed corn maggots; etc.
- Disease tolerance ~ gray leaf spot; northern leaf spot; etc.
- Drydown ~ fast to black layer; slow stalk drydown; or an equal stover-to-grain ratio
- Heat tolerance ~ ability to yield well under drought stress
- Root strength ~ best on marginal soils vs. high fertility soils
- Digestibility ~ milk/ton vs. milk/acre (BMR vs. non-BMR)
- Harvest window ~ relates to hybrid relative maturity and/or planting time spread
- Crop rotation ~ corn-on-corn; corn-on-sod; corn-on-soybeans; etc.

Once you have determined the genetic characteristics that best fit the needs of your farm, you can choose the corn hybrid families that match your farm. With the selection of the genetic family, you can now pick hybrids that have a desirable trait feature. Remember, it's much easier to match the hybrid to your farm needs and goals versus forcing your farm to match the hybrid. It is probably a good idea to select more than one hybrid (possibly 3 or 4), depending on how many acres are going to be planted. This will spread out the risk of crop failure if unforeseen events happen, such as severe drought, damaging winds, prolonged standing water, etc. Don't put all your "eggs" in one basket!

In summary, understanding your operation's needs and goals, selecting the hybrid genetic families to match those needs, and choosing desirable traits within the hybrid genetic families will increase the odds of growing the best crop possible. There are also excellent new tools available to assist the selection process, including MILK 2006 and CornPicker for Silage (1.0), which can help in making the right selection – from financial calculations to starch and fiber digestibility, and much more! I can assist you in use of these tools and selecting the best corn hybrid for your farm. Growing and maintaining quality forages starts with the selection process. Grow quality in 2007!

(edited from an article by MYCOGEN SEEDS)

RENAISSANCE NUTRITION

When You Want Quality & Results

Interested in discussing topics in this newsletter, or want to do a better job feeding and managing your cows? Looking for research-tested new hybrids for the coming year? Call me! My goal is to help you.

That's Renaissance's commitment!

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THE TEAM FOR RESULTS

Growing results...

The harvest is complete for this year and the fields lay bare, soon to be covered with frost and snow as they rest for the coming months. It is time to start planning for the 2007 growing season and determining what hybrids are a "best-fit" for your operation. We recommend that you plant more than one hybrid, due to the variability of soil and climatic conditions. Renaissance offers outstanding hybrids that are research-tested for results – giving your livestock quality nutrition with every mouthful. Growing quality forages starts with selecting hybrids and seed products that can maximize nutrition and digestibility. Our lineup includes products from **WOLF RIVER, MYCOGEN, GARST, KING'S AGRISEED** and others! Take advantage of early order discounts and ensure you will be planting top-quality. Check it out and aim for results in 2007. Call today!



PLANNING FOR WINTER ~ How important is ventilation throughout the winter months? Winter ventilation is all about keeping the air in dairy barns and enclosed livestock housing as dry as possible. Warm, moist air is one of the main causes of respiratory problems during winter months. It is one thing to keep facilities comfortably warm during extremely cold weather, but the need for good ventilation is critical to the health and well-being of your livestock. You want to create an environment that provides uniform air distribution and eliminates dead air spots with high moisture. As you prepare for the coming winter this is an excellent time to ensure ventilation equipment is clean and in good working order, fans and louvers are not bent or clogged, and that there is a constant flow of air moving moisture out of the facility. Good ventilation this winter can make a difference in the health and productivity of your cows. Don't underestimate the benefits of good ventilation. It's worth it!

A POINT TO PONDER... The pilgrims celebrated the first Thanksgiving in our country. It was officially proclaimed as the last Thursday in November by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, and continues to be enjoyed year after year throughout this nation. It is important for all of us to pause and consider the multitude of blessings that are ours each and every day ~ so many things we often take for granted. Take time this season and throughout the year to share those blessings with family and friends, as well as those who are less fortunate. When we are truly thankful we are continually blessed. Happy Thanksgiving!



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November...

*selecting quality corn hybrids.
the importance of winter ventilation.
looking ahead to 2007.
Happy Thanksgiving!*

Check it out.

