

UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS OF ADDING SUNFLOWERS TO YOUR ROTATION

SITUATION:

Growers in dry areas are constantly looking for the crop option with the highest return per acre. Sunflowers perform in dry conditions because of deep, aggressive root systems. With high crop value, low input costs and multiple marketing opportunities, sunflowers may help maximize profit potential.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER:

- [Crop rotation benefits](#)
- Drought and cold temperature tolerance
- Taproot system
- Flexibility of planting date and equipment
- Double-crop options
- Marketing options

ACTION PLAN:

- 1. Rotational benefits.** In a crop rotation with small grains, corn, soybeans and pulses, sunflowers provide value with effective weed control. Sunflowers also work well on ground returning to production from the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Take soil tests on CRP acres to establish nutrient levels before planting. Fertility needs for a 2,000-pound sunflower crop are similar to that of a 40-bushel wheat crop and are much lower than those for corn. Sunflowers often will perform well on marginal land and soils with pH above 8.
- 2. Excellent use of water.** For any crop, yield is related to water availability. Sunflowers are less susceptible to drought, achieving high production with limited moisture. A [conservative estimate](#) is that each inch of water will produce about 100 pounds of sunflower seed. Even with less moisture, rainfall at the right time makes sunflowers a good crop.
- 3. Advantages of the taproot system.** Sunflowers have extensive [taproot systems](#). Taproots penetrate deeper than fibrous root systems of grass crops like wheat, corn and grain sorghum. This allows the crop to utilize moisture and nutrients at depths others cannot reach.
- 4. Production flexibility for equipment and timing.** Planting can be accomplished by growers using either air drills or row planters. Growers also have a wide planting window, ranging from the middle of May to the [first of July](#), depending on location. Late planting makes sunflowers a productive [double crop](#). Sunflower seedlings are rather frost-tolerant and survive cold better than soybeans or grain sorghum. Most crops' growing seasons end when temperatures drop below 32 F, whereas sunflowers tolerate temperatures as low as 27 F for several hours.
- 5. Multiple marketing opportunities.** Marketing segments for sunflowers are high-oleic, NuSun[®], dehull, confection and bird food. Production contracts often include an "act of God" clause, reducing risk compared with other crops. Mycogen Seeds offers [hybrids](#) that can be sold into multiple segments for marketing flexibility.

SUMMARY:

Sunflowers offer many advantages to other crops, especially under dry conditions. Environmental and [market conditions](#) are making this crop a more viable option than in the past. For more information, contact your local Mycogen Seeds customer agronomist or trusted agronomic adviser.



Sunflowers are less affected by drought conditions and make a great late-season crop.

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