

Rain, Cool Temperatures Delay Corn Planting

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — According to Penn State agronomists, recent rainy weather and cool temperatures have delayed corn planting in much of the state during the first two weeks of May.

The May 8 national 6 to 10 day outlook calls for higher than average rainfall and cooler than normal temperatures. As a result, the odds are high that much of this year's corn crop in Pennsylvania will be planted much later than normal.

Long-term planting date response studies indicate that delaying planting until late May reduces grain yields by about 8 percent compared to early may planting dates. After late May, however, yield reductions become more severe, increasing to about 20 percent for corn planted in early June. In some of our recent research, silage yields were reduced by about 1-2 tons per acres by delaying planting from May 7 to May 20.

When fields do dry out, there are several considerations that corn producers should think about to try to deal with this situation. Concentrating on planting should be a priority. Reducing additional tillage and switching some fields to no-till could be considered. Also, delaying nitrogen applications until sidedressing could be considered to help speed planting. On optimum or high testing soils, a response to starter fertilizers

becomes less likely with delayed planting, so these could be eliminated in some situations if they contribute to slower planting.

Relying more on custom herbicide applications could also be an option, but ag chemical dealers are also likely to be behind schedule. One option may be to relay more on postemergent herbicide applications for weed control. With some of the new products on the market, these postemergent programs are a more effective option than they were in the past.

For producers who consider switching to no-till, remember that if it's too wet to plow it's generally too wet to plant. This rule is frequently overlooked in wet, late years. When planting into wetter than desirable soils it's harder to get good seed slit closure. Firming wheels on planters should be adjusted to achieve good seed to soil contact and seed coverage. This is particularly true if using Prowl herbicide.

Under wet soil conditions, bubble coulters are more likely to cause sidewall glazing than eight or thirteen wave coulters. Seeding depth in late planted, moist soil conditions should be governed by the herbicide program. If seed coverage is not needed than a shallower than normal planting should lead to a quicker emergence and

help the crop "catch up."

Hybrid selection is also a consideration. It is difficult to generalize about hybrids because of the variation in growing seasons and planting dates across Pennsylvania, but most of the adapted hybrids can be planted two to three weeks later than normal and still mature. Consequently, it is generally not necessary to consider switching to earlier hybrids until the 20th to 25th of May in most areas.

For growers who were planning to use full season hybrids that need most of the available growing degree days in their area, however, they may want to consider dropping back to some earlier hybrids. Not paying attention to hybrid maturity consideration as planting becomes delayed may lead to more of the immature, low test weight corn problems experienced in 1992.

In late planting situations, consider the intended use of the crop. Fields planned for grain harvest should be planted first, since they will likely be at more risk for lower yields, high grain moisture and possible lower test experience lower yields with delayed planting, but often quality is not reduced unless the crop is killed by an early frost. Delaying planting may lead to later silage harvests, however, so growers should con-

sider this in making harvest or livestock feeding plans.

Growers will also likely encounter more conflicts this year with planting corn and harvesting hay. Generally the reduction in feed value from delaying hay harvest a week for dairy farmers will be greater during late May than the value of the yield penalty from delaying corn planting a week. Consequently, given the choice, dairy farmers who need high quality feed should probably consider harvesting hay. In early June, yield penalties for corn become greater and changes in hay quality are less significant, so then

the edge might go to corn planting.

There are some advantages to later plantings that we should remember. Weed control is often improved with delayed planting and the risk of herbicide injury is often greatly reduced. Germination and emergence is much more rapid and we often achieve better stands with later plantings.

Remember also that yields are not always reduced with late plantings. In 1989, when only 42 percent of the Pennsylvania crop was planted by May 30, yields averaged a respectable 103 bushels per acre. Most of our crop yields potential will depend on July and August weather.

Maryland Company To Send Fruit Drinks To Canada

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Lewis R. Riley has announced that a food company based in Baltimore has reached an agreement to export its fruit shake mix to Canada. The company, Flying Fruit Fantasy, plans to market its fruit drinks at more than 100 locations in Canada by 1999 through a license agreement with a Canadian gourmet pretzel chain.

"This is another example of Maryland agriculture and food products now being marketed around the world. I wish the Flying Fruit Fantasy company well in their new Canadian joint venture," said Riley.

The company hopes the export revenue of the fruit shake mix to reach \$200,000 per annum once all the 100 locations are complete. Flying Fruit Fantasy distributes fruit shakes through retail locations, hospitals, colleges, offices, arenas, and business cafeterias in the mid-Atlantic region. Now their fruit drink will be found in stores from Halifax to Vancouver.

In recent years, more and more Maryland food companies have begun marketing their products in the international marketplace. Recent examples include ice cream to the Middle East, wine to Canada and Japan, and poultry to Mexico and Europe. The Maryland Department of Agriculture's International Marketing Services is actively working with Maryland companies to break into overseas markets.

For more information on the International Marketing Program at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, contact Marketing Services, (410) 841-5882.



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