

Warming Trend Could Help Growing Season Move Forward

LEXINGTON, KY.

Kentucky's agricultural producers have been hampered by excessive rainfall and cool temperatures in recent weeks. These conditions have delayed field operations and, as a result, put the onset of the growing season on hold. But, better days are on the horizon according to University of Kentucky Agricultural Meteorologists Tom Priddy and Keys Arnold.

"Growers across the Commonwealth should see a much needed break in the rainfall through the next five days," Priddy said. "The state has seen above normal rainfall for four straight weeks, and more than 4.5 inches of rain have fallen since April 1."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Crop Report, dated April 20, stated the corn-planting progress in Kentucky was only 4 percent of intended acreage planted, which is 33 percent below the 5-year average.

Arnold said the forecast for the next five days is showing sunny skies, dry conditions and a substantial increase in temperatures. Many lo-

cations in Kentucky could see temperatures climb into the 80s by Friday.

"Although the next five days will prove to be a beneficial active period for growers and field operations across the state, the 6- to 14-day forecast shows above normal rainfall moving back into the Ohio Valley," Arnold said.

However; the Climate Prediction Center of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a federal agency focused on the condition of the oceans and the atmosphere, reports rainfall should gradually return to near normal in the region during May as current La Niña conditions are expected to transition to ENSO neutral. ENSO stands for El Niño/Southern Oscillation. ENSO neutral is the state of near-normal climate when neither El Niño nor La Niña is present.

Priddy said ENSO-neutral conditions generally lead to climatologically normal conditions for Kentucky, which means near-normal temperatures and rainfall. Δ



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