



Field Notes for The Week Of

7-18-2022

Why Are Corn and Soybeans Turning Yellow?

We have made it halfway through the month of July and that means summer is at its halfway point, day are getting shorter and nights gradually getting longer triggers many of our day sensitive crops to enter the reproductive phase. Longer nights also have some effects on livestock breeding cycles, this is the beginning of sheep breeding season. Last week was a wonderful week at the fair and I truly believe probably the best weather conditions the Adams County Fair has ever experienced. I was able to meet many hard-working young folks with their projects. I also met many of my traditional farmers and have some good discussion on many topics ranging from weather to livestock markets. A few notes that I took in my discussion is that precipitation amounts, and needs are very variable across the county with some in desperate need for a rain and other just drying out from the last rain. The weather is not the only thing that is variable, crop growth has a wide range too. Some crops are growing strong while others are just now emerging and beginning its life. Pink eye in cattle was another hot topic with many cattle producers struggling to get a handle on the issue. But even with all the stress agriculture is facing it was nice to see so many happy faces at the fair, enjoying a long-standing agriculture tradition. Even with all the busyness at the fair, I still managed to get out in the field and make some field calls. I received a few calls regarding corn and soybeans turning yellow along the edge of the field. After making the field visits and scouting numerous other fields showing the same symptoms, I concluded that the crops were showing potassium deficiency.

Potassium deficiency symptoms in corn and soybeans include yellowing along the edge or margins of the older leaves on the plant. Potassium can be confused with nitrogen deficiencies. The difference between Nitrogen and potassium deficiencies is that nitrogen deficiency will begin from the center of the leaf blade and work its way out to the edge while potassium starts on the outer edge and works its way into the center. Potassium deficiency is common to see during the summer growing season following a very wet spring or other stresses such as compaction or plant root restrictions. These factors in combination with short term dry spells can cause plant to decrease potassium uptake from the soil. To know if this is the main cause of soybeans or corn symptoms, producers can take tissue samples in combination with soil samples. Soil potassium levels should be maintained between 100-120 parts per million. If your soil or tissue samples come back in adequate amounts then root restriction is the likelihood for the symptoms. Planting deep rooted cover crops such as cereal rye, annual ryegrass, and radishes can do wonders for breaking up compaction. Deep ripping tillage can also help in alleviating some of the deep compaction problems.

