

Pioneer Talks Crops

Welcome to Pioneer Talks Crops. This information is provided by the Pioneer agronomist serving your community.



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This is the first edition of Pioneer Talks Crops for the 2008 growing season that will be featured monthly in *Mid-America Farmer Grower*. The overall goal of this column is to discuss timely agronomic issues as well as provide valuable production tips for growers.

Late planting. We are off to a late start for corn planting in Southeast Missouri and in the mid-South overall. It is already past mid-April, and we have very few acres planted in this area. However, it may be a good thing, because conditions have been less than ideal due to the cold, wet weather. Planting will be a hectic process this spring as growers will be attempting to plant several crops at one time.

One of the first questions growers ask is: how late is too late to plant corn? The answer varies from year to year by geography. We still can expect normal yields on corn planted in April in Southeast Missouri. The University of Missouri planting date studies show we can expect more than 92 percent yield compared to normal if planted by April 30. Late-planted corn is much more susceptible to yield-limiting infestations of southwestern corn borer as well. When planting after mid-April, we recommend growers consider planting the maximum allowed percentage of Bt corn according to the EPA. Corn can grow

very rapidly depending on the growing degree unit (GDU) accumulation. Corn emergence requires 110 to 130 GDUs under ideal conditions. That can take from five to 20 days or more depending on soil temperature and other conditions. The sooner corn emerges after planting, the less likely it is to be attacked by disease and/or insects. At this time of year, we typically accumulate about eight to 10 GDUs per day. Watch for belowground insects such as wireworms, seed corn maggots and white grubs which could affect corn emergence in the spring.

Limited Soybean Supply. Soybean supply has been a hot topic this winter as we gear up for a big soybean acreage jump in the South. We recommend using extreme caution when planting soybeans this spring due to the limited supply. Handle the seed as little as possible before getting it into the ground. Check the weather and planting conditions often to limit replants. Growers may get only one shot at this in some locations. Seeding rates vary depending upon the seed size and row spacing. If a particular soybean variety or seed lot has much smaller seed size, it may not be necessary to plant as many pounds of seed per acre to achieve the desired population. Be sure to check the bag tag for the seed size. As a general guide, utilize 135,000 to 150,000 seeds per acre for 30 to 38-inch row spacing; 165,000 seeds per acre for 15 to 20-inch row spacing; and 180,000 seeds per acre for 6 to 7.5-inch row spacing. If planting conditions are poor, higher seeding rates may be desired



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