

# One More Look Back At The 2009 Crop Season



DENNIS R. EPPLIN

## MT. VERNON, ILL.

**T**he 2009 crop season has come and gone, but certainly will not be forgotten. The weather conditions both helped and hurt Illinois farmers. It would be easy to describe 2009 as a wet, cool and late season. However, it was much more complicated

than that.

Even with today's technology, the environmental conditions dictate our level of crop production success. Simply put, the weather continues to be the deciding factor. Yes, we do strive to apply good management and modern technology to improve the probability of producing a good crop.

It was certainly wet in Illinois in 2009. The year exited as being the 4th wettest year on record. The Illinois State Water Survey has maintained records starting in the late 1800s.

The spring planting season turned out to be the 4th wettest ever. Not surprisingly, we had the 6th wettest April. Since many farmers like to begin to plant corn in April, that process was delayed, and in some cases, corn was not planted until June.

We were just starting on the 2009 record setting season. The month of July turned out to be the coldest July on record in the state. The summer of 2009 went in the books as the 8th

wettest, 11th coolest and possibly the cloudiest summer on record.

September came and an Agricultural Disaster Declaration was issued due to excessive rainfall and flooding. The declaration covered 58 counties and 30 additional contiguous counties (of the 102).

You might think that we were due for a "normal" fall. But, October decided to enter the record book as the 2nd wettest and 7th coldest on record. Translation: Almost no harvest progress in the month of October.

The eleventh month of the year treated southern Illinois farmers better. A combination of below normal precipitation (south) and the 7th warmest November allowed the crop and fields to dry, permitting substantial harvest progress.

The delayed harvest also resulted in delayed and reduced winter wheat plantings. Illinois producers planted the smallest acreage of wheat on record last fall. The low wheat acreage will clearly limit double cropping and will have implications for future crop rotations.

I am sure that forecasters will have more surprises for us as we enter the 2010 crop season. Additional information on Illinois weather and climate can be found at the Illinois State Climatologist website:  
[www.isws.illinois.edu/atmos/statecli/index.htm](http://www.isws.illinois.edu/atmos/statecli/index.htm)

*DENNIS R. EPPLIN: Extension Educator, Crop Systems, University of Illinois*



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