

# Yielding SUCCESS

Winter 2010

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Local producer Gary Haupt decided to plant his own soybean test plot this year.

## Testing the waters

More and more local producers are expanding past the traditional Western Kansas lineup of wheat, corn and milo in search of new ways to make their farm more profitable. They are incorporating newer or less common crops and products into their farm, and experimenting to see which ones work, and which ones don't. Gary Haupt is one of them.

Haupt chose to run his own soybean test plot this year, planting five separate varieties on a 60-acre irrigated half-circle on his farm south of Scott City. His motivation? Finding a better balance in his current rotation.

"We were having problems getting corn out early enough, which meant our wheat was going in too late," he says.

Soybeans, Haupt hoped, would provide a viable alternative to wheat while giving him more cushion between planting and harvest. Haupt was no stranger to soybeans, having tried them before in the early 2000s. However, the high pH of the soil made iron chlorosis a significant problem in his attempts. His introduction to REBAR™, an iron chelate product, made him rethink soybeans' potential.\*

"I'm still pretty green at this, but I think the biggest thing a farmer should do if they have any chlorosis is to take a strong look at REBAR™," Haupt says. "It went into suspension well and we put it in the seed slice just like a starter fertilizer."

Haupt planted in early June and was

*(cont. on page 5)*



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# PASSing it on...

With fall harvest as just a memory, we've been busy taking early orders and stocking seed. We want to thank you – our customers – for another successful year. Pioneer has recognized PASS for its growth and market share, and as a result, is giving a \$1,000 grant to the Scott County FFA. We are matching that grant. That means that your dollars are not only getting you quality seed, but are going back to the community as well.

As the focus has shifted towards seed, next year's wheat crop has become the question at hand. This fall has left us wondering what the best plan of attack is for our spotty stands of wheat and lack of root growth. Will it winter kill? What is the yield potential? What are our options?

The reality is that there are a number of approaches:

1. **Take the wheat to harvest**, and in the case of a loss, file an insurance claim;
2. **File a claim pre-harvest and fallow the ground**;
3. **File a claim pre-harvest and plant a row crop (corn or milo)** – this leaves you with two alternatives:

- Insure the row crop. Then collect 35% of the wheat loss and after row crop harvest, decide if you want the remaining 65% on wheat claim or loss on row crop.

- Don't insure the row crop. Collect 100% of wheat loss.

Keep in mind that a crop's success is generally driven by what happens in-season, so be sure to explore all your options before setting up your strategy. I hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2011!



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# FEEDING YOUR FIELDS...

## Part 4: THE VALUE

In addition to its affordability, wealth of micronutrients and overall consistency, conditioned manure also offers a great value in nutrients for overall cost.

In an analysis of more than 30 samples taken over a two year period, a ton of conditioned manure contained an average of 33 lbs. of nitrogen (N) and 34 lbs. of phosphorous (P). Looking at current prices of commercial fertilizer, price of N ranges between \$0.42 - \$0.64 per pound, while price of P is between \$0.48 - \$0.59 per pound.

If you apply the recommended rate of 5 tons of conditioned manure per acre, your product cost will be \$50, whereas the same amount of N and P from commercial fertilizer will cost you \$180 (as averaged between five commercial fertilizers

considered). Even if you discount the P component, conditioned manure N is still cheaper than commercial fertilizer (\$50 for conditioned manure versus \$88 for same amount of N in commercial fertilizer).

Conditioned manure's value is such that even with the spreading and hauling charges added to the product cost, your overall total still remains less than the commercial fertilizer product alone. For instance, at 50 miles away, it would cost you \$116 to apply 5 tons per acre, as opposed to \$180 for commercial fertilizer, not including the commercial fertilizer's application.

Conditioned manure's nutrient value for cost makes it a highly competitive option and is an important point to consider when making your fertilizer selections.

### Value of Conditioned Manure

(based on the value N & P; other nutrients are considered "free" for this valuation)

