



CROP SOLUTIONS THAT WORK

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Giving your corn crop the best start

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There are lots of articles describing the idea of picket fence corn stand establishment. There has been less emphasis given to the importance of consistent seeding depth and the monitoring of that seeding depth to give you the most uniform emergence.

Some growers are thinking about shallower planting because of the thought that getting corn out of the ground faster equals a better stand and yield potential. It's important to note, faster out of the ground does not necessarily mean better. Even and consistent emergence is the goal. Later emerging plants act as runts, never catching up to first emerging plants or reaching their full yield potential.

New corn planter technology can compensate with down pressure adjustments as you plant to maintain the consistent seeding depth. However, seeding depth is still a manual setting on a majority of planters. Therefore, checking seeding depth is still an important management practice in the field and should be checked several times across the field and again in each field you plant.

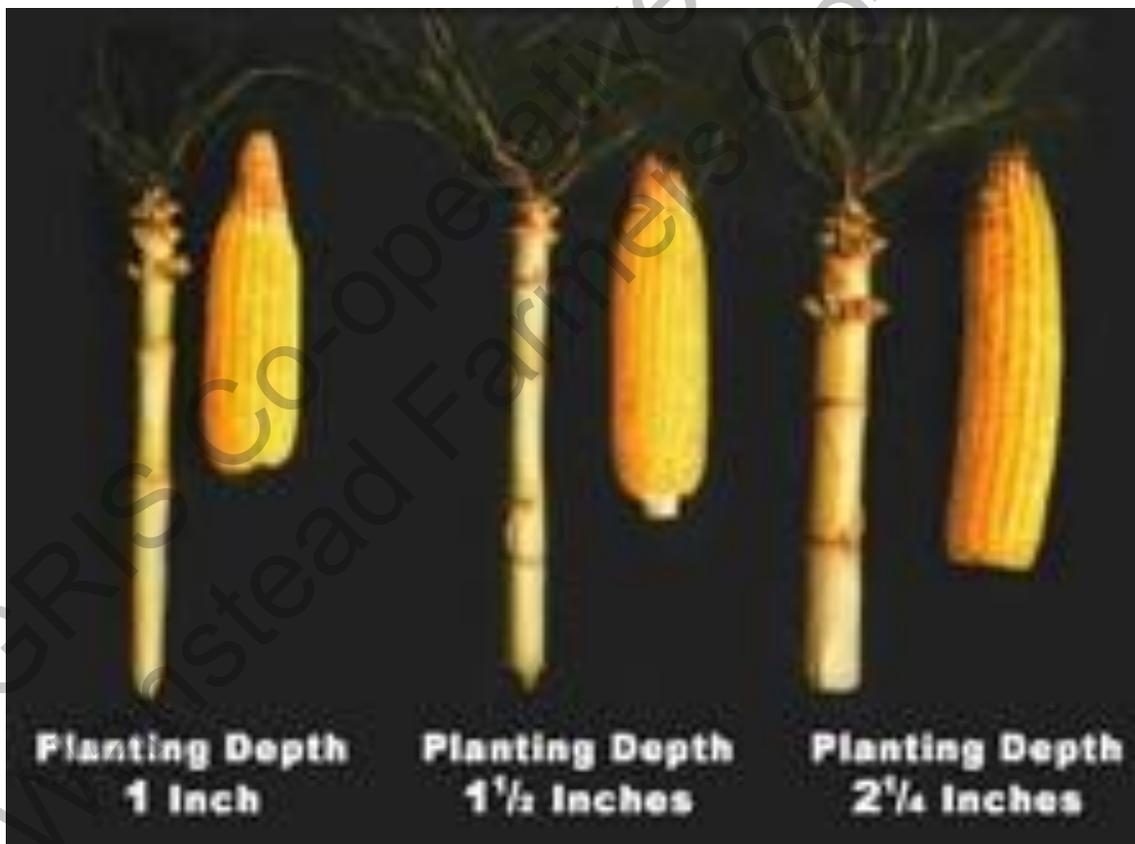
Here are four things to consider when thinking about corn planting depth.

1. Plant to moisture. A corn seed must take up 30 per cent of its weight in water before it will start to germinate. Seeds not adequately planted into moisture will have delayed germination until enough moisture is available, typically resulting in delayed emergence.



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2. Residue from previous corn crops must be taken in to consideration when determining planting depth. This includes residue on the surface and residue that has been incorporated in years previous. In my experience, most problematic residues are in the top two inches of the soil surface. For many growers planting at 2 ¼ inches allows the double disc openers to cut through the residue, placing each seed consistently within the soil profile.



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3. Planter maintenance and set up is key to achieving consistent planting depth, giving your crop the best chance for even emergence. This will include coulters, row openers, fertilizer openers and placement are all functioning properly row to row. A good management practice when starting to plant is to check and level of the planter front to back as well as side to side.
4. Nodal root development. Planting too shallow can result in nodal roots emerging above the soil surface. This reduces the root mass below ground which can lead to mid-season and late season lodging. As well, shallow nodal roots do not allow access to moisture deeper in ground during times of drought. This may also contribute to rootless corn syndrome earlier in the season if it remains dry.

Remember, you only get one chance to plant your corn crop correctly. Taking the time to check planting depth and consistency in every field, even multiple times in the same field, will help get your crop off to the best possible start.

In the spring we are only a phone call away to offer assistance in checking on your planting depth.

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