

It's time to see what drought tech can do

By TOM J. BECHMAN

FARM Progress editorial director Willie Vogt put it best. This is the year to see what new technologies such as drought-tolerant corn can do. Even if it's an oasis in your area, it won't be hard to find plots to look at or data to review from places that are more like a desert.

Therein lies the rub: Will this season be so extreme in some areas that the technologies that are supposed to help corn or soybeans survive dry weather better will be overshadowed? One company's own literature even says its technology won't let you grow corn in a desert, but will benefit corn when conditions are dry.

Tabbed the "Extreme Summer" by some TV weather gurus, the weather is desert-like in parts of various states in the central and eastern Corn Belt. However, Vogt makes a good point. If you want to see what a product can do, look for those areas that were dry, but not so dry that all bets were off and nothing would work.

Drought tolerance

Pioneer introduced AquaMax corn on a limited basis this year. The hybrids are in the field. Monsanto is ready to bring its drought-tolerant product to the market.

The key is drought "tolerant" — not



drought "resistant." Keep the difference in mind when viewing plots where these products are planted. Did they give plants an edge when it was dry but still reasonable? If so, they're doing their job. Most companies developing these products talk about 12 to 15 extra bushels per acre, not 112 to 115 more bushels.

Syngenta promotes fungicides

Quilt Xcel and Quadris fungicides from Syngenta are touted for their ability to boost performance in a dry year. Syngenta says they increase efficiency of water use, and university tests prove it. A 2010 University of Nebraska study did show that Quilt Xcel sprayed over corn increased yields by 8 bushels per acre on fully irrigated fields and by 15 bushels per acre on fields receiving 60% of recommended irrigation. In both cases, corn received at least 7 inches of water through irrigation — this wasn't a desert study!

New seed treatment

Bayer CropScience received registration for EverGol Energy fungicide seed



treatment for 2013. In addition, Bayer and Pioneer Hi-Bred International have reached an agreement that allows Pioneer to provide EverGol Energy to farmers on Pioneer soybeans in 2013.

Bayer says EverGol Energy is a next-generation technology with multiple modes of action. The goal is enhanced protection against a broad spectrum of early-season diseases, plus improved crop vigor. The company says it should also result in more efficient use of water and nutrients.

Improved protection

Triple Crown from FMC is billed as delivering three-way protection against aphids, stinkbugs and other key pests. It can be

used in corn, soybeans and cotton.

The insecticide is a combination of pyrethroid and neonicotinoid. It offers both post-systemic and contact activity in the plant.

Smart antenna

Hemisphere GPS brings the A325 GNSS Smart Antenna to market as an affordable GPS receiver. It's so flexible it can be used where only submeter accuracy is needed without charge, or it can access fee-based centimeter-level-accuracy RTK that utilizes both GPS and GLONASS satellites. The Smart Antenna accomplishes this through the use of Hemisphere GPS' SureTrack technology.