

VIKING DELIVERS A WINNING ORGANIC LINEUP

By Mac Ehrhardt, Co-owner



Sometimes, one superstar number really shines in a given year. That's a good thing. For our farmers, however, it may be even better when

we have several strong performers. That's the case this year, as our lineup of organic corn hybrids and soybean varieties turned in strong performances at university and private trials throughout the region. That means more quality choices for our organic customers.

Here are some of the results from a few of our top performers that you'll want to consider for 2017. You can see all the results by visiting our website, alseed.com.

Viking 0.51-04GS Corn

#1 Silage Hybrid at University of Minnesota and Michigan State!
Grain/Silage Hybrid

MSU Early Silage Trial (three-location average)
33,709 lbs milk/acre (#1 out of 34 hybrids!)
3,428 lbs milk/ton
9.7 dry tons/acre

University of Minnesota South East Early (Rochester, MN)
34,468 lbs milk/acre (#1 out of 27 hybrids!)
13.7 dry tons/acre

University of Wisconsin South Central Early
35,400 lbs milk/acre
3,470 lbs milk/ton
10.2 dry tons/acre

Viking 0.58-98GS Corn

Yield, Stress Tolerance and Adaptability

University of Wisconsin (North Central Zone)
30,800 lbs milk/acre
3,300 lbs milk/ton

Michigan State University
Early Silage (<104RM)
31,579 lbs milk/acre
3,429 lbs milk/ton



Why do some Viking hybrids receive the GS designation?

Simply put, these are organic dual-purpose grain hybrids that also produce exceptional quality silage. We test our hybrids, in the field and in the lab, for silage quantity and quality against leading silage hybrid genetics at similar maturities. Only those hybrids that show consistently excellent tonnage and quality get the GS designation.

Why GS for silage? Because grain has energy. Our GS hybrids are very high-yielding grain hybrids. As a result, you're going to get a lot of grain in your silage, which equates to higher energy. GS hybrids have an optimal grain-to-stover ratio and have excellent standability compared to low-lignin specialty silage hybrids.



VIKING ORGANIC CORN, BEANS PRODUCE TOP YIELDS

In university trials and farmers' fields, our organic corn hybrids and soybean varieties stood out from the pack. The results confirm our decision to focus exclusively on non-GMO and organic corn, soybean and alfalfa seed. They also speak to

our experience in organic agriculture and our commitment to quality seed for organic producers. The Organic Viking corn and soybean line is the longest standing brand on the market for a reason.

"I have never had my yield monitor hit 270 bushels per acre before. We were harvesting a field of O.84-95UP and over half a mile it averaged 220 bushels per acre."

—Certified organic producer; Glencoe, MN

Viking O.84-95UP

Robust, Healthy, High-Yielding



University of Minnesota Central Zone Early
224 bu/A over three locations

University of Wisconsin North Central Zone
ORGANIC
196 bu/A (statistically higher than trial
average of 187 bu/A)

Michigan State University
Early Grain Trials
214 bu/A over three
locations (statistically
higher than trial
average of 203
bushels per acre)

67.1 bu/A (one of the top yielders in
Viking four-location replicated testing)

University of Wisconsin
Southern Zone (two-location average)
80 bu/A (trial mean 78 bu/A)

University of Minnesota
Southern Zone (three-location average)
65.4 bu/A (109% of trial mean)

"The O.2188AT12N soybeans had a whole farm average of 46 bushels. That includes no-till acres where the beans were not as good. We had fields that went over 60 bushels. I will be ordering all 450 acres of beans from you this year."

—Hudson, NY

"Our O.2188AT12N averaged over 60 bushels across the entire farm. The monitor was hitting 70 plus in places. I planted them on both our rolled down rye fields and our plowed fields. Our rolled down rye beans were within five bushels of our plowed fields."

—Cuba City, WI

VIKING ORGANIC CORN HYBRIDS MAKE THE GRAIN MILLERS APPROVED LIST!

Grain Millers has added **Viking Ultra-Pure Organic O.84-95UP, O.86-03UP** and **40-03UP** to their approved list. These hybrids possess very good agronomic traits and yields. They also have very good to excellent milling performance for food

corn production. Contact Grain Millers with any questions regarding contracting or food-grade corn production. You can contact Steve Wickes or Brenda Worrick at Grain Millers/ Agricor at 765-662-0606 or senior trader C.J. Eisler at 952-983-1344 or email cj.eisler@grainmillers.com.



Mike Schneider and Matt Leavitt talk seed in a field of organic Quest barley.

Organic agriculture has changed dramatically since Mike Schneider and his father, Jerry, began transitioning their crop and dairy operation in the early 1990s. In those days, he recalls, there were relatively few options available to farmers who were interested in pursuing an organic path.

