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# AGRONOMY ALERT



## A Great Wheat Plot Begins At Planting

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As we progress into silage harvest, wheat season is going to quickly approach. The best way to ensure a successful crop starts at planting. If we do the basics right, the wheat crop in the spring will be off to a good start.

### Timing

When it comes to planting, be mindful of your local Hessian Fly date and freeze dates. Planting ahead of the freeze date will allow the wheat plants to grow and tiller prior to snowfall. For most of the Northeast that falls between September 15th and October 15th. Depending on your management style, keep in mind that no-till planted wheat will be slower to emerge due to cooler soil temperatures. Timing is important in managing possible fall disease and pest pressures and ensuring proper overwintering.

### Populations and Seeding Depth

Another factor when it comes to planting management is proper populations. To achieve the most yield out of the crop, the target is around 1.3-1.5 million seeds per acre. Depending on the soil type, variety, seed size, and fall conditions, this may be adjusted. Certain varieties may produce better at lower populations and varieties may have different seed sizes. Adjust your population for seed size and know the recommendations for each variety to get the most out of your crop.

As we progress through the fall, planting population also changes with planting date. The later we get into the fall, the population you aim for should increase, rule of thumb would be to increase 1% for every day past optimum, up to 30%. We also want to make sure to increase populations if going into a no-till situation. Ideally, we want to stay under 2 million seeds per acre, but it is important to adjust for conditions and the ground we are planting into to ensure good stand and yields come spring time.

Similar to our other crops, seed to soil contact and planting depth play a large role in germination and stand health. When planting wheat, a planting depth of 1.5-2 inches is recommended under normal, ideal, circumstances. Later planted wheat is at risk of frost heaving and winter kill, if the seed is too shallow the risk greatly increases.

Keep in mind that each of these factors is important in ensuring a strong, healthy wheat crop heading into the spring. It is easy to forget the basics, but yields start from the moment the seed hits the soil.