

## Grower Files

Nicholas Meyer, *Monona, Iowa*



# Variable conditions call for top varieties

Nicholas Meyer and his father, Brian, and brother Phillip raise corn and soybeans, have a cow-calf operation, and custom-finish hogs on their family farm in Monona, Iowa. The rolling hills there in the northeast part of the state range from 3% to 18% slopes, and the variability within each field can be just as up and down. "We have marginal soils, and we have fertile soils," says Nicholas. "We want to get the low spots up and get the fields evened out, but make our fertilizer budget and still grow a top-quality crop. There's a fine line."

That's where his relationship with FS crop specialist Adam Rahe is so beneficial. "It's reassuring to know that he understands and has been educated on how to use soil maps," says Nicholas. "We can look at the soil maps, but we rely on him to fine-tune our maps and fertilizer recommendations."

The Meyers plant FS HiSOY® soybeans and work with Three Rivers FS for grid soil-sampling needs, variable-rate fertilizer and lime, and bulk chemicals.

"On the soybean side, our growers want a multiple package with high yield, good standability and above-average disease resistance. There is a lot of no-till planting of soybeans, so early vigor and growth of the plant is important. The variable soils and fertility in our area require a tough soybean variety that can handle many agronomic challenges yet continue to excel in performance," says Adam.

"The most important thing we are looking for is consistency," says Nicholas. "We want stable hybrids year in and year out. We don't want it to be phenomenal one year and then leave us standing the next."

"Since using a fertility program, we can see that the yields have definitely increased. We have taken fields with marginal fertility and have tightened the gap. We shoot for 180 to 200 bushel per acre on corn and 55 to 65 bushel per acre on beans. We used to see a 50- to 60-bushel gap on corn; we could easily go from 220 to 170 bushel," he says. "Mother Nature still has a say, but we have tightened to a 30-bushel gap. Where we have increased our fertility, we can see that lower and marginal fertility just doesn't pay."

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