

# Agricultural Beet

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## 2023 Considerations for Planting

As spring eventually will be ready for us, we too need to be ready for it. Looking around the growing area tells us we still have some time to perform that final inspection on the planter. The planter pass has the highest influence on your sugarbeet crop's potential. This means that both machine and operator should be some of the biggest investments in your operation, and if not in dollars, then it must be in time, tools, and resources. As many SMBSC growers know, sugarbeet planting is less forgiving than corn and beans. Being diligent in checking over your planter means knowing what your settings are and the condition of various wear parts. With more factory options and aftermarket parts available than ever, keep in mind that the nut behind the steering wheel is still the most important component!

Early March brought the planter test stand program back to SMBSC, which has been performed through SBREB funding for many years, and ran through 438 meters. Run by SMBSC agriculturalist Dylan Swanson and Jacob Rykhus of NDSU Extension, this program has great value for those growers who choose to participate and will still have value for you and your planter in the future. This in-person evaluation provides peace of mind knowing your meters are ready to go. Most issues with planter meters are easy to solve when we get them on the stand. Vacuum inconsistency resulting from worn seals and plastic components were the most common issues to troubleshoot this year. Brush and singulator positioning also caused issues, as well as spacing/shimming adjustments to the plates. Consider signing up for the test stand next year with Dylan. Inspection checklists are available from the planter manufacturers, dealers, and can also be found in the NDSU Extension sugarbeet pocket guide.



If you intend to target the SMBSC recommended final stand of 200-225 plants per 100 feet of row, certain factors must be considered. Planting population should be between 57,000 and 60,000 seeds per acre. Seed lubricant should be used to reduce static whether using box planters or central fill systems. Set depth the same on all planter rows at 1.25". Prime the planter and watch the monitor closely in the first pass. Expect to see about 80-95% of the seed with all seed tube sensors. Routinely check spacing and depth throughout the first few passes and make necessary adjustments. Drive at a speed that provides the most consistent spacing and depth through different areas of the field.

An evenly spaced crop with uniform emergence timing tends to produce more uniform sized beets, and consistent sugar content. This lends to earlier canopy, and better defoliation and scalping in the fall. Skips, doubles, and "bad-hops" in the seed tube result in uneven spacing. Seeds that land too shallow in the furrow can be the result of improper gauge wheel, opening disk, closing wheel settings, and/or row unit geometry issues. In our growing area we are blessed with highly knowledgeable dealership staff, agriculturalists, local agronomists and growers with vast planting experience. Please call them or myself with any planter questions you may have. Have a safe and productive spring!

**Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative**  
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