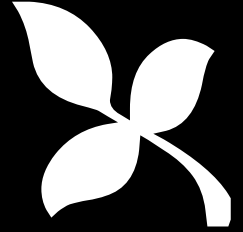


Texas Agricultural Extension Service

The Texas A&M University System

Soil & Crop Sciences Department



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Tips for Soybean Production in Panhandle, S. Plains

Amarillo- Farmers in the Texas Panhandle and South Plains have jumped on the soybean bandwagon. Soybean production in those areas has increased dramatically over the last two years, says Dr. Brent Bean, agronomist with the TAEX.

According to Bean, Texas soybean acreage grew from 190,00 in 1996 to 420,000 in 1997. This can partly be attributed to the loss of cotton acreage in the south Plains, Bean said. Other factors that led farmers to make the switch included poor early season weather conditions and boll weevil concerns.

Bean said the availability of Roundup Ready herbicide-resistant soybean varieties also helped producers make the change. Using Roundup in soybeans appears to help effectively control or suppress weeds that producers were less able to control on other crops.

In the past two years, a few producers have been successful in growing dryland soybeans, said Bean. Yields have generally ranged from 15 to 20 bushels per acre. With these kind of dryland yields, soybeans will compete favorable in most years with wheat or sorghum, he added.

He cautioned producers to check rainfall histories in their area for 1996 and 1997 when considering crop selections. Weather conditions were very favorable for soybean production in those years, he said. 1982-1983 studies demonstrated the importance of water that the plant must have for grain fill, which typically occurs in August. When irrigation was not applied during the critical grain-fill period, yields were greatly affected. In 1983, if a single irrigation was missed during this period, yields were reduced 22 bushels an acre. He says soybeans can be stressed early in the season without greatly affecting yield.

A soybean-corn rotation will give producers an excellent opportunity to clean up weeds, and break insect and disease cycles that can build up in continuous corn systems.

Soybean rotation with cotton or sorghum isn't as viable, from an irrigation scheduling stand point, since the periods of maximum water use are virtually the same for these crops.

In 1996 and 1997, some farmers realized 40-bushel yields when beans were planted in the first week of July. However, for every day past about June 20 that planting is delayed, yield will generally be reduced one bushel per day.

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