

ANOTHER STRONG YEAR FOR VIKING ORGANIC CORN

As a leader in organic seed production, we know that one strip trial, one season or one conversation on the phone often isn't enough to help you arrive at the best organic corn hybrid for your farm. That is why we invest heavily in the replicated, statistically relevant corn trials we conduct across the northern United States every year. The information these trials generate helps you (and us) make the most informed seed choices.

With data from more than 40 locations in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Nebraska (in addition to the university, third-party and strip trials we enter every year), we feel confident we can fit a productive hybrid or hybrids into your rotation.

Here are a few selections from our trials that really stand out:

VIKING O.63-05N

- 105-day C.R.M.
- Stable performance across multiple zones, excellent rooting strength
- Tall hybrid, semi-flex ears, very good drought stress tolerance

30 location average (97-106 RM). 2015

Hybrid	RM	Yield	Moist.	Yield/Moist.	TW	Pop.
0.63-05N	105	200.6	18.32	10.95	56.4	28968
0.59-06N	106	197.7	18.72	10.56	56.8	29009
Great Harvest 37N4	97	192.7	16.50	11.68	58.1	29080
Pioneer 35K02	106	180.7	18.48	9.78	59.4	28841

Luther, IA, 2015

Hybrid	RM	Yield	Moist.	Yield/Moist.	TW	Pop.
0.63-05N	105	228.5	16.20	14.10	58.6	28750
GH37N4	97	181.0	14.15	12.79	58.9	28750
Pioneer 35K02	106	177.5	17.65	10.06	62.4	28750

Harvard, IL, 2015

Hybrid	RM	Yield	Moist.	Yield/Moist.	TW	Pop.
0.63-05N	105	216.1	20.82	10.38	54.2	28750
Great Harvest 37N4	97	211.1	18.24	11.57	55.6	28750
Pioneer 35K02	106	208.2	20.68	10.07	54.6	27443

Wabash, IN, 2015

Hybrid	RM	Yield	Moist.	Yield/Moist.	TW	Pop.
0.63-05N	105	221.9	16.50	13.45	57.2	29621
Great Harvest 37N4	97	208.1	16.10	12.93	59.2	29621
Pioneer 35K02	106	201.9	19.80	10.20	62.0	29621

VIKING O.58-98N

- 98-day C.R.M.
- Racehorse hybrid with excellent emergence, root strength and ear flex
- Best suited for medium to heavy soils with adequate fertility

Grafton, Iowa, 2015

Hybrid	RM	Yield	Moist.	Yield/Moist.	TW	Pop.
0.58-98N	98	221.1	14.15	15.63	59.0	28750
GREAT HARVEST 37N4	97	216.2	14.40	15.01	60.0	28750
PIONEER 36V51	102	178.5	14.95	11.94	59.2	28097

Cuba City, WI, 2015

Hybrid	RM	Yield	Moist.	Yield/Moist.	TW	Pop.
0.58-98N	98	235.2	22.10	10.64	56.3	30928
GREAT HARVEST 37N4	97	213.9	21.80	9.81	56.1	30928
PIONEER 36V51	102	181.3	21.90	8.28	55.9	30928

Wells, MN, 2015

Hybrid	RM	Yield	Moist.	Yield/Moist.	TW	Pop.
0.58-98N	98	213.4	13.60	15.69	56.6	27443
PIONEER 36V51	102	201.0	13.95	14.41	57.3	26354
GREAT HARVEST 37N4	97	200.3	13.75	14.57	57.8	27443

VIKING O.24-95N

[INPUT SAVER: \$30 OFF ON SMALL SEED!]

- 95-day C.R.M.
- Very good stalk strength, plant health and stress tolerance
- Good ear flex for varied populations, strong yield potential

New London, MN, 2015

Hybrid	RM	Yield	Moist.	Yield/Moist.	TW	Pop.
0.24-95N	95	208.0	17.60	11.82	59.0	33106
GREAT HARVEST 37N4	97	183.7	17.95	10.23	58.8	33106
PIONEER 36V51	102	157.0	19.55	8.03	58.8	33106

Blue Earth, MN, 2015

Hybrid	RM	Yield	Moist.	Yield/Moist.	TW	Pop.
0.24-95N	95	176.3	11.65	15.13	-	32670
GREAT HARVEST 37N4	97	170.5	14.80	11.52	-	32670
PIONEER 36V51	102	165.3	15.95	10.36	-	32670

Bode, IA, 2015

Hybrid	RM	Yield	Moist.	Yield/Moist.	TW	Pop.
0.24-95N	95	178.0	15.30	11.63	59.3	27443
PIONEER 36V51	102	173.7	15.85	10.96	58.0	24176

RAY YOKIEL: HE WAS ORGANIC BEFORE ORGANIC WAS

This year, Ray Yokiell will plant his 32nd organic crop. The fact is, Ray was organic before the organic movement existed. He inherited his environmentally friendly approach to farming from his father, who purchased the land Ray farms today in 1956.

