

Plant And Scout At The Same Time

Editor's Note: Next in a series from Iowa farmer Tyler Bruch whose family farms 10,500 acres in Bahia, Brazil.

The planting season carried on from last Oct. 28 to Jan. 7 – it seemed like forever. We planted about 650 acres a week for the last 6-7 weeks, and about 6,000 acres in the weeks before that.

The popcorn that we started with is completely pollinated and filling ears as I write this in early January, and the last of the cotton has yet to come out of the ground. We took a slow approach with cotton and only tried to plant in perfect conditions. As a result, we only had to replant about 25 acres due to poor germination. I feel like the most important job of the year is over.

The rains have been about perfect so far this year. Unlike most years where we get four to five days of rain in a row, it has been distributed a lot better. The longest we've gone without rain is seven days, and our total rainfall is about 21 in. so far this growing season.

If there are a few rains in the last 2-3 weeks of January, which sometimes can represent a mini-drought, we should be set on

moisture. Usually, February and March are our wettest months.

As of early January, the soybeans are in V-12 (near mid-thigh high) and continue to look very good. As



Even though planting just ended, Bruch checks mature soybeans for rust.

of now we have potential to break our goal of 45-50 bu./acre on every acre. However, we still have a lot of management ahead.

Asian soybean rust is starting to be widespread in the region. It's not much of an issue to control, but something that has to be monitored daily. We'll try to hold off on our first fungicide application so the protection will take us to a time frame when the second application will carry us to maturity.

Our popcorn continues to fill ears, and we'll be harvesting in early February. The price continues to hold near \$14/bu. All

of the cotton has great uniformity and our final stand count of 46,000-48,000 plants/acre is ideal.

Our spraying continues every day. We sprayed about 32,000 acres by mid-January. We'll continue spraying 12-15 hours a day, every day that we possibly can from now until mid-March. Then it will be 6-8 hours a day until mid-May.

Last week I found myself sitting in our sprayer and grabbing the wheel while teaching one of my employees how to follow a lightbar. I was less than thrilled and thought it was taking a long time for the lesson to stick. But then I remembered my father telling me about when he was 10 years old and began cultivating corn. He said Grandpa would stand on the hitch of the Farmall H and pull the wheel, trying to keep him on track.

I also remember Dad doing the same routine when I began plowing at about the same age – of course it wasn't on an H

but it was the same principle. I think the quick flashback allowed me to keep my cool as we continued to weave back and forth. ■