

Variable-Rate Seeding



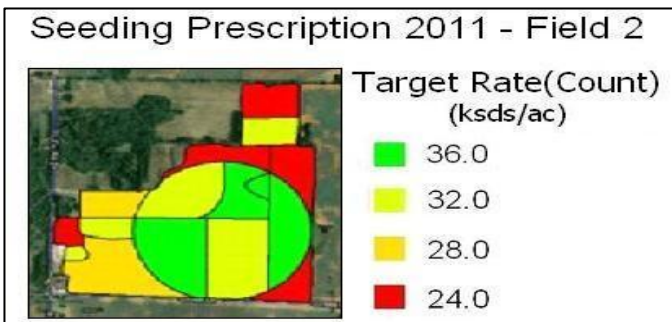
Variable-rate seeding is a precision ag practice to help farmers tailor their seeding rates to address field variability thereby increasing utilization efficiency.

Getting Started

For planters, implementing variable-rate technology requires a hydraulic drive(s), rate controller, a DGPS receiver, and prescription map. Prescription maps for seeding can be generated by using yield (productivity) maps, soil maps, elevation data, soil fertility data, soil EC data, and producer knowledge to name a few. Those interested in variable-seeding should conduct on-farm trials to evaluate its value.

Benefits of the Technology

- Potential to reduce seed costs
- Maximize yields by optimizing seeding rates to match field variability
- Tool for on-farm research
- As-applied seeding maps for future management analysis and decisions



Farmer Testimony by Neal Isbell

Why did you adopt variable-rate seeding?

We started using it because of the inherent variability in our fields.

How do you define your zones?

We create zones based on our personal knowledge of fields because we know where the higher and lower productive areas exist. We also create zones from yield maps, soil fertility maps, and irrigated verses non-irrigated areas.

Is it worth investing?

Yes, there are benefits to the whole system. The combination of all precision ag practices is key to maximizing the paybacks. It is hard for us place a savings value in terms of seed, but we are putting the right amount of seeds where they belong.

Advice to Others:

I recommend it to everyone, no matter the size farm. It is not too difficult to learn however there is a learning curve and patience is crucial in order to make it work successfully.

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Neal Isbell and sons, Todd and Shane, farm in Northwest Alabama where they grow cotton, corn and soybeans on 5,000 acres. They adopted precision ag in 1995 with grid soil sampling. Variable-rate seeding for corn was first implemented in 2005.