“Dad never believed in fertilizers and herbicides,” Ray recalls. “He acknowledged that fertilizer would give him bigger yields, but he said, ‘It takes more crops to satisfy the animals.’ He could tell that the organic approach resulted in a more nutrient-dense end product.”

When Ray took over the farm in 1977, he practiced the same principles his father did. Today, he raises organic corn, soybeans, oats and canning peas in a three-year rotation on his farm near Wells, Minnesota.

Ray also had a chance to observe some of the alternatives to organic farming firsthand before he returned to the farm in 1977. “I got a degree in chemical engineering from the University of Minnesota, and I worked for Shell Chemical for a couple of years making pesticides,” he says. “That was a rude awakening, to see just how toxic some of those chemicals were.”

Natural mechanisms

Working in harmony with nature makes more sense to Ray. For example, he makes good use of cover crops and is a big believer in the rotational benefits of small grains in general and oats in particular.

“People went away from oats because the economics favored corn and soybeans,” Ray acknowledges, “but as far as what oats do for the soil, it’s very beneficial in the rotation. It’s not a row crop, I can underseed it with a cover crop, and it gives me a chance to work up my weeds one more time. I leave the straw out in the field after harvest, because there’s a fair amount of potassium and phosphorus in it. It’s in a much more available form for the next crop in that straw than it would be if I put it on in the rock form.”

Ray’s oat and soybean crops are raised for seed. “When Dad bought this farm in ‘56, he started raising seed for the Albert Lea Seed House, and when I took over I just continued doing that.”

Consumers driving the future

In Ray’s opinion, the organic approach to farming is clearly on an upswing, though the future is not without its challenges.

“It’s all driven by the consumers, who want to know where and how their food is grown,” he states. “Long-term, that’s good for organic farmers. At this point, a lot of the bigger companies are starting to take notice, and that could eventually cause downward pressure on the price farmers receive for their product.”

Producers are feeling some of the pressure now, in the form of European organic imports that have increased tenfold in recent years. And then there are the annual production concerns that all farmers face—plus a couple that are unique to the organic farmer.

“The two biggest hurdles for the organic farmer are nitrogen supply and weed control,” Ray states. “If you have livestock, your first concern is addressed. Weed control is a different issue, and it’s more dependent on the weather than anything else. GMO contamination from pollen drift is also a big concern.”

For Ray, however, there’s no question that he’s taken the right path. A 40-acre piece of ground he bought five years ago is proof of that.

“I wanted to see how long it would take to turn that ground over to organic,” he states. “It’s taken longer than I thought it would. I think I’m still a year away. It’s taken a long time to deplete the soil, and it will take a long time to build it back up. But it’s worth it if you’re concerned about the quality of the crop and the environment.”

“I’ve helped several guys transition to organic, and what’s amazing is once they’ve switched, they’ll say they feel good about farming again,” he concludes. “When you start using nature’s mechanisms for providing nutrients, it makes all the difference in the world.”

Ray flame cultivating his organic corn.



Organic Crop Insurance

Organic farming has become one of the fastest-growing segments of U.S. agriculture. USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) recognizes organic farming practices as good farming practices and continues to move forward in improving crop insurance coverage for organic producers and producers transitioning to organic production to make viable and effective risk management options available.

Several insurance alternatives exist to help organic farmers manage risk. For example, the Contract Price Addendum (CPA) allows you, as a certified organic or organic-transitional producer who has a written contract from a buyer by the acreage reporting date, the ability to insure your crop at the contract price. You can now buy a federal crop insurance guarantee that is more reflective of the actual value of your organic or organic-transitional crop.

Whole-Farm Revenue Protection provides a risk management safety net for all commodities on the farm under one insurance policy and is available in all counties nationwide. This insurance plan is tailored for any farm with up to \$8.5 million in insured revenue, including farms with specialty or organic commodities (both crops and livestock), or those marketing to local, regional, farm-identity preserved, specialty or direct markets.

