

Spring Crop Conditions Are A Week Behind

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 barley is heading out and some farmers are busily chopping rye for silage. We could see a few more soybeans this year than last. In spite of the spate of home gardening this year, Lueck expects to see a strong market for fresh fruits and vegetables. Growers aiming for the processing markets, though, may be facing some disappointments. Lueck said there are sizable carryovers in processed apples and tomatoes.

Lueck noted that the corn belt is already three weeks behind in planting corn because of an unseasonably cold spring. At the moment, this fact alone should have very little impact on the nation's fall corn harvest, but if it gets much later, the outlook could change considerably.

From Berks County, County Agent James Haldeman echoed many of Lueck's comments. Corn is a week to 10 days behind schedule, and it looks like farmers are going to be planting about the same

acreage they planted last year. "I don't know of any actual cutbacks in acreage, but I do know that some fellows aren't going to use as much fertilizer or as many weed control measures this year. Some farmers who might have gone for 150 bushels in any other year seem to be aiming for 125 bushels this year, but I still don't think we're going to see a noticeable drop in our corn harvest."

Glenn Shirk, County Agent from Chester County, said he had seen some corn planted two or three weeks ago that hadn't poked through the ground yet. "But most of the farmers have held off planting through the cold and the wet," Shirk said. "I think they remember the sad experiences many of them has last year with early plantings. Overall, I'd say we're about two weeks late on account of the weather."

In Lebanon County, Dennis Hoak said there's still a lot of corn not in, although the recent good weather will have the planters working overtime. He said small grains have come through the winter well, although weather conditions during the critical bloom period coming up could help or hinder ultimate yields.

"I have noticed more interest in sorghum in the northern part of the county," Hoak said, "and rightfully so. Sorghum is more drought resistant than corn and it's the find of crop we need for that area. I expect to see at least as much sorghum as last year and maybe a little more."

Although York County farmers are also running at least a week behind schedule, about the only crop that seems to be in any trouble are peas, according to County Agent John Smith.

"We won't be able to plant all the acreage we normally would have put in peas," Smith said. "The problem is not so much that they won't grow, it's just that the processing plants won't be able to keep up with the harvest. If we'd plant all the crop now, the peas would all ripen at the same time and the canneries wouldn't be able to take care of the processing load. The processors like to have the plantings spread out so they can spread their workload throughout the harvest season. And it doesn't do any good to plant a crop if you can't can it, so I think we might see fewer peas this year."

Sweet corn is likewise

running late in planting, and could cause a problem for the canneries, Smith said.

The fruit crop in York County looks all right so far, Smith noted. Some trees got hit hard during the winter, and the bloom period is running a week or so behind schedule. "But once it gets warm, the fruit trees will push to catch up."

The vegetable year started off pretty good in the county with most of the potato crop planted in early April. But

now, the rest of the potato crop is probably running a little behind schedule, Smith said. Tomatoes should be in pretty good shape, because this is the time to plant.

The corn planting is running late in York County as elsewhere, but Smith doesn't expect to see any major problems created by this fact. Hay crops and pasture were hit by the cold dry weather in April but appear to be rebounding nicely.

Baltimore USDA Report

CATTLE 400. Slaughter steers & heifers \$2 to \$4 higher. Cows steady to 50 cents lower. Bulls 50 cents to \$1 higher. Feeder Cattle steady. Supply 35 percent slaughter steers & heifers, 40 percent cows, 20 percent feeder cattle, balance bulls.

STEERS: High Choice & Prime yield grade 3-4 1100-1240 lbs. 50.75-51.50, Choice yield grade 2-4 1025-1150 lbs. 47.00-50.00, High Good & Choice 45.00-47.00, Good 41.00-45.00, Standard & Low Good 1000-1585 lbs. 34.85-41.00, several Standard 28.00-32.75. **HEIFERS:** Choice yield grade 2-3 915-1010 lbs. 41.50-43.00, High Good & Choice yield grade 2-4 800-1050 lbs. 38.00-41.00, Good 33.75-38.00, few Standard 24.00-27.50. **COWS:** Utility & Commercial 20.50-24.00, one at 24.50, Cutters 18.00-20.75, Canner & Low Cutters 15.00-18.00, several Canners 550-700 lbs. 11.50-14.50. **BULLS:** Yield Grade No. 1 1200-2000 lbs. 26.00-30.00, several yield grade No. 2 21.00-25.00.

FEEDER CATTLE: Good & Choice steers 525-730 lbs. 31.00-34.00, Good 650-900 lbs. 27.25-30.00, Good steer calves 390-530 lbs. 26.50-30.00, Standard & Low Good 24.50-26.00, Good heifer calves 330-500 lbs. 19.50-22.50. **HOGS** 800. Barrows & Gilts \$1.75 higher. US No. 1-3 200-240 lbs. 44.75-45.00, 80 head 45.25-45.35, No. 2-3 230-260 lbs. 44.25-44.75, No. 2-4 250-280 lbs. 43.25-44.25. **SOWS:** \$1 higher. US No. 1-3 300-400 lbs. 34.50-35.50, No. 2-3 400-600 lbs. 35.50-36.50.

Strip Farming A Century Old

While poor farming practices causing erosion and other neglect of the soil prevailed well into the 20th century, there is evidence of early attempts at conservation methods dating back a century or more.

In 1865, more than 200 farms on rounded hills in Lycoming County, Pa. were being tilled according to strip farming practices, alternating crops like corn with uncultivated crops like grass or winter wheat. Slowly, the practice spread.

In 1928, the U.S. Department of Agriculture started to awaken many farmers to the threat of poor farming practices in its bulletin, "Soil Erosion a National Menace." But it took a farming disaster, the "Black Blizzard" of May, 1934 to drive the extent of the problem home. Then a series of droughts accompanied by high winds stripped farms in Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Colorado of their top soil and carried the dense black clouds for hundreds of miles.

The "dust bowl" and the pathetic migrations of destitute farm families resulted in expansion of efforts of the government's Soil Conservation Service, which had just been created in 1933.

Time For Barn Safety Check

Early spring is a good time for a barn safety check, remind Extension agricultural engineers at The Pennsylvania State University. Repairing barn floors, lighting dangerous corners, and keeping stairways uncluttered reduces the chances of serious and costly injuries.

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