



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ANGIE RIECK-HINZ

An example of soybean pods growing out of clumpy soil. These are what agronomist Angie Rieck-Hinz recommends evaluating after planting.

Fighting fungi

Post-planting evaluations are vital

BY SHAWN DIGITY
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Maybe a more overlooked part of the planting season process, Field Agronomist Angie Rieck-Hinz advised that scouting in an evaluation phase after planting can prove beneficial when staving off insects and fungi that might damage seedlings. Checking for patches of dead stands can provide some insight into what's going on beneath the ground.

"What happens after planting?" she started. "If we're going to stay cool and wettish, seed treatments are important. They have insecticides on them. More importantly, they have fungicides on them. So thinking about protecting that seed while it's in the ground because it may be in the ground a little bit longer this year before it actually germinates."

Rieck-Hinz highlighted that increased time spent in the ground while germinating also means greater vulnerability to fungal diseases.

"So if we experience cooler weather temperatures, we have an increased chance of having fungal infections because the seed is in the ground a lot longer," she stated.

With that, some sort of fungicidal treatment — especially in wetter years — can be beneficial.

"So that fungicide may be important to reduce seedling diseases, so we get a more even stand, and we get as many of those seeds out of the ground as

possible."

Wetter conditions can propagate funguses and give them more time to attack a wide-open seedling still in the ground.

Those pathogens typically strike during germination because as the root emerges through the seed coat, it offers an opening to infect a seed.

"The later we go in the season planting, like May, when it gets warmer and drier, we don't worry so much about those seed treatments just because the seedlings come out of the ground faster. We don't have to worry about so much disease pressure," she continued.

Once those seedlings start breaching the surface, Rieck-Hinz mentioned, that can be an opportunity to check in on the stands with a post-planting evaluation.

"We really do need to go out and evaluate our seeding, our stand," she said. Those check-ins could hint at funguses,

insects, or poor seed-to-soil contact. And while not every seed will germinate to fruition, it's worth noting if large swaths of the seedlings failed.

"We have to reevaluate those stands, and we need to do that early on because we need to decide if that stand might be worth keeping or if we need to replant. So that's the next big step after planting — to evaluate our stand to make sure that we have our seeding our stand population where we want it," she said.

"So that's what happens after planting. That's what needs to happen after planting," Rieck-Hinz stated.

Some possible reasons for why a stand didn't grow could include wetter-than-normal soil conditions, frost or colder-temperature seed injury, furrows not closing, planter malfunctions, or diseases. ■

2 biggest factors with 2023 planting season knocking

BY SHAWN DIGITY
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In a recent conversation with ISU Extension and Outreach Field Agronomist Angie Rieck-Hinz, she explained that while planting season might still be a couple of weeks away, some serious considerations are being followed now that spring is officially here.

First, Rieck-Hinz explained that the planting season might not have as early a start as last year and anticipated a later start time.

"Last year, we were planting early, and this year we will not be planting as early," she shared. "Last year, we started planning the second week of April. This year, I'd say, it's probably going to be delayed, maybe more like the beginning of the fourth week of April."

However, she added that a later planting season compared to last year's isn't a bad thing, nor is it something to fret over either. "So it's not an overly big concern at this point in time," she stated. "We're certainly not at a yield-limiting concern yet, by planting later in April."

"When we start making decisions about planting this time of year, we look at two things," she continued. "We want to look at soil temperature — number one. We want those soil temperatures at about 50 degrees and trend-



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ANGIE RIECK-HINZ

Planting season is almost upon us, and agronomist Angie Rieck-Hinz anticipates farmers will have a later start getting in their fields than they did last year.

ing upward. So when that seed goes in the ground, it's warm enough to get it germinated and out of the ground very quickly," she clarified.

Part of why the soil temperatures can prove vital is that it allows stands to shoot up easier. If soil is more compact or harder because of a colder temp, seedlings can risk infection or pest damage. A warmer temperature can ensure that the seeds can germinate efficiently with less resistance.

Then, Rieck-Hinz continued, "Our second biggest impact will be soil moisture. So we don't

want to be in the field doing tillage or planting when it's too wet so that we compact the soil. We squeeze out the air space. We don't get good drainage. We make clods, so we don't get good seed-to-soil contact."

With those bullet points in mind, Rieck-Hinz said that this year (possibly good for every year), "Patience is key when it comes to getting seed in the ground."

"And this spring, we'll probably need a little bit more patience to get that top couple of 3, 4 inches dried out for good planting conditions." ■

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