<u>Average Fertilizer Prices on:</u>		<u>Dec-10</u>		
<u>Conditioned manure (tons/acre):</u>		5		
<u>Nitrogen Source</u>	<u>\$/ton</u>	<u>\$/lb of N</u>	<u>N (lb)/acre with Manure</u>	<u>\$/acre</u>
Anhydrous Ammonia (82-0-0)	\$688.00	\$0.42	164.8	\$69.11
Urea (46-0-0)	\$510.00	\$0.55	164.8	\$91.33
UAN Liquid (32-0-0)	\$407.00	\$0.64	164.8	\$104.77
Average \$/acre of commercial N in 5 tons of manure				<b>\$88.40</b>
<u>Phosphorus Source</u>	<u>\$/ton</u>	<u>\$/lb of P2O5</u>	<u>P2O5 (lb)/acre with Manure</u>	<u>\$/acre</u>
Mono-Ammonium Phos. (11-52-0)	\$595.00	\$0.48	170.1	\$82.23
Liquid Ammonium Phos. (10-34-0)	\$488.00	\$0.59	170.1	\$101.09
Average \$/acre of commercial P in 5 tons of manure				<b>\$91.66</b>
<b>Equivalent value of commercial N and P in 5 tons of manure</b>				<b>\$180.07</b>
<b>Cost of 5 tons of manure at the feedyard</b>				<b>\$50.00</b>
<b>Total savings from conditioned manure (\$/acre)</b>				<b>\$130.07</b>



# PASS's Top 10 for 2010

## IF THERE IS ANYTHING CONSISTENT ABOUT FARMING, IT'S THE INCONSISTENCY.

Weather is always changing, markets are always moving and technologies are always shifting. That's why it is so important to stay abreast with the current research, trends and opportunities. Here we highlight our "Top 10" areas that we think all producers should be watching as we wrap up 2010.

### 1 - NO-TILL AND CROPPING INTENSITY

It is commonly accepted by producers that transitioning from the traditional wheat-fallow-wheat approach to the widely practiced wheat-sorghum-fallow rotation is economically advantageous. Kansas State University and the Tribune Experiment Station have demonstrated an even greater economic return when 100% no-till is utilized in this rotation. Taking this one step further, continuous no-till provides the opportunity for greater cropping intensity of three crops in four years such as wheat-corn-sorghum-fallow. Such practices offer additional opportunities for profit and might become the commonly accepted practice by producers in the near future.

### 2 - CONTROLLING KOCHIA

Kochia is a constant battle in this area, and there are three things to keep in mind when controlling it: 1) Because of resistance issues, it is imperative to use a herbicide combination that involves multiple (three or more) modes of action; 2) It will likely take a 2-shot approach, with the first application prior to kochia emergence; and 3) Crop competition is particularly effective in helping keep kochia at bay, so if a field is not planted with a cash crop, a cover crop might prove beneficial.

### 3 - COVER CROPS

Cover crops planted in our fallow acres are gaining more ground as a potential solution to some of our Western Kansas farming woes. They are effective in controlling erosion, capturing rainfall, slowing weed pressure and providing a better seed bed. However, these benefits must also be weighed with their potential negatives, including the overall cost of planting the cover crop, the amount of soil moisture the cover crop uses, as well as its impact on the following wheat yield. It is important to note, however, that the extent of soil moisture usage and wheat yield impact is highly dependent on when the cover crop is terminated. Keep an eye on the KSU Experiment Stations as they have begun studying the impacts of cover crops in Western Kansas.

### 4 - FERTILITY IN NO-TILL

No-till farming practices are being implemented with increasing frequency. Because of that, it is necessary to give fertilization practices a second look. Since organic matter is not being broken down like it would be in tillage operations (therefore making the availability of all nutrients lower), more fertilizer is required in the first 5-10 years when establishing a no-till field. Just how much of an increase is needed remains a question we continue to research.





## 5 - BREAKING OUT CRP

The farming tools available to us today allow us to effectively farm ground that was once placed into CRP due to lack of profitability. In the past two years alone, our operation has broken out a significant amount of CRP and we have learned many valuable lessons from it. Generous fertilizing is a key component to the success of the first crop out of CRP. In addition, one must determine how to break it out (burn, mow, spray, till, etc.), and what to plant as the first crop (corn vs. wheat vs. soybeans). Our “Break out...” article in the Fall 2010 issue of *Yielding Success* offers some great insight into the process of breaking out CRP.

## 6 - SOYBEANS

Due to the high soil pH we have in our area, soybeans have typically been dismissed as a viable option. However, we have discovered the pH issues can be overcome with the assistance of a new chelated iron that doesn't get tied up in the soil. We've planted soybeans on fields with a pH as high as 8.3 and had yields over 40 bu/acre on dryland. We've even heard reports of irrigated soybeans yielding over 80 bu/acre. Clearly, soybeans need a second look in our rotations.

## 7 - GRAIN STORAGE

The wide basis (difference between futures price and cash price) and differing local cash bids have left us scratching our heads. The only thing we are certain of is the cash market is ripe with opportunity. We are continuing to evaluate the economics between bagging and additional on-site grain bins, but we have been pleasantly surprised with how one bagger can replace 6-7 truck drivers during fall harvest.

