THE EARFULL
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Protecting Corn Silage & High Moisture Corn Quality with Renk Advantage

This growing season has been anything but normal. With widespread disease pressure—southern rust, crown rot, stalk rots—many fields are maturing earlier than expected, and stalk integrity is declining fast. That means more acres are being harvested as silage or high moisture corn. The challenge: stressed, diseased plants are at higher risk for poor fermentation, clostridia growth, and heating in storage.

That's where Renk Advantage Inoculants play a critical role.

Why Inoculate in a Disease Year?

- **Diseased Plants = Higher Risk:** Infected plants often have lower starch content, more plant sugars, and higher moisture variability—perfect conditions for unstable fermentations and feed spoilage.
- **Reduce Shrink & Spoilage:** Advantage strains *(Lactobacillus plantarum, Pediococcus, Lactobacillus buchneri)* rapidly drop pH and crowd out harmful bacteria, protecting energy in diseased silage.
- **Better Feed Stability:** When molds and yeasts are more likely to carry over from the field, Advantage keeps silage and HMC cooler, extending bunk life and reducing heating at feed-out.

The Right Tools for the Job

- **For Corn Silage:**
  Products like FS320WS, FS340WS, FS370DF, and MT550CL deliver high counts of lactic acid bacteria and enzymes to speed fermentation. MT550CL also adds *Bacillus subtilis*—ideal for wetter, disease-damaged forage where clostridia can thrive.
- **For High Moisture Corn:**
  HMC 780-B and HMC 790-B feature *Lactobacillus buchneri* plus *Pediococcus pentosaceus* to control yeasts and molds. This improves bunk stability and reduces feed losses—especially important when kernels come from compromised, disease-weakened plants.

The Payoff in 2025

Even in a "normal" year, Advantage inoculants help reduce dry matter loss by 3–5%. But in a disease year like 2025, they are your insurance policy against losing even more feed value. Every point of starch and every ton of silage preserved translates directly into cow health, milk production, and a stronger bottom line. As you chop silage and grind HMC this fall, make sure your investment is protected with Renk Advantage—because in a tough disease year, you can't afford to leave feed quality to chance.

Tackling Weedy Soybean Fields Before Harvest

As harvest nears, many soybean fields are showing more late-season weed escapes than we'd like. Waterhemp, giant ragweed, and volunteer corn are particularly troublesome this year, creating headaches at harvest and adding risk for future weed pressure. While it's too late to control these weeds in-crop, how you manage them at harvest can make a big difference in efficiency and crop quality.

Why Weedy Fields Are a Challenge

- **Slower Harvest:** Dense, green weeds wrap in cutter bars, strain machinery, and reduce field efficiency.
- **Grain Quality & Dockage:** Excess foreign material increases dockage and can lower test weight.
- **Future Weed Pressure:** Every surviving weed that goes through the combine contributes to the soil seedbank.

Tips to Ease Harvest in Weedy Soybeans

1. **Harvest Early in Problem Fields**
   Get to weedy fields before weeds fully mature to reduce seed contamination and minimize tough green stem issues.
2. **Adjust Combine Settings**
   - Slow down ground speed in heavy patches.
   - Adjust reel speed and cutter bar angle to reduce plugging.
   - Increase fan speed to help clean lighter weed seed from the sample.
3. **Isolate Weedy Patches**
   Harvest cleaner areas first, then return to problem patches to avoid spreading excess weed seed and foreign matter across the field.
4. **Think Long-Term**
   Mark problem areas and adjust 2026 weed management plans. Rotations, fall tillage, and herbicide program tweaks will help prevent escapes from becoming a yearly harvest issue.

Bottom Line

Managing weedy soybeans at harvest is about protecting grain quality today and reducing weed pressure for tomorrow. While no one likes fighting weeds at the combine, small adjustments and harvest strategy can help minimize losses and prepare cleaner fields for next season.

References:

- North Carolina Soybean Production Guide – Weed Management (NC State Extension, 2023)
- "Combine Settings for Variable Crop Conditions" (Iowa State University Extension, 2017)