

INTEGRATED CROP MANAGEMENT

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Crop Production

More about early seed discounts

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We received a great deal of feedback from our article in the October 9, 2006, issue of the *ICM* newsletter concerning early seed discounts. Most of it was very positive and congratulated us for tackling an issue that is important to every grower. There were also a few readers who felt the article missed the mark, so we want to clarify some of the points.

Growers can lock in early seed discounts without locking into purchasing a particular variety. One aspect of risk management is determining how many different varieties will be planted on a specific number of acres. This decision should not be made based on price alone.

Our main objective was to highlight just how much risk is involved when selecting hybrids without using performance data. The good news is that our crop performance testing program is providing performance information earlier than ever before. Data from corn, soybean, alfalfa, and small grains variety tests can be accessed, free of charge, by anyone.

A second objective was to emphasize the need to use regional data rather than single-location data when making selection decisions. Single-location information is a good measure of performance for the current growing season but is much more reliable as a predictive component after data from several locations are combined into regional analyses.

This year, the Iowa Crop Performance Tests evaluated 390 distinct hybrids and 365 soybean varieties. With 36 testing locations across the state,

there is a wealth of information available to growers at www.croptesting.iastate.edu. In most cases, this information is presented early enough to allow growers to make selection decisions based on performance data **and** take advantage of early seed discounts. That's a management decision that everybody can live with.

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