

OBJECTIONS & ROLE-PLAY

Developing Cropping Plans SCRIPT



LESSON 1

Right now, you're asking...How do I start using Cropping Plans for the first time? Where do I begin?

The answer is that you start with one grower at a time, but you start with the guys who like you the most—the most forgiving customers you have who want to help you succeed.

The first thing I do is make the statement...

Crop Planner: We need to start your cropping plan earlier this year, don't we J.J.

Grower: Well, I don't know. Do we?

Crop Planner: Yes, we do. There are so many things we need to talk about and decisions to make that we need to get started a lot earlier than we have done in the past.

Grower: Ok.

You can also take the personal approach. I've used it many times on my best customers who I have great relationships with and who are always willing to help me. Here's how that sounds...

Crop Planner: J.J., I have a favor to ask of you. I need your help.

Grower: Ok, sure. What do you need?

Crop Planner: My family is growing so fast and they need to have me around more than I've been for them at certain times. My youngest is now also in baseball and my oldest in soccer. I would like to spend more time with them. If we could start your cropping plan a few months earlier this year, it would help me and my family a lot. Could we set a date to start your plan in July instead of doing it after harvest this year? I'll have all the information we'll need, and we can always change it later if we need to.

Grower: Sure, that's no problem at all. Just let me know when you're ready and we can do it.



Crop Planner: Great. Thanks so much. My family and I really appreciate it.

When you go to a personal level with particular growers, they're almost always willing to help you out. You only need a few customers to change their buying cycle to get the rest of the herd following the same path. And once customers start planning early, they love it and are actually eager to begin the process earlier and earlier every year.

LESSON 2

Let's take a look at how you can prepare a new prospect, who is used to writing orders, to develop a cropping plan that begins with a field visit. Here's a script on how this conversation may take place. As usual, you can find this complete script in the Study Guide below this video.

This is a new prospective buyer. You did a 5-Minute Drill with him to get an appointment. You came back and did a 25-minute StoryBook and then made an appointment to look at his fields. This should take 1-2 hours.

We're starting in his office prior to leaving for the fields, and eventually the dialogue will involve what to say as you're riding to the field with the grower.

Crop Planner: One of my favorite things to do is visit growers' fields before I start their cropping plans. This is where we both learn a lot about the opportunities we have to take yields to new levels. Which fields are we going to look at today?

Grower: I thought we'd look at three different fields—the Johnson quarter; the Milford farm, that's another 160 acres; and the Smith 80. Here are the field maps you asked me to have for those fields.

Crop Planner: Great. Which one will we be visiting first?

Grower: Let's go to the Milford farm first since it's the farthest away, then we can work our way back.

Crop Planner: Ok, let's take my pickup. I'll do the driving and you can do the navigating.

Grower: Ok. I hate to see you get this clean pickup dirty going into the fields. We should really take mine.



Crop Planner: *[As you get into your pickup you say...]* Well, this is my office and like any office, it's intended to be used. I do work hard to keep it clean because I wouldn't want a good farmer like you to think I didn't take care of things. Plus, I want its appearance to properly represent our company. *[You arrive at the field and before you get out of your vehicle and walk the field, you say...]* Let's visit for a minute about these acres. I see last year's crop was soybeans. Is this a fully tillable 160 acres?

Grower: Yes, it's 160 and next year it's going to corn.

Crop Planner: It's kind of a personal question—you don't have to answer if you don't want to, but what's the APH on corn in this field?

Grower: No, I don't mind telling you—it's 200 bushels per acre.

Crop Planner: Excellent. Where would you like to take your yields in this field in 3 years?

Grower: Gosh, I don't know. I'd like to be able to hit 220, I guess.

Crop Planner: Ok, do you have a plan to get there?

Grower: I really don't. It depends on the weather, I guess.

Crop Planner: How thick have you been planting corn in this field?

Grower: About 38,000 and ended up with about 35,000.

Crop Planner: This looks like a great field. We'll need to look at the soil tests before we actually set the goal, but I'd like you to shoot for at least 280.

Grower: Wow, that sounds pretty crazy, but it would be great.

