

THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR LATE PLANTED CROPS

Excessive rains over the last few weeks have delayed planting operations for many producers in NW Wisconsin. A number of farmers have yet to get all of the corn in the ground and many have significant soybean acres to plant. Here are some guidelines to consider for late planted crops:

If you still have corn to plant, it will now need to be taken as silage, and you should plant a 75 to 80 day hybrid. If the corn cannot be planted by the second week of June, consider planting an alternative crop. Corn planted after this date will likely contain little or no grain, and only stover (stem and leaves) will be produced resulting in low quality silage.

A number of soybean acres have yet to be planted. Soybeans should be planted no later than the second week of June before a significant yield hit is observed. Keep in mind that soybeans planted in mid June will mature during the first week of October, meaning that frost damage will be likely prior to maturity. This adversely affects the grain filling and dry down process.

Research suggests that there is not a benefit to switching to a shorter seasoned soybean variety. Studies conducted in northern Wisconsin from 1992 to 1995 demonstrated that full season varieties out yielded or had equal yield to short season varieties at all planting dates (including a June 14th planting date).

However, if you are still planting soybeans consider increasing your plant population and, if possible, use narrow rows over wide. Part of the yield loss observed with late planted soybeans is that the plants end up being shorter, which means pods get left in the field below the harvester. Increasing the plant population will help the soybean to grow taller and grow the bottom pods above the cutting height. Increasing the number