

Keep The Brakes On Planting A Little Longer

LEXINGTON, KY.

Record and near record warm temperatures have many corn producers jumping at the chance to get out in the field and plant corn, but it may be best to wait a little longer, said Chad Lee, extension grain crops specialist with the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture.

Historically, producers in Western Kentucky have started planting corn around April 1, and Central and Eastern Kentucky producers begin to plant between April 10-15.

Because of the warm weather, many farmers have readied their fields for this growing season, spraying burndown herbicides and applying anhydrous ammonia earlier-than-normal. Planting is all that's left for many producers. In addition to the weather, Lee said producers vividly remember spring 2011 when flooding and continuous rain seriously delayed corn and soybean planting and would like to get this crop in the ground in case history repeats itself.

According to the National Climate Data Center, the vast majority of the state has a 90-percent chance of experiencing its last freeze after April 1. If this event occurs, young corn seedlings could be severely damaged or killed.

For Lee and others who follow Kentucky weather, this warm weather pattern is reminiscent of 2007 when the state had two weeks in late March with highs above 70 degrees. In early April of that year, low temperatures did

not get above 20 degrees for five or six days.

"Corn planted the last two weeks of March 2007 emerged in less than seven days, grew rapidly and was no match for the cold weather," Lee said. "Farmers replanted 100,000 acres or



more of corn that year."

Producers may want to consult their crop insurance agent to see what their early planting date is, which is the date their full insurance benefits become active. For much of the state, that date is April 1.

"If you plant before the earliest planting date, those acres are not eligible for crop insurance replant payments," said Cory Walters, UK agricultural economist. △

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