“When my dad and I decided to raise organic food-grade soybeans for export in 1994, that was all before the National Organic Program (NOP) was formalized,” Mike says. “You’d talk to your seed dealer at the elevator, and he wouldn’t have what you needed. There are a lot of resources for organic farmers today, but back then there was Albert Lea Seed House and Doug Gunnink.”

Mike and his brother, Jimmy, farm together, and Jerry is still involved. The relationship with Albert Lea has remained strong through the years. Mike raised 160 acres of Quest barley this year, half of which was raised as seed barley for Albert Lea. He also planted Viking conventional 50-04N corn and Viking O.2188AT12 soybeans.

Thanks to his 300-head dairy operation, Mike is always looking for feed. That makes it easier to work cover crops into his rotation. His soybean field, for example, was in corn last year. After he cut the field for silage, he planted a rye/triticale mix as a cover. He will also plant some sorghum sudangrass. Small grains will often be planted with alfalfa, which will then produce alfalfa the next two years. Organic canning peas round out his normal rotation.

“We split our corn acres about 50/50 between silage and grain,” Mike notes. “After alfalfa, we’ll inject dairy or poultry manure on the corn acres. Our rotations are set up to ensure that we can get the best possible weed control in the corn. Forage-wise, we make just about everything into baleage.”

Though he’s tried some oats and hard red winter wheat, barley seems to work the best for the Schneiders. “It’s hard to get the protein levels we need here with the wheat,” Mike notes. “The more I researched it, I found that a lot of barley used to be grown around here. Barley responds well to high

pH soils, which we have on our farm. I’ve been very happy with our quality and yields the past couple of years.

“We like to adapt,” Mike says of their cropping rotations. “If we can grow it and the market’s there, why not? Diversity is a good thing. It’s good for the land, we can always use the feed and if it’s not a good year for beans, it may be a good one for small grain or peas or something else.”

Transition continues

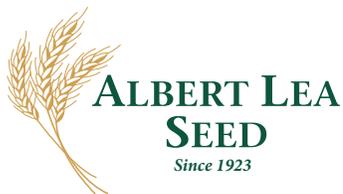
After moving into organic crop production, the Schneiders decided to follow the same path with their dairy operation, achieving organic certification in 2000. They currently milk about 300 head, and the herd is primarily Holsteins with some Jersey influence to ease calving for first-time heifers. In addition to the corn, silage and forage, the bulk of the Schneider soybean crop is roasted and fed to the dairy herd as well.

The Schneiders are currently transitioning 240 additional acres to organic production with a target date of 2018. That will bring their total up to 1,300 acres, which makes for a very full-time job when combined with the dairy herd. “There’s not a lot of time in a day to sit around, especially during the spring, summer and fall,” Mike notes.

As the organic industry continues to gain traction, Mike says that he is seeing some of the practices they’ve been using for some time gaining popularity with others in the area and the industry.

“I think organic farmers have been out in front on cover crops to some extent,” he states. “Now we’re seeing more interest in cover cropping in other area fields, which is a good thing. People are realizing it’s easier to kill a crop you put out there on purpose than the waterhemp that you didn’t.”

Though it was a true adventure when they ventured into organic production more than 20 years ago, time has proven that it was the right move for the Schneiders. “We’re glad Mac, Tom and their dad had the insight to start handling organic seed 20 years ago,” Mike concludes. ▀



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EXPANDED OPEN HOUSE A SUCCESS

Check the videos online!

We expanded our Albert Lea Seed open house to three days this year, and the change was well received. Over 350 farmers and farm families came to learn, eat and share over the three days.

The organic crowd won the numbers game with more than 150 in attendance on Friday for their session. Thanks to everyone who attended for making our annual open house a great success.

Those in attendance heard from excellent presenters addressing a wide range of topics. Here's a small sampling. Jessie VanderPoel, Grain Millers, addressed small grain markets on Thursday. Klaas and Mary-Howell Martens, Lakeview Organic Grain,

spoke about building resilience on an organic farm in the Friday session.

Erin Silva (UW) and an organic farmer panel discussed organic no-till soybean production using rolled winter rye. We had an excellent panel of three very experienced organic farmers discussing their machinery and methods for weed control.

We were happy to see so many of you on one or more of the open house days. If you were unable to attend, missed some of the sessions or just want to refresh your memory, we've placed most of the videos online. You can find them at www.youtube.com/user/AlbertLeaSeed. ▶



ORGANIC TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM



The Organic Trade Association (OTA) has announced a new partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help guide farmers transitioning into certified organic agricultural production. 

Using standards developed by OTA, the National Certified Transitional Program (NCTP) will provide oversight to approved Accredited Organic Certifying Agents offering transitional certification to producers. This will help ease the transition process to organic, allow farmers to sell their products as certified transitional at a premium price and help encourage more organic production.

Applications are due Feb. 28.

Visit www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing/apply for more information about the standard, the application process, and to download the application for service. ▶