

Grower Files

John Reifsteck, Tolono, Ill.



Full-service support maximizes returns

John Reifsteck uses a lot of FS products — from corn and soybean seed to lubricants, fuels, chemicals and fertilizers — but the thing he likes best about working with Illini FS is the information he gets from them.

“He’s very progressive when it comes to using technology,” says FS crop specialist Dan Schaefer.

“We have some of the most productive soil in the Corn Belt, but some is more variable than others,” says Reifsteck.

He uses the co-op for variable-rate applications of dry fertilizer and limestone, and does variable-rate nitrogen application on his own. He works closely with the co-op to make sure he is applying those amounts correctly. “For instance, the phosphorus fertilizer used with variable-rate application contains some nitrogen, so we need to adjust for it as we apply the remainder of the nitrogen. We exchange not just information, but data and files. It’s not just simply the products I get from them, but the information they can bring to the success of the farm,” he says.

“I like to have someone besides me in to see what they are observing. I’ve built that relationship of trust. With new products there is no history, so if you wait to get some history, you’re behind. You need people in the pipelines to tell you what they think will work on your farm,” he says.

“In central Illinois, it’s important for farmers to have access to the traits that they want,” adds Schaefer. “They want yield and standability, and good dry down and harvestability. The biggest pests in our area are rootworm and European corn borer. Growers here also want herbicide-tolerance traits.”

“There is an immediacy when choosing what hybrids to plant,” says Reifsteck. “You don’t have seven to 10 years to look at a hybrid, and you can’t wait to try a few bags. The old method we used 10 years ago doesn’t work anymore.”

Reifsteck is the third generation on his family farm in Tolono, Ill., and has worked with FS for some time. “I know the people and I know the product and that just gives me more confidence,” he says.

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