## 8 - SEED WHEAT TREATMENTS AND TESTING

As witnessed by many producers as they convert to no-till, achieving and maintaining a good stand of no-till wheat in heavy residue can be a challenge. Lack of seedling vigor and poor root development is a recipe for winterkill. Although the verdict is still out, we have seen some response to wheat seed treatments. In addition, we have learned that not all seed wheat is created equal. Warm germination tests (as opposed to the more common cool germination test) as well as accelerated aging tests often reveal whether a certain lot of seed wheat has the vigor required for the harshest no-till conditions.

## 9 - WHEAT FUNGICIDE

Knowing what kind of fungicide to apply to your wheat – and when to apply it – is an important question. Recent research by Kansas State University and the Garden City Experiment Station on various types of fungicides showed no difference between fungicides on their performance against stripe rust on wheat. With generic fungicides costing less than \$2/acre, the decision process might have just gotten easier. The looming question is now whether to apply by ground or air..

## 10 - CLUMP ROW MILO

Planting clump row milo is beginning to receive significant attention by researchers, and is worth watching. The idea behind it is to control the number of tillers per acre, as the primary heads arguably offer a number of advantages. However, in order to be possible, a special planting plate is required, and the seeding rate must be higher than in conventional planting – there need to be at least 55,000 heads per acre to ensure maximum yield potential. It will be interesting to see how this technique performs in our farming conditions.

# Testing the waters...

(cont. from page 1)

pleased with the overall look of the plants all the way up until harvest. He attributes much of their healthy appearance to the REBAR™. In the end, they yielded an average of more than 62 bushels per acre (see table below for individual variety data). It was higher than what Haupt had been hoping for, but was still a bit lower than what he expected based on their appearance.

“They looked good all year, but I think the heat at the end hurt them a little,” he says. “While I was hoping for 60 bushels per acre and we surpassed that, I think we need them to go a little higher.”

Haupt was also pleased to see that he was able to support the soybeans on his well, which pumped an average of 800 gallons per minute and was split between the soybeans and 180 acres of corn.

One observation that Haupt made was the rather low nodulation on the plants themselves, which he suspects might be due to either the presence of the REBAR™ or the wet conditions the plants faced soon after planting. At any rate, he says, it did not appear to affect yields and the plants never showed signs of lacking nitrogen.

When asked, Haupt says he fully intends to plant soybeans again next year, but plans on implementing a few changes in his strategy.

“It’s a learning curve,” he says. “We have to get the beans to yield consistently. Next time, we will probably go with no more than three different varieties and try to plant a little earlier.”

In addition, some foliar issues he observed have made him consider a fungicide application on next year’s crop. He also plans on planting more early-season corn on the fields sharing a well with the soybeans to allow the soybeans more water.

Haupt notes that the varieties he chose the first time around were those that were the best adapted to



While Haupt was pleased with the 60+ bu/acre average he saw from his soybeans, he had expected better based on their great appearance early on.

## THE RESULTS

Haupt's yields ranged from 60 bu per acre to 76 bu per acre. The best performing hybrid was Pioneer's 93M43, while the least performant was Dyna-Grow's 35G38.

<b>Product</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Moisture</b>	<b>Yield</b>	<b>Test Weight</b>
Dyna-Grow 35G38	5700	9.1	60.18	56.1
Pioneer 93M43	6060	8.8	64.05	56.4
Pioneer 93Y70	7250	9.3	76.02	56.3
Asgrow 3830	6600	8.8	69.07	56.6
NK S36-B6	6930	9.1	71.99	53

performing in high pH soils. With the access he has to REBAR™, he says that next time he will be less concerned about iron chlorosis and more likely plant higher yielding varieties.

Once he has a better sense on the best strategy when growing soybeans in this area, Haupt says that each year’s characteristics will be what decides between growing wheat and soybeans.

“If it’s an early fall, we’ll go wheat,” he says. “If it’s a late fall, we’ll go beans.”

In just a single year, Haupt has

learned a lot about the potential of soybeans as a Western Kansas crop and he looks forward to gaining an even better understanding in future test plots. It has been a worthwhile experiment, one that has offered him additional options and solutions for his farm.

“I was real happy with it,” he says. “It worked well.”

*\*REBAR™ is distributed by Loveland Products and Crop Production Services. Go to [www.lovelandproducts.com](http://www.lovelandproducts.com) to learn more.*

# THANKS FOR A GREAT YEAR!

**Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**



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