

Milo Production Tips

Choose Top Hybrid - Select a top performing hybrid from one of the seed companies who are proud to sell milo seed. Don't be afraid of taller hybrids, many times these are top performers and height is not a real issue with today's combines and is not closely related to stalk rot or standability. Plant 80,000 plants per acre on dryland in any row spacing in Gage County and drop the population 5000 plants per acre for every county west across Southern Nebraska. Plant milo when soils have warmed to 60 degrees F or higher. This means planting with or just after soybeans. It is important in milo to not leave the slot open after planting. Milo can unfurl to emerging leaves in the open slot and be buried by heavy rains.

Fertilize For Top Yields - Milo needs one and one-tenth pounds of nitrogen per bushel for top economic production. Milo is excellent at utilizing nitrogen sources from manure, soil organic matter mineralization, and prior soybean crops. Take full credit for nitrogen from these sources. Soil test levels will tell you the nitrogen fertilizer addition you will need and the response you might expect from phosphorus and zinc. If the phosphorus level in the field is low starter fertilizer is an excellent way to get the phosphorus efficiently placed for top response. Milo can handle up to 5-6 gallons per acre of 10-34-0 in furrow with the seed. Today when we rely so much on postemergent herbicides for weed control, starter fertilizer usually will help us get a larger plant sooner and aid in the weed control.

Limit Tillage - Milo yields have been excellent under no-till systems. If you feel you have to part the residue do so without moving soil, without affecting your weed control. Residue cover keeps the soil temperature a bit cooler and reduces stalk rot problems. This is particularly true as you move west in Nebraska to dryer and warmer summer-time soil temperatures.

Grass Control - If you have a terrible grass problem in the field plant corn or soybeans. If you have a terrible shattercane problem in the field plant corn or soybeans. That is a fact of life, because of the limited herbicide choices in milo. Early Preplant herbicide applications in April are the best choice for milo. We have the herbicide in place for the later planted crop which saves moisture and gives the producer added options for both grass and broadleaf control. Splitting the treatment and spraying part of the Bicep, Bullet, Guardsman, Lumax, etc behind the planter and/or using Roundup behind the planter extend the weed control program and ensure a clean field at planting without using tillage to drying the soil and planting more weed seed. There are limited options for post grass control so scout heavy early and respond aggressively to escapes while they are small.

July is Greenbug Month - Scout fields carefully during July and make a decision on greenbug control. Treatments in August most often kill the greenbugs after the damage has been done. Don't forget to monitor predator insects like parasitic wasps and ladybugs carefully to make sure that investments in insecticide treatments are necessary.

Trifold Chinch Bug Plan - Chinch bugs are a threat to sorghum at three stages. One, in the seedling stage when chinch bugs are present because of poor weed control or too late control of grasses like volunteer wheat. Two, when wheat or oats ripen and the chinch bugs walk from stubble fields to milo fields next door. Three, after heading when the second generation chinch bugs fly into the milo and set up housekeeping. In particular they like warm south facing slopes and thin stand areas of the field. Stay alert and do the best you can to choose treatment options for this troublesome pest.

Timely Harvest - Part of treating milo as a second choice is to let it stand to dry while getting other crops harvested. A better choice is to time harvest when the milo is dry enough to harvest. Drying milo is slower and more time consuming than corn, this should be considered.

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