

Precision Over Pace: How a Seed Corn Grower in Indiana Found \$100+ Per Acre by Slowing Down

BACKGROUND

A seed corn grower in Indiana farms several thousand acres dedicated primarily to seed corn production, along with some soybean seed acres. Seed production requires precise planting windows to ensure proper nick timing between male and female rows. With tight timelines, unpredictable spring weather, and a lean crew in recent seasons, the team has occasionally pushed planting speeds to 9–10 mph to stay on schedule. While high-speed planters are designed for performance, uniform emergence is critical in seed production – impacting both yield and quality standards.

CHALLENGE

The grower wanted to improve what they could control – specifically, machine efficiency and planting performance.

While running at 9–10 mph helped cover acres quickly, there were concerns about singulation and stand consistency. Seed production requires highly uniform emergence. Even minor irregularities can disrupt tassel timing and reduce field pass rates during quality inspections.

Using SeedTrax planting maps, the team monitored planting speed and singulation.

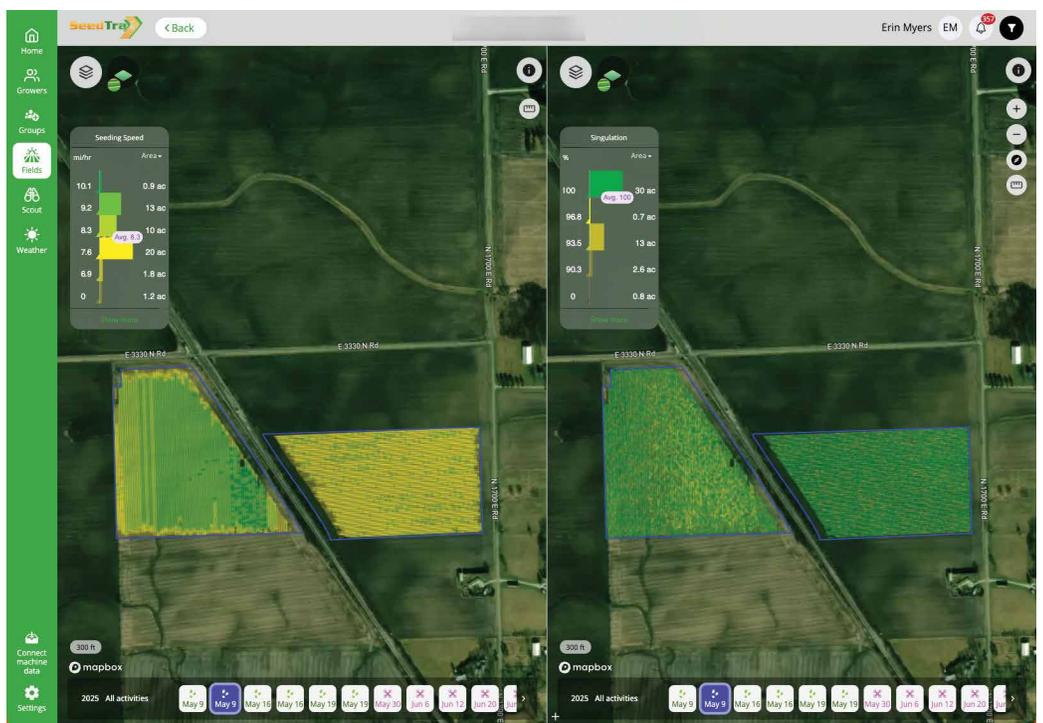
They noticed a pattern:

- At 9-10 mph, singulation dropped significantly.
- At approximately 7.6 mph, singulation stabilized and performed optimally.

Visually, they believed 7.6 mph was their “sweet spot.” But the real question remained:

What was the financial impact of planting faster?

Without measurable proof, it was difficult to justify operational changes during an already compressed planting season.



Using the May 9 planting date to analyze planting speed and singulation. Image shows 8+ mph leads to poor singulation while 7.6 mph is the sweet spot.

Planter Speed /
Singulation

SeedTrax
Use Case
2025

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

\$100+ per acre impact identified by correlating planting speed with NDVI and singulation data.

7.6 mph emerged as the optimal planting speed, significantly improving stand consistency compared to 9-10 mph.

Data-driven operational change implemented, including new reporting procedures and tighter planting speed controls.

SeedTrax
Innovative seed production
management platform

Seed production is complex.
SeedTrax makes it manageable.

Powered by Intelinair

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SOLUTION

The seed corn grower in Indiana combined:

- NDVI
- Planting maps (speed and singulation)
- Data processing and spatial analysis tools

By overlaying NDVI with planting speed and singulation data, they were able to identify:

- Areas of missing plants
- Uneven emergence zones
- Stand irregularities correlated directly with higher planting speeds

Fields planted at 9-10 mph showed more variability and reduced vegetative vigor. Compared with areas planted at 7.6 mph, the difference in uniformity translated directly into economic impact.

