



Speaking on the 2012 damaged corn, drought stressed corn, and just general problems is Dr. Chad Lee, University of Kentucky extension grain crops specialist.



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## Best Efforts Fail When Weather Interferes

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While everything was done according to schedule, this was not the best year for crops because of the drought and heat, according to Dr. Chad Lee, University of Kentucky extension grain crops specialist. Lee works with corn, soybeans and wheat and addressed the crowd recently at Princeton.

Part of the topic was damaged corn, drought stressed corn, and just general problems, however in a series of studies of demonstration plots visitors were able to look at problems in the field.

“As everybody knows with the weather we’ve had this year, we’ve had plenty of problems dumped upon us,” he began. “So some of the things we discussed were population and it’s response to the drought. In hindsight, all of our fields should have been planted at about 18,000 plants to the acre.”

That is not a recommendation we plan to make next year. Where there were skips in the field, that’s where there was better pollination and usually better kernel fill. Where there were normal populations, anywhere from 25,000 to 35,000 plants to the acre, there were more problems with pollination overall.

“We discussed some about pollination and talked about how temperatures above 100 degrees really, really hurt the pollination; and the fact that we had any kernels at all is almost a miracle when you consider the kind of year we’ve had.”

He also discussed hail damage and frost damage, as well as early season damage that really has very little impact on final yield results.

“Ultimately, in a year like this, the lack of water that we’ve dealt with has trumped everything else that we’ve done; so if we’re looking at good planting dates, proper weed control, excellent nitrogen fertilizer management, and so forth, we’ve done everything right, but the weather has really worked against us and caused a lot of problems.

“We had one problem with one of our hybrid trials where we had to go back in and replant and at that site we were about a month late and it’s something we would never recommend a farmer do in ‘a normal year.’ But, based on the weather we’ve had this year it’s probably going to be one of our best locations because of the later rainfalls that have come.”

In general, corn fields that were planted on time were hurt this season while those planted late will do much better. All of this is really frustrating for producers who did everything right in terms of management, but their corn was hammered by the weather. On the flip side, someone could have planted late, had poor stands and may actually have a really good crop this year.

Despite this year’s failures, he recommended using good management, timely applications and trying to produce a good crop.

“We have to throw out this year in terms of management. We are not going to recommend planting a month late at 18,000 plants per acre any time soon. In the long-term average, good management pays off,” he said.

“Hopefully next year we have a different outcome with our weather and things will look much better for us,” he summed. Δ

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