



Welcome to 2022! For many people across the globe 2021 couldn't end fast enough. However, for those of us in agriculture, 2021 will go down in the record books as a very good year. 2021 brought many local producers the highest corn and soybean yields they had ever experienced. In addition, we enjoyed one of the more pleasant (and productive) harvest seasons in recent memory! I doubt we ever see another harvest where the last stalk of corn looks nearly identical to the first stalk harvested! More importantly, prices for corn and soybeans remain strong...setting up nicely for another successful run in '22.

2021 was a record setting year for many Hillcrest customers. As many AG publications have shown, Mar-I-War farms set the "high water mark" with a 320.79 Bu/A National Corn Growers Yield Contest check. This yield was not only the highest weigh check we have done at Hillcrest but was also enough to be the 2021 NCGA Iowa State Champion in the Non-Irrigated/ Tillage category. Mar- I- War farms also placed 3rd in the Irrigated/Tillage category for the Iowa Corn Growers Competition with their P1563AM entry of 290 Bu/A. Congratulations to Jim Gregory and crew!!

In addition to these state place winners, we also had some top finishers for three other local operations.

- 310 Bu/A with P1082AM = 5th Iowa Mulch/Min Tillage Division
- 298 Bu/A with 1213AM = 11th Iowa No-Till Division
- 291 Bu/A with P1213AM = 22nd Iowa Mulch/Min Tillage Division

These 290+ checks weren't the only entries for the year...we had multiple checks ranging from 265-290 Bu/A! (As a reminder the NCGA entries require a minimum of 1.25 Acres weighed per qualifying entry) Very legitimate and VERY BIG yields for SW Iowa...Also personal bests for all 3 of these operations! Nicely done...Thank you to all that completed weigh checks with us!

On the soybean side we had several 85-90+ Bu/A yield checks. These levels have been rare for us in Fremont and Mills Counties. However, we also saw a new record high with a 106 Bushel/Acre yield check in Southern Mills county with P29A25X! If we can continue to put yields like these together in the coming years, soybeans stand the risk of losing their "2nd Crop" designation in Iowa. Congratulations on these "next level" soybean yields!

It is nice to see the hard work of our plant breeders pay off in a big way! We are seeing new yield levels from not just 1-2 products, but multiple corn and soybean products throughout our lineup. With that being said...these products work their best when growers do the right things to make them successful. Managing fertility, choosing the right planting conditions, protecting from disease, and timely harvest are just a few of the important "risk management" decisions that greatly impact the performance of these products. Thank you for the work you guys are doing to help make our products shine!

Fertilizer

Unfortunately, with high market prices and record crop revenues come with higher input prices. Fertilizer is leading the way with as much as 300% increases over last year. For those of you that still have fertilizer decisions to make, don't give up just yet... there has been some good news of late. Urea has been struggling to hold at these high levels and has come down roughly \$200/ton within the last week. Hopefully, if urea continues to struggle and it will pull the rest of the Nitrogen market down with it. MAP has also softened a bit in recent weeks. It is my hope this could be a sign that we have hit the high and prices will slowly start to come back "in check". In my opinion, I would not expect any huge correction as these increases have not been caused by supply and demand issues, but by greed. And we all know...greed doesn't usually correct itself quickly.

Crop Protection

Crop protection is the next challenge we will face. While the price increase(s) are not ideal, I don't see it being as much of an issue as the availability of some products. The predictions about supply shortages appear to be coming to fruition on several Crop protection products. For 2022, the industry will see supply challenges Atrazine, Gyphosate, Gluphosinate (Liberty), and Clethodim (corn Killer). I would suggest you build a plan that does not include Glyphosate on every pass. It will be extremely tight on supply and price will be very high. We will be looking at \$15/ quart rather than \$5/ quart. It will no longer be cheap insurance, so we will want to utilize the glyphosate for cleanup/rescue situations.

Manufacturers continue to promise product will be in place in time, but there is a lot of product left to ship and only about 10 weeks left to get the pre-emergence product in place. Stay in touch with your supplier and make sure you are making necessary adjustments to your plan.

If you haven't utilized the Corteva Crop Protection tie-in program, the 2022 offering will add 10% or 15% to your Corteva prepay dollars. We will be happy to help you with any questions you have and help enter those checks into the system as needed. This is a favorable offering that will help indirectly offset some of the increase in prices we are experiencing for 2022. Please talk to us or your crop protection supplier to find out how to utilize that program to help maximize your buying power.

Corn meters

For those of you with finger pickup meters, Manny is set up and currently running meters. Give us a call or drop your meters off if you would like to get them calibrated on the stand. If you have not had your units run for a year or so, I would highly recommend allowing Manny to get them "tuned in" this winter. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" ...as they say.

Thanks again for your continued support. Please let us know what we can do to help your operation continue to become more efficient and more profitable. Jan/Feb/March are important months in agriculture for planning and learning. Please make time to come in and discuss your plans for the upcoming growing season. Looking forward to a successful 2022!

Ryan, Manny, Drayton and Melanie