

Reflecting On The 2009 Crop Season

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Remember at 2008 harvest when you thought we could not have a repeat of that season? Well WOW! It was almost like 2009 was 2008 on steroids.

Late planting returned for most growers. Who would have believed that June planted corn would yield so well? Most, but not all, late planted soybeans were also fairly productive.

Rainfall at the correct time can be extremely helpful to a crop. July 2008 rainfall was 180 percent of normal, and July 2009 rainfall was 185 percent of normal. Jefferson County grower Jerry Seidel stated it well when he indicated, "that it has been another remarkable year when all the compromises and mistakes are forgiven by rain."

It is also interesting and ironic that rain delayed planting, then "made" the crop, and finally returned to complicate harvest. What part of the 2009 rainy season will you remember in future years?

One difference that many producers found in 2009 was high-moisture corn at harvest. The

combination of late planting and a relatively cool season did allow the southern Illinois corn crop to mature. Unlike many previous seasons, conditions were cool enough that the crop did not quickly "field dry." The unintended delayed harvest and favorable November temperatures did aide in the eventual field drying.

Another unusual situation related to where the best production occurred within fields. Usually, optimum production is found in better soils and often in bottomland locations. A number of farmers reported the fields with hills and better surface drainage were their best performing locations this year. Growers with yield monitors and yield mapping capabilities can study this more closely.

Another crop year is now in the record books. If there is a New Year's wish, it may be for 2010 to be a productive season, but with few of the weather challenges that 2009 presented.

The 2009 Ewing Demonstration Center Summary Booklet has been posted on the Southern Illinois Agriculture website: <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/regions/ag/> At this site, you can access all of the corn, soybean and wheat studies that were conducted at Ewing in 2009.

Best wishes for a happy and safe new year. Δ

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