

## Nebraska/Colorado crop clinic to be held in Sterling

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

---

Colorado and Nebraska are jointly hosting this year's crop clinic on limited irrigation systems Dec. 2-3 in Sterling. The clinic's goals are to provide education for farmers and their advisors on the following topics:

- —understanding crop growth stages when water stress is and is not acceptable.

—optimizing limited irrigation water for crops and crop rotation systems.

—recognizing weed, insect and disease pest shifts under crop drought stress.

—appreciating the benefits of leaving old crop residues for soil moisture and organic matter retention.

—developing a cost-efficient crop and crop system fertilizer plan.

The clinic planning committee is requesting one continuing education credits (CEUs) for licensed pesticide applicators for agricultural weeds. The committee is also expecting to offer CEUs for certified crop advisors, soil and water—six, nutrient management—three, crop management—three and pest management—two.

Contact Bruce Bosley at 522-3200 x285 or e-mail [bruce.bosley@colostate.edu](mailto:bruce.bosley@colostate.edu) for further information and to register. Registrations for the clinic are limited and will be taken until the program maximum is filled.

## Harvesting corn residue to ease planting

With this year's good corn yields and increased plant material, some farmers are concerned about dealing with the entire residue. Properly handling the residue at harvest is key to preparing for the next crop.

Corn stalks and leaves must be processed down through the snapping rolls at harvest to make no tilling into corn residue easier. Knife-to-knife or tapered snapping rolls are more aggressive to lacerate and crush the stalks. By getting the stalks broken open and down to the soil, they are exposed to microbes and weather conditions that will help speed decomposition.

With BT corn hybrids, new disease packages and in-season fungicide applications, processing the stalks with the corn head is even more important as there is less natural breakdown.

Numerous aftermarket snapping rolls are available to aid in processing residue. Many of them are tapered or a knife-to-knife design, such as those on most of the newer European corn heads being promoted to process residue.

Usually, producers should avoid the chopping heads with the shredders underneath as they cost more, weigh more and take more horsepower. In addition, the chipping corn heads process the residue too much, leaving it much more likely to blow around.

A 12-18 inch tall corn stalk anchored and upright after harvest helps keep the residue in place, reducing residue movement by wind and water. It also catches snowfall and reduces wind erosion. The standing residue allows good air movement down to the soil surface, encouraging faster breakdown of the residue.

Matted or flattened residue doesn't let the surface soil dry as quickly and may delay planting in wet springs. Leaving taller stalks at harvest may create problems when catching on planters or fertilizer equipment the next spring.

Residue should be left in the field as it protects the soil to reduce erosion and conserve water, critical in dry land production. The residue mulch greatly reduces evaporation, saving three to five inches of water over the growing season. Leaving crop residues also replaces soil nutrients

## Nebraska/Colorado crop clinic to be held in Sterling

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

---

and can stabilize or increase soil organic matter and result in more productive soils.