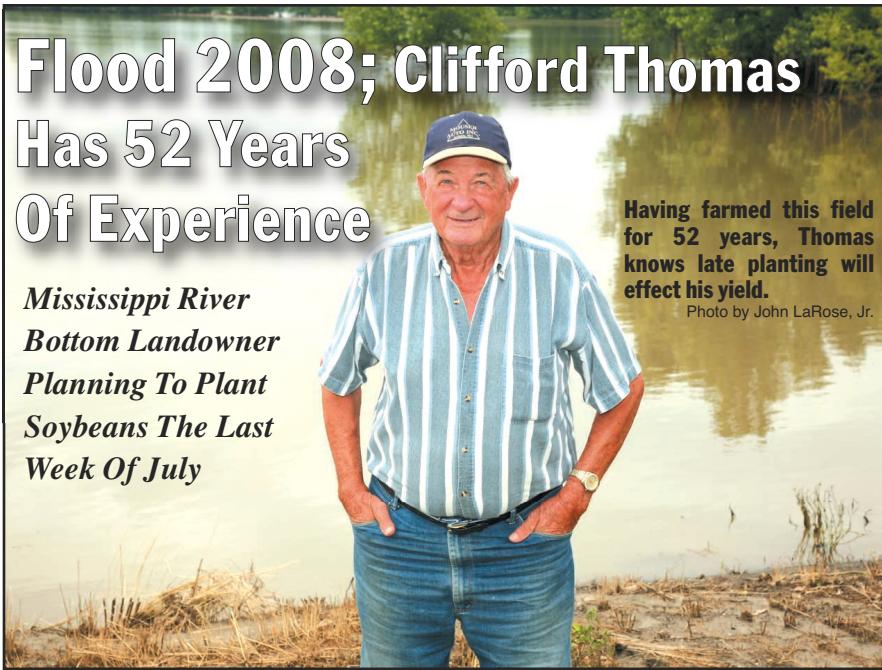


# Flood 2008; Clifford Thomas Has 52 Years Of Experience

*Mississippi River  
Bottom Landowner  
Planning To Plant  
Soybeans The Last  
Week Of July*

Having farmed this field for 52 years, Thomas knows late planting will effect his yield.

Photo by John LaRose, Jr.



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**C**lifford Thomas, Mississippi river bottom landowner in Southeast Missouri, keeps a close eye on his 200-acre field located between the river and the levee. "The water has fell six foot in less than a week. The river is falling fast now," stated Clifford on July 9, 2008.

When asked if he thought levees contributed to his flooding problem, Thomas responded, "I think too much concrete is the problem."

Thomas said, "we bought this field in 1956 and have been farming it for 52 years." During this time period, Thomas has experienced loss many times. "I would say around 20 times we have lost one-third or more of our crop. In 1973 and 1993 we had a complete loss, as we were not able to get in to plant at all."

"When we first bought the farm we tried other crops. The soil is so rich and we wanted to grow something else besides soybeans. We tried alfalfa, wheat and corn. We wanted to get into the field and work early. It took awhile before we gave into the river and soybeans," he remembers.

Thomas also farms 650 of hill ground and is involved in other family partnerships. "Waiting is less of a problem now, as we have other work we can do."

"We plant group 4 Roundup Ready soybeans in this river bottom field," he explained. "We plant as late as we can now because of what the river might do."

Thomas knows late planting will effect his yield, "if we can plant, by say June 5th we can get 47 bushel per acre, I am predicting we will get in this field during the last week of July and I am expecting about 25 bushels per acre."

Thomas will not need to do a burn down nor will he need to cultivate. "The flooding eliminates weed growth," he said. "We will plant as soon as we can pull the planter through the field, we do not have a problem with hardpan in this rich soil."

Thomas plants no-till soybeans with a 15" narrow row planter. "The planter turns the soil as it plants," he said. "We do not need to cultivate."

Weed spraying is limited for Thomas. "We spray when the soybeans are six to eight inches tall." Thomas said usually, he only needs to spray this field one time. "the canopy closes up quickly and the weeds cannot grow, there is no need to spray again."

When asked if he ran into problems waiting on crop insurance adjustors to inspect his field before he planted, Thomas said, "Crop insurance? What is that? Crop insurance is not available on this land."

If insurance were available, Thomas would not purchase it. "What for? We don't need it if we wait to plant."

Frost can pose problems with late planting of soybeans for some producers. Thomas is still optimistic. "Frost is less of a problem on this field. People need to know, it takes a five degree cooler morning to frost this field because of the river."

In talking with Thomas later in the week about his plan, Thomas said, "I just read in the paper today that they are predicting the river to fall one and a half feet a week." If Thomas cannot get into the field by the end of July, he has another plan. "I have been thinking about it and I might try sunflowers in that field this year, I am just thinking about it," he said. Δ