

Taking Stand Counts – Corn

Taking stand counts in newly emerged corn is important for several reasons. Stand counts provide feedback on how well the planter did uniformly spacing seeds down the row and relative to the target seed drop. Stand counts provide insight on the emergence characteristics of the hybrid(s) planted, and observations made while taking stand counts can help prioritize future management activities – timing of and need for post emergence weed control, for example. Stand counts are the best way to see if there are problems with emergence, and, if counts are taken soon after emergence, the cause, or causes, for that problem. Finally, knowing the emerged population provides an update on progress toward attaining optimal yield potential in each field.

Walk at least twenty paces straight into the field before taking a stand count. This will get you away from the field edge, where past tire traffic and or planter speed while slowing into or out of a turn might have altered emergence or seed drop relative to the rest of the field. Try to be random on where and in which row the count is started, and avoid starting counts at a spot where the stand is obviously thicker or thinner compared to average. The table below shows the distance in a single row that corresponds to 1/1000th of an acre for common row widths. Counting the number of plants in this distance and multiplying that number by 1,000 will provide an estimate of the emerged plants in an acre. In 30 inch rows, thirty one (31) plants in 17 feet 5 inches represents an emerged population of 31,000, for example (31 times 1,000).

<u>Row Width (inches)</u>	<u>Distance in 1/1000th of an acre (feet, inches)</u>
20	26'2"
22	23'9"
30	17'5"
36	14'6"
38	13'9"
42	12'5"

Counts involving multiple rows require very little additional time and are significantly more reliable compared to counts involving only one or two rows. Also, considering each row individually in a multi-row count allows greater feedback on planter performance. Using the same example as above (the number of plants in 17 feet 5 inches, but this time in four adjacent 30 inch rows), 31, 32, 30, and 31 plants per row equals an average of 31,000 plants per acre with very little row to row variation, whereas 26, 31, 32, and 31 is nearly the same overall population (30,000) but indicates a possible planter-related problem.

After taking the count, spend a little time digging around in the skips, or blank areas in the row where a plant should have been but is missing. Skips without an adjacent multiple drop can be an indication of an emergence problem. (See Rob-See-Co Agronomy Tips *Common Emergence Problems – Corn*, April 2015)