

Field Connections

Make Adjustments For Planting In Wetter Soils

The wet conditions have kept equipment out of most fields. Hopefully conditions will improve and field work will progress. The reality is that planting will be (and is) taking place in less than ideal conditions. Remember that wet soils are easily compacted and sidewall compaction, created at planting, can be a real problem throughout the rest of the season.

Reduce the down pressure on the press wheels. Excessive down pressure will over pack the soil around the seed. Simply lighten up on the spring tension on the press/closing wheels. Keep in mind that the targeted pressure zone is 2 inches below the soil surface.

Plant the corn seed 2 inches deep. If the seed is planted shallower than 2 inches then the press wheels will be packing the soil below the seed where roots will eventually try to grow. It's also a good practice keeping the planting depth at 2 inches in order for the plant's crown and secondary roots to be well established in the soil.

Level the planter. Be sure the planter is sitting parallel to the ground (front to back). If the planter runs even slightly nose-down, the angle of the closing wheels is incorrect which then causes poor performance.



Photos courtesy of University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Fracture, or till, the sidewall while closing the seed furrow. The double disc openers push the soil outward to open the furrow for proper seed placement. Unfortunately in wet conditions, the pressure of the discs combined with the depth gauge wheels pushing down creates a vertical compaction layer. The sidewalls may become hard and smooth as it dries if not sufficiently closed. Fracturing, or tilling, the seed furrow sidewalls helps deteriorate the hard surface and creates good seed-to-soil contact.



Use spoked closing wheels. Using spoked closing wheels provides a means of tilling the sidewall. If using spoked closing wheels on both sides of the seed furrow, be sure to use a seed firmer for seed-to-soil contact. Another option is to use a spoked wheel on one side and a standard press wheel on the other side of the seed row, which works in a wide range of conditions and provides good furrow closing as it also firms the soil.

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