

Beyond Description: The 2008 Season

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Harvest is wrapped up at this point, so let's reflect back on the crop season. What a season it was! Would you have even believed that a season like this was possible a year ago?

March precipitation was 11 inches at the Dixon Springs

Ag Center in Pope County, Illinois. Other locations will argue that they had that much in one rainfall event. The spring continued wet with delayed plantings and probably more replants than most can remember. By June, there were quite a few questions on "When does it become too late to plant corn?" Our early to mid-June answer was that good corn yields were still possible, but not probable.

Early to middle summer growing conditions remained wet with moderate temperatures. Late summer became drier, however the moderate temperatures persisted. Hurricane Ike stopped by in mid-September bringing wind to all and heavy rain to some. The question became: "Will we have enough heat and time to mature the crop?" Fortunately, frost did not come early,

and crops matured timely, but later than normal. The next question was, "Will this corn crop ever dry down?" That also came about, even though it was early November.

Now, with this set of questions and concerns most would expect that 2008 was a disaster year. Quite to the contrary, 2008 delivered good to outstanding crop yields for many growers. The November crop report estimated 155 bu/ac corn and 42 bu/ac soybeans for the two southern Illinois crop reporting districts.

How could this happen? I would suggest that it was a rare event that I will call LEGM, just for fun. We definitely had some Luck. We also had an extremely good Environment following planting. A great deal of credit must go to the seed industry for continuing to bring forward outstanding Genetics. Finally, pat yourself on the back for supplying a high level of Management, as well as hard work.

It is doubtful that the 2008 season will repeat in the near future. But, congratulations go to all the corn, soybean, and grain sorghum growers who were able to take "lemons" and make "lemonade" in 2008. Δ

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