

Delayed Rice Planting In 2013 Is Not The End Of The World



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Rainfall and cool temperatures throughout the southern rice-growing region have put the brakes and planting and growth of the 2013 rice crop. After the last two years, when we've been able to get most of the crop planted by April 15th,

this has folks worried.

There is no doubt that 2013 is a different year. Although I'm no meteorologist, it seems to me that snowpack in the north resulting in these late cold fronts further south is likely an indicator that we're going to experience a cooler than normal year in 2013. This definitely comes with some positive benefits.

First of all, rice that matures later in the fall typically (and I mean typically) has better grain quality due to cooler nighttime air temperatures during the grain filling process. After the last three years, better grain quality and milling yields would be welcome.

Secondly, all this rain has forced many growers to spread their planting window. Although most growers I know want to plant everything they can when they can, spreading of planting time results in spreading of harvest. When harvest is spread out over a longer period of time, there is obvious weather risk, but it also may provide a better opportunity to harvest each field at the optimum moisture content to maximize milling quality.

Finally, for those folks in the northern reaches of the rice growing region, RiceTec has several years of planting date data showing the impact of planting date on yield (Figure 1). What we've observed over the last five to seven years is that May 1 planted rice actually produces higher hybrid rice yields than April 1 plantings. This feature seems to be unique to the hybrids, but will hopefully put your mind at ease that there is still adequate time to make a great rice crop with the potential to provide a better payoff in milling quality at the end of the season. Δ

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