

Seeding rate, depth can be picked

In the scheme of planting wheat, many factors have been determined when the tractor pulls into the field. However, seeding rate and depth can still be decided, within reason.

Seeding rates in western Kansas range from 600,000 to 900,000 seeds per acre planted (40 to 60 pounds at a rate of 15,000 seeds per pound). Considering 80 percent germination and emergence, the plant population may vary from 450,000 to 750,000 plants per acre. Seeding rates for irrigated wheat are 900,000 to 1,350,000 seeds per acre (60 to 90 pounds per acre of 15,000 seeds per pound). This would result in a final stand of 720,000 to 1,080,000 plants per acre.

Traditionally, seeding rate is viewed as pounds of seed per acre. However, seeding rates of wheat



jeanne falk

• extension district

are increasingly viewed similar to corn seeding rates, as seeds per acre. This is due to the variability of seed size in seed wheat. For example, Overlay is a variety that normally has large seeds when compared to other varieties. This would result in fewer seeds per pound and if planting in pounds per acre, fewer seeds planted per acre.

Lower seeding rates will tiller more than higher seeding rates. This can allow the wheat plant to make adjustments based on the available

soil water. During tillering in the fall (mid October), wheat can use over 0.6 inch per week.

Seeding rates can be adjusted upwards by 10 to 20 percent, if planting conditions are good or if quicker cover is desired. Seeding rates should also be increased 50 to 100 per cent when double-cropping behind row crops. This is due to the later planting date and compensating with challenges associated with seed-to-soil contact and residue. In addition, this also potentially compensates for the decreased time for tillering by adding more plants per acre.

Wheat can emerge from various depths, but a planting depth of 1½

inches is optimal. The important part of planting depth is the length of the coleoptile. Coleoptile length is related to the height of the wheat. Many times a taller variety will have a longer coleoptile, although there are always exceptions. In addition, wheat emerging in hot soils can experience problems with the coleoptile. Extremely warm soil can cause the coleoptile to shorten and prevent it from emerging from the soil surface.

In dry soil, a hoe drill can help place seed deeper into soil moisture. However, when creating deep furrows, be aware that a heavy rain can further bury the seed. This can cause a deeper 'planting depth' than intended and decreased seedling emergence.

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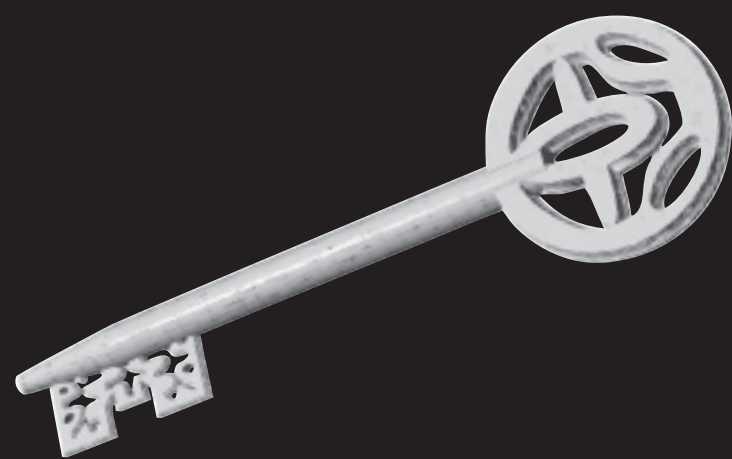
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