

Agronomy "Crib" Notes



April 2013 – Checking Planter – Issue 2

Barry Fisher, NRCS State Soil Health Specialist

Victor Shelton, NRCS State Agronomist/Grazing Specialist

Tony Bailey, NRCS State Conservation Agronomist

Certainly hope that everyone is **checking over their planter**...on a regular basis. Planting conditions can change and so can the planter. Never assume it is right; better to double check. Check prior to planting and recheck throughout the planting season.

- ✓ Is the planter level level with the ground? Adjust the hitch, the frame should be level with the surface of the field in operating position. 
- ✓ Do all the row units run true to the direction of travel? Check for bent linkage arms or worn bushings.
- ✓ Are all fertilizer openers exactly the same distance off the row? They should operate at correct depth and deliver the same volume of product.
- ✓ Adjust down pressure on row units if needed. Lower the planter into planting position to do it. You should just be able to turn the gauge wheels by hand. Excessive down pressure will increase sidewall compaction and too little will result in poor depth control.
- ✓ Check depth if no-till coulters are used. The coulters should run one-quarter inch higher than seed opening disks.
- ✓ Are seed opening disks sharp and no smaller than what the manufacturer recommends?
- ✓ Are disc openers adjusted to maintain 2 to 2 1/2 inches of contact on the cutting edge?
- ✓ Check seed drop tubes for wear every year. Replace if tips are worn. Make sure to use standard size tubes (made for corn). Are there any plastic burs inside the tubes that could cause problems?
- ✓ Adjust the depth gauge wheels to maintain contact with seed disks when lifted up to their normal planting depth.
- ✓ Do any of the chain idlers need to be replaced? What about worn or sticking chains? Don't forget to lube chains.
- ✓ Bearings on seed drives ok?. Replace if any cause chatter.
- ✓ Are row cleaners running at the correct depth? They just need to move residue, not soil.
- ✓ Have seed metering units been calibrated and worn parts replaced?
- ✓ Have you aligned closing wheels so that they are spaced equally outside the seed slot?

Refer to your operator's manual for manufacturer's recommended settings!

Mark your Calendar!



Soil Health Workshops – The Conservation Cropping

Systems Initiative and the Indiana Conservation Partnership are sponsoring a series of soil health workshops across Indiana. Go to <http://iaswcd.org/CCSI/ccsi-calendar.html> for dates and more information.

The **Purdue Pest and Crop Newsletter** is a great way to keep up with the latest information. You can sign up for it at <http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/pestcrop/subscribeSecure.php>.

Issues of this publication plus more information can be found at <http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/agronomy/agronomy.html>