The yield difference associated with stand irregularities and missing plants exceeded \$100 per acre.

This analysis validated their suspicions and gave them the confidence needed to make operational changes.

RESULTS

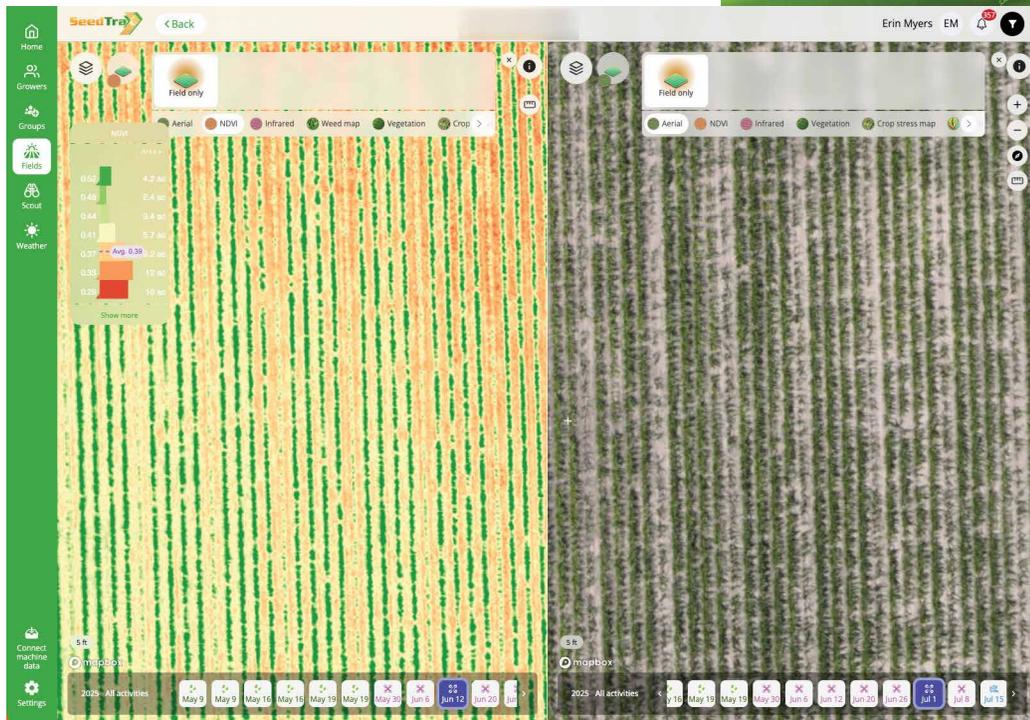
The grower now treats planting speed as a critical management metric rather than a flexible lever. Based on these findings, they plan to:

- **Establish internal procedures** requiring crews to report average mph per field.
- **Build better contingency plans** around weather to reduce pressure to overspeed.
- **Reinforce 7.6 mph as their operational benchmark** unless conditions justify otherwise.

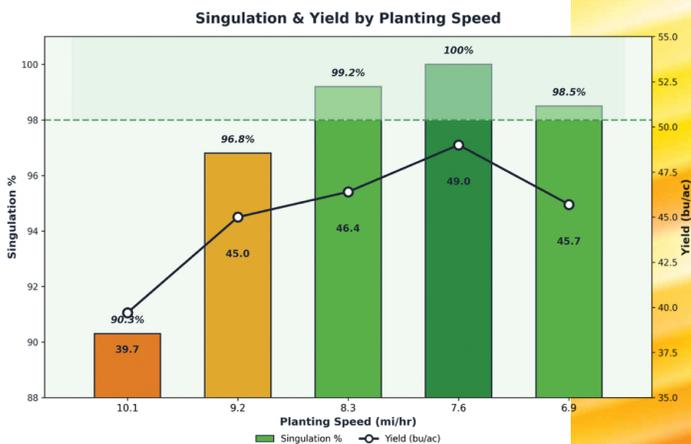
By aligning planting speed with optimal singulation performance, the operation improved:

- Stand uniformity
- Yield consistency
- Quality control outcomes
- ROI per acre

What seemed like a small adjustment became a significant financial insight across his acres.



NDVI map shows the 4 female rows with missing plants across all 4 rows in a bouncing pattern. This shows the planter is bouncing causing inconsistent planting conditions.



Singulations % by planting speed. This illustrates the sweet spot across the farm.



Singulation issues caused by increased planting speed may cost nearly \$100+/ acre in seed corn production.

Turn Field Complexity
Into Confident Decisions

See SeedTrax in action.
Discover how SeedTrax can transform
your seed production operations.

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