For more information, visit the RMA website at: www.rma.usda.gov. ▶

Certification for Growers in Transition

The Organic Trade Association Transitional Certification Task Force continues to work with the National Organic Program to establish certification standards for growers transitioning from conventional to organic production. The goal is to ease the financial burden incurred by farmers during the transitional period.

The OTA task force continues to examine ways that a workable transitional certification program could be put in place, while also working to identify risks that a harmonized transitional program could pose to the certified organic industry. ▶

Organic Checkoff

The Organic Trade Association, in collaboration with the GRO Organic Core Committee, has formally petitioned the USDA for an organic research and promotion checkoff program. As proposed, the organic checkoff would be a full supply chain checkoff program, promoting the organic brand and organic production practices.

At this point, we don't have details on precisely what the checkoff will look like—for example, how checkoff funds would be assessed, how much money would be generated, and what the funds would be spent on. This is an issue that we will be watching. ▶

Gene Editing

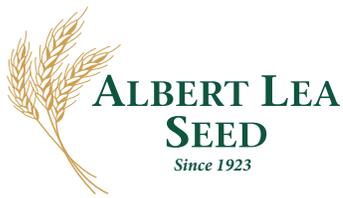
The National Organic Standards Board is likely to issue a guidance document this spring on several new plant breeding techniques. CRISPR/Cas is the breeding technique most often in the news, due to its profound implications for genetic therapy. But many related techniques such as RNA-dependent DNA methylation, reverse breeding and synthetic genomics also pose questions for organic plant breeders and certifiers. Mac Ehrhardt and Matt Leavitt attended a listening session on this subject at the Organic Seed Alliance Conference. Look for a comment period to open up soon on the USDA NOSB website. For details, visit <http://tiny.cc/usda>. ▶

Organic Involvement

Mac Ehrhardt is now serving as the Chairman of the Organic Committee for the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA). The ASTA was formed in 1883 and consists of over 700 companies involved in the production and sale of seed. More information can be found at <http://www.amseed.org>.

Matt Leavitt presented at the Organic Seed Growers Conference in Corvallis, Oregon, on cover crop seed production. There was a strong turnout at the conference and ample opportunities for networking with leaders in organic seed advocacy from across the nation.

Elia Romano has been invited to take part in the 2016 Seeds & Breeds Summit as a speaker in Raleigh, North Carolina. The summit is an offshoot of the National Association of Plant Breeders annual meeting, with a specific focus on how best to address intellectual property rights issues in the public plant breeding sector, how to address challenges and come up with solutions. ▶



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ORGANIC ALFALFA SEED? WE HAVE IT!

Whether grown as a high-value cash crop, fed as the essential foundation of an organic livestock operation or plowed down to feed the next crop, the quality of the organic alfalfa seed you plant is vitally important. We have several excellent organic alfalfa seed options available at Albert Lea Seed.

Organic Appaloosa

LOW-CROWN SET

- Very high-yielding low-crown set alfalfa blend
- Excellent quality with a high leaf-to-stem ratio
- Excellent choice for haying or grazing (tolerant to wheel and hoof traffic)
- Very good winter hardiness and disease resistance
- Inoculated with Nitragin Gold (OMRI-approved)

Organic Hardy

ECONOMICAL VARIETY

- A very winter-hardy alfalfa variety (WSI 2.2)
- Good for short haying rotations on heavy soils or long rotations on drier ground
- Good inexpensive plowdown option
- Limited disease resistance, avoid wet ground
- Coated with APEX Green Hydroloc Seed Coating (OMRI-approved)

Organic Nitrogen Brand Alfalfa

HIGH FALL DORMANCY

- Alfalfa variety bred for maximum 1-year biomass and nitrogen production
- Good leaf retention and forage quality
- High fall dormancy rating (FD=7)
- Best used on well-drained soils as a single-season hay crop or plowdown
- Will likely winterkill in the Upper Midwest
- Coated with APEX Green Hydroloc Seed Coating (OMRI-approved)

Organic Viking 340M

HIGH QUALITY

- High-quality multileaf alfalfa
- Good all-around disease resistance
- Very good yields, quick recovery
- Good choice for all classes of livestock
- Inoculated with Nitragin Gold (OMRI-approved)

Organic Charger

FAST ESTABLISHMENT

- Fast establishment and recovery
- Good choice for one- or two-year hay rotations
- Very winter-hardy, limited disease resistance
- Inoculated with Nitragin Gold (OMRI-approved)