

Weather Foils Efforts This Planting Season

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If you happen to be farming somewhere in the southern third of Illinois, 2008 may be one of the most frustrating planting seasons in recent or maybe not-so-recent memory. Even though the statistical services reported around 80 percent of the corn crop planted, replanted or re-re-planted by June 1, only around half of it had actually emerged at that time. What has emerged is in variable condition and would benefit from sunshine and drier soils. Fortunately, soybean seed is almost all still in the bag; but, full-season soybean planting and double-crop soybean planting are going to occur nearly in tandem.

So, assuming that you finally got your corn crop planted, what might you expect the rest of the season to look like?

Unless you planted an extremely long-season hybrid and/or a killing frost occurs earlier than average, the likelihood of your corn successfully reaching physiological maturity is pretty good. All hybrids will tend to require fewer growing degree units to reach maturity when planted later

in the season as compared to when they are planted earlier. And, for several years, there has been a tendency to plant hybrids that don't utilize the full growing season anyway. However, we will be harvesting corn at much higher moisture levels than we have gotten used to in recent years. It might be a good idea to check on the grain drying system and see if it will be up to the task this fall.

Yield prospects are obviously going to be lower than average, both due to delaying planting and the fact that seedlings emerging under wet, cool conditions do not develop the good root systems that they will need later on in the season when things turn hot and dry. As strange as it seems now, for this crop to yield well, we will need the weather conditions to remain both cooler as well as wetter than normal for the rest of the growing season. Right now we are wishing for drier growing conditions; but, be careful what you wish for because you might get it in spades.

Even under decent growing conditions, do not expect corn planted in mid-June to yield more than around half of what it would if planted at the optimum time. Δ

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