

# OUR FARM

By Tyler Bruch

## Ready To Plant... In November

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

It has remained hot and dry here in Western Bahia for the last three months. This is normal for our winter because we're in the heart of the dry season. We've been working ground 24 hours a day, 7 days a week since mid-May in preparation for cotton, soybeans and popcorn. We'll need another 45 days before we're caught up with all the tillage.

A huge advantage of farming here is you have all off-season to do field work. However, as we worry about ground freezing in Iowa, we worry about it drying out here. Typically, we start fieldwork right

behind soybean harvest, when ground still has a lot of moisture in it. As you go further along into the dry season the ground starts to harden. So before this happens, we want to get over all of our acres with a sub-soiler to break the crust.

If we get behind with our sub-soilers, our shop mechanic will be the first to know. We snapped three drawbars on our last two days of crust breaking. Once we've sub-soiled it, we can come with any form of tillage and not have any problems.

**Our off-season** tillage program this year is more than normal, but we are making some pH adjustments on the cotton ground with lime that require deep tillage.

Our soybean program is semi

no-till, and next year our cotton will be, too. We began by spreading lime, then sub-soiling the ground so we could get back on it later with deep plows.

We're pulling the plows around 16-18 in. deep, which takes a lot of horsepower, fuel and time to get across the acres. Then we spread phosphorus on the plowed ground and come back with a 20 blade, 34-in. disk, to mix it into the soil profile (another slow process), leveling the ground for our next step. Once this is completed we can put down our MAP. After all of these steps are finished, we're ready to plant in late November.

Our off-season program for soybeans is pretty simple. We'll bulk spread a majority of our fertilizer (0-46-60) during the dry season, then start working it in after we get the first rain of the season, typically in late October. A small portion of our soybean fertilizer is applied with the planters as a form of starter on our newer, less fertile soils.

Popcorn will be no-till planted with the bulk of the fertilizer going on with the planter (10-49-0 with micronutrients). Our goal is to plant the popcorn in late October, anticipating the rains. This will enable us to get it harvested by February and still be able to double-crop a short-season edible bean.

Soybeans will be planted from Nov. 1 to Dec. 10, and we'll start with cotton around Nov. 15-20,

hoping to have it in by Dec. 15. This is ideal in a perfect world, but we can easily have 15 days of nearly non-stop rain mixed into the schedule.

We'll begin our pre-maintenance in September, going through planters, sprayers and what tractors are not being used. This year we're waiting on a custom-built planter bar and a 2,000-gal., 132-ft. sprayer both leaving out of New York. This is the only time in my life that I am concerned about the possibility of hurricanes. ■

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