



## Planter Recommendations for 2018

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There are many settings and calibrations to be made on your planter, but ultimately the operator is the most valuable component. Settings made in the shop during the winter seldom reflect actual field conditions, so significant time must be taken to check planter performance on your first field. It is perfectly ok to trust your planter monitor, but with the value of the seed and potential crop revenue loss, the operator must physically check depth and spacing often.

### Before the Field

Each type of planter has various wear components that need to be checked and potentially replaced. Parts like tires, wheels, hubs, bearings, bushings, planter bar structural steel, hydraulic cylinders and lines, and other components that have a less direct impact on the row unit, still need to be checked over closely for wear. Worn row unit parts have a direct impact on depth and spacing. These parts include; opening disks, gauge wheels and their arm components, parallel linkage components, row cleaner wheels, drive chains or cables, springs, airbags, hydraulics, closing disks/wheels, and any bushings associated with them should all be checked for excessive wear. Electrical components such as seed tube sensors should also be tested.

JD opening disks that are worn down to 14.75” from 15” should be replaced. Depth should be preliminarily set in the shop using blocks of the same thickness as the desired depth of planting. Place the blocks under the gauge wheels and adjust the depth as necessary.

Meters need to be checked every year whether on a test stand, or run normally on the planter row units in the shop. Air leaks need to be addressed for both vacuum and positive pressure planters, as variations from row to row can cause noticeable differences in singulation.



- JD meters covers and seals should be checked and be replaced if you are unable to achieve uniform vacuum. Plates and knockouts/scrapers should turn smoothly through the full rotation. Singulators should be set in the second position or higher.
- Case IH Early Riser meter covers and plates should be checked for excessive wear. Uneven vacuum can occur well before the plastic reaches the full depth of the wear mark indicators. If you cannot achieve

uniform vacuum through the full plate rotation, the covers should be resurfaced or replaced. Set singulator to position 4 or lower.

- White planter positive pressure meters need to have the plates properly shimmed to achieve cell fill and eliminate excess blow by. Cutoff brushes should be replaced if they pull and retain seed from the cells. Singulator/tickler brushes should be replaced if worn.
- Precision Planting meters and their components also have typical wear in varying locations. Please consult your precision dealer for advice on maintenance.

## **Plant Population**

Many operations have chosen to increase their planted populations in recent years. This is due to grower experimentation and the Ag Staff's recommendations of achieving a final harvest stand of about 200 plants per acre. I urge caution when exceeding planted populations of 60,000 seeds per acre or 4.75" spacing. These high populations can be devastating if not planned for properly. High populations that are uniform in size and spacing, will always outperform the same population that is non-uniform in size and spacing. SMBSC growers have planted at an average of 57,000 plts/A, or 5" spacing for the past few years. The Agronomic Practice Database (APD) info is showing an upward trend in final harvest population, as we are starting to see more fields at or greater than 50,000 plts/A. Variable rate prescription planting is a great way to save on seed cost and to more accurately place populations that match intra-field variability. Many growers have experimented with, or fully implemented, this practice. Use caution, and preferably data, when deciding how high, or low, of a planting population to use.



## **Making the First Pass**

When you hit the field, the initial steps you take in checking and adjusting your planter have significant revenue consequences for the entire crop year, which can be both positive and negative. The best way to check depth and spacing is a method I observed from one of our shareholders. Using a small length of rope or strap to tie up the rear closing system, so that the seed trench remains open, the performance of everything else on the row unit becomes very evident. Your planter is capable of achieving 200+ final harvest stand counts, but it is your time and adjustments to create a more uniform stand that increase both your profitability and crop quality for your co-op. The SMBSC Agricultural Department staff is highly knowledgeable and dedicated to a strong start for your 2018 sugarbeet crop. Please contact your agriculturalist or your equipment dealerships with any questions or concerns you may have about planting your 2018 sugarbeet crop. Remember to have a safe and successful spring!