

# Managing Another Delayed Planting Season



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**Y**es, even though we just did late planting in 2008, we have had to relive the experience in 2009. Late planting typically places stress on both the crop and the farmer. I have suggested to some of my co-workers that we should actually establish a planting difficulty index to compare planting seasons in the future.

The 2009 planting season has had very few good “windows of opportunity.” I would argue that continuous no-till farmers never got a good planting opportunity this spring. That certainly makes farming and proper soil conservation difficult to reconcile.

Good management is important every year, however, it may be even more important in late, stressful seasons. Most growers use crop insurance to help protect their investment in the crop. Make sure you keep your crop insurance agent or adjuster informed if you think that you may have a claim.

Likewise, many crop producers are participants in USDA programs. Do not forget to make timely reports to the local FSA office. Keep accurate records on your crops and planting

dates. If this year’s wet spring has required tillage practice changes that might affect your farm Soil Conservation Plan, contact the local NRCS office promptly.

If wet fields prevent the planting of crops, then other alternative actions may become possible. Some fields may have perennial weed problems that have been difficult to control. A fallow summer season could allow for improved weed control. Soil conservation structures are often installed in the drier months of the summer, and 2009 may provide that opportunity. Although many fields could benefit from drainage improvements, not every field is a candidate for tile drainage. Closely study possible improvements. Many growers also lament the lack of good timing to establish cover crops. Open fields will provide excellent cover crop locations later this summer.

Finally, I will leave tax planning to the accountants, but 2009 may require some extra management actions. If your farm sold 2008 grain in 2009 and also had crop insurance payments this year with fewer expenses, you may be surprised with higher-than-average income.

Each crop year is a little different. We will have to wait a bit longer to see how 2009 plays out.

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