

Corn Planting Begins Monday In Chicot County

LAKE VILLAGE, ARK.

In Chicot County, the arrival of spring comes on the big tires of a corn planter. "We are planting corn in Chicot County. We just got started today," Gus Wilson, Chicot County extension staff chair for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture said Monday. "It's a little cool, but as long as we don't get a heavy, cold rain, we ought to be alright."

Last year, corn farmers in the southeastern most county were the first to plant a spring row crop, planting corn in the last week of February. This year's first seeds were on rain delay.

"The muddy fields were more of a factor in the week's delay than were soil temperatures," he said. "If we miss this forecast rain, we'll see more people starting."

On the other side of the state, Little River County may be next in the fields.

"Nothing yet, but may plant some corn this week," said Joe Paul Stuart, Little River County extension staff chair.

Corn acreage has grown by leaps and bounds

in Chicot County, where just over 12,000 acres was planted in 2005. Last year, the acreage was up to 45,579. Corn acreage grew in Little River County too, from 8,500 in 2011 to 10,000 in 2012, Stuart said.

Statewide, corn growers harvested 690,000 acres in 2012.

Further north, in Lonoke County, spring seems a little further off.

"I have not heard of anyone even talking about planting yet," said Keith Perkins, Lonoke County extension agent for the U of A System Division of Agriculture. "It will be soon, but best to keep the seed in the bag for now."

Outside of row crops, "We have a lot of fescue being replanted for pasture," said Boone County Extension Agent Mike McClintock. "We had several acres planted in spring oats also. This is for spring hay and grazing in areas where the fall plantings failed."

Home gardeners are putting in potatoes and peas, said Berni Kurz, Washington County extension staff chair. Δ