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1. Management practices for early Group III soybeans in southern Kansas

The supply of Group IV and Group V soybean varieties is generally tighter than normal this year, although there is still a supply available from some of the local seed companies. Producers who normally plant a Group IV or V variety, but can't find seed of this maturity group this year, may consider planting a Group III variety instead.

Will a Group III variety have adequate yield potential in areas that normally have primarily later varieties, such as east central, southeast, and southcentral Kansas? In many cases, yes. The main exception would be on upland soils, or in doublecrop situations, in southeast Kansas.

On good bottom land in southeast Kansas where the producer is expecting yields of 40 bushel/acre or more, a Group III variety would be a reasonable selection. But on the upland soils or when doublecropping after wheat in that region, a Group III variety will probably have considerably less yield potential than a late Group IV or V variety.

If seed supply is short of late-maturing varieties from your favorite supplier for planting on upland soils or doublecropping, it would be preferable to seek out alternative suppliers of late Group IV or V varieties rather than settling for Group III seed in southeast Kansas.

Would planting dates have to change when planting an earlier variety? If producers want a Group III variety to flower and fill pods at the same time of year as a late Group IV or V variety normally would, they would have to plant the Group III variety a little later than they normally plant. But there is no way to predict the effect of planting dates on yield for any given year. The best advice is always to spread out planting dates and maturities as much as possible to spread the risks.

-- Bill Schapaugh, Soybean Breeder

2. Sunflowers as an option in southeast Kansas

Southeast Kansas producers may be looking for an alternative crop to grow on some of their acres this summer. Sunflower has good yield potential in southeast Kansas averaging from 1,000 to 1,500 lbs/acre in yields tests at the Southeast Agricultural Research Center in Parsons. Yields greater than 2,000 lb/acre are not uncommon.

Producers should fertilize based on a soil test, but generally 70 lbs/acre nitrogen, 20 lb/acre phosphorus, and 50 lbs/acre potassium are adequate.

Oilseed sunflower is the most popular type of sunflower grown in southeast Kansas. It should be seeded at populations of 18,000 to 24,000 seeds/acre between May and July. Uniform emergence is critical so that plants develop equally and pesticide applications and harvest can be timed properly.

Sunflowers are often infested with sunflower head moths that may need to be controlled with an insecticide if above the tolerated economic threshold. Early planting dates usually result in one to two spray applications for head moth. Sunflower acreage has grown in recent years, and even late-planted sunflowers have had economically harmful head moth infestation levels at times -- and have benefited from spraying. Active scouting for head moth should begin before the flower bud opens until flowering is nearly completed.

There are limited options for broadleaf weed control in sunflower once plants have emerged, so a preemergence weed control program is key. There are several preemergence and postemergence herbicides that can control grass weeds in sunflower. For the latest recommendations, see K-State Report of Progress 994 "2008 Chemical Weed Control for Field Crops, Pastures, Rangeland, and Noncropland": <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/crpsl2/SRP994.pdf>

Read and follow all label directions when using any pesticide.

Sunflowers are also a good option for double cropping after wheat. Yields of 1,500 lbs/acre are not uncommon in southeast Kansas when planted as late as June or July. An important consideration for double cropping sunflowers after wheat is the field herbicide history. Several wheat herbicides restrict the time to which sunflower can be planted after application. There are, however, several options for weed control in wheat this spring that allow a doublecrop of sunflower.

Wheat herbicide	Sunflower rotation restriction after application*	Weeds controlled
Osprey	30 days	Italian ryegrass
Harmony GT	45 days	Treacle mustard, tumble mustard, tansy mustard, field pennycress, shepherdspurse, lambsquarters
Harmony Extra	45 days	Henbit, blue mustard, treacle mustard, tumble mustard, tansy mustard, field pennycress, shepherdspurse, lambsquarters
Affinity Tankmix/ Affinity BroadSpec	45 days	Henbit, blue mustard, treacle mustard, tumble mustard, tansy mustard, field pennycress, shepherdspurse, lambsquarters
Express TS	45 days	Blue mustard, treacle mustard, tansy mustard, field pennycress, lambsquarters
2,4-D	30 days	Blue mustard, treacle mustard, tumble mustard, tansy mustard, field pennycress, shepherdspurse, lambsquarters

*Refer to label for all rotational restrictions, full list of weeds controlled/suppressed, and applications rates/timings.

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3. Choosing wheat varieties for late winter plantings

Where wheat has not yet emerged, producers may still want to plant wheat this month or next. Potential yields with late planting are normally very low, but it's always possible to get a better-than-expected yield if spring conditions are very favorable and there is a long enough grain fill period.

When planting late, what variety should be used? If producers are planting before mid-February, Jagger can be used. This variety has a short vernalization period requirement for a hard winter wheat, and may have enough time to vernalize and head out when planted by mid-February in all but southeast Kansas. Wheat does not have to emerge as a seedling in order to be vernalized by cold temperatures. As long as the seed has received enough moisture to become physiologically active and begin the germination process, it can undergo vernalization. Winter wheat will vernalize after experiencing several weeks of soil temperatures below 48 degrees

In most of Kansas, it becomes much more unlikely that there will be enough periods of cold weather for Jagger to vernalize after mid-February. If producers are planting wheat after that time, it would be best to plant a spring wheat variety. Producers in northwest Kansas can wait a little longer to make that decision. Spring wheat does not have a cold temperature vernalization requirement.

When planting spring wheat, select the shortest-season variety you can find. Even then, yields will be quite variable. Most years, it turns hot too early in Kansas for spring wheat to yield more than 20 bushels per acre.

Another consideration when planting spring wheat is marketing. Producers should be sure they have a buyer lined up before planting spring wheat. If spring wheat gets commingled with winter wheat, it will be classified as “mixed wheat” and discounted heavily.

-- Jim Shroyer, Extension Agronomy State Leader
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These e-Updates are a regular weekly item from K-State Extension Agronomy and Steve Watson, Agronomy e-Update Editor. All of the Research and Extension faculty in Agronomy will be involved as sources from time to time. If you have any questions or suggestions for topics you'd like to have us address in this weekly update, contact Steve Watson, 785-532-7105 swatson@ksu.edu, or Jim Shroyer, Research and Extension Crop Production Specialist and State Extension Agronomy Leader 785-532-0397 jshroyer@ksu.edu