Crop Planner: We're going to put together a plan that will give you a yield advantage over everyone else every year, regardless of the weather. What do you think is keeping you from increasing your yields to those levels right now?

Grower: Again, I have to say it's the weather. I'm thinking about increasing my population even more—that's what my seed guy told me to do.



Crop Planner: Do you know how many bushels per 1,000 plants you've gotten in this field in the past?

Grower: What do you mean?

Crop Planner: We don't use plant populations or row spacings anymore to plan high yield strategies. The only thing that matters is bushels per 1,000 plants. Here's what bushels per 1,000 plants means.

[Illustrate this on paper for him]

There were 35 groups of 1,000 plants per acre in this field the last time you planted corn here, right?

Grower: Yeah, I guess so.

Crop Planner: What we do is monitor how many bushels every one of those groups of 1,000 plants produces in the fall. To increase those levels of production, we monitor every plant to make sure it's producing to its full potential in the group. If we divide your APH on this field—which is 200 bushels per acre—by 35, that gives us the number of bushels of corn produced by every 1,000 plants. Are you following me?

Grower: Yes, it's very interesting.

Crop Planner: So, in this field last year you produced about 5.7 bushels per 1,000 plants. Our goal is 8 bushels per 1,000. For example, if you produced 8 bushels per 1,000 plants, we take 8 times 35 and your yield would be 280 bushels per acre. So, we don't need to increase population until we hit 280 at 8 bushels per 1,000. If we hit 8 bushels per 1,000 at 35,000 ppa that would give us 280 bushels per acre. If we do things right, we could possibly do that in two to three years.

Grower: Wow, no one has ever told me that before.

Crop Planner: That's because they're still trying to increase yields the old way—the way that doesn't work. With that background in mind, let's get out and look at the field. I want you to tell me about the field. Tell me whatever comes to mind.



Here is a list of the things you are going to want to know about the fields you visit with a grower. Some of these will be part of your cropping plan form, some of them will be asked simply as part of your field conversation.

1. Field name
2. Owned or rented
3. Field size
4. Field location, distance from the main office
5. Field map (draw the shape)
6. Previous crop
7. Soil test
8. Soil type
9. Tiling pattern
10. Dryland or irrigated—if irrigated, type of irrigation
11. Type of tillage
12. Current bu/1,000 plants
13. Average planting date
14. Average harvest date
15. Type of tillage used in the past
16. Any border issues
17. What you like about this field
18. What needs to be fixed in this field
19. In what order do you plant this field with other fields
20. Varieties recommended in this field
21. Number of units of each variety to be planted

Crop Planner: *[As you walk back to your vehicle]* Ok, I'll put the cropping plan together for this field based on a yield goal of 280 bushels per acre. That's 8 bushels per 1,000 plants at 35,000 ppa. Now let's look at the other fields.



[After you look at the other fields, and on your drive back to his home, set him up for the planter visit in the spring]

One of the things we talked about during our other conversations was visiting your planter in the spring. I'll want to be there when you start planting our seed to make sure the seed looks ok to you, that it's planting properly, and that the conditions are right to obtain the highest bushels per 1,000 plants possible. We will also set the date to begin next year's cropping plan prior to next season's harvest. I need to have you contact me a day or two before you'll be planting one of my fields, so I can be here when you start. I will only be there for about 10-15 minutes, but you'll like the things we do at that time. It will give you a lot more confidence that you're on-track to raising the highest yields possible.

Grower: Ok, that's sounds great.

Crop Planner: I better get going. Thanks for everything, and I'm really looking forward to you raising the best corn crop you've ever raised.

Grower: Me too. Thanks a lot!

As you've probably figured out by now, you need to stop writing orders right away and writing cropping plans instead. Farmers love the detail involved in developing a cropping plan, versus an order, and the amount of input they have in the crop planning process. Customers who develop cropping plans are not only more successful, but they also become much more loyal, long-term customers.

You've also noticed how easy and fun this kind of conversation with a grower can be when you have new and unique things to talk about that no competitors are talking about. Farmers love it because you are solving HIS problems, not just trying to sell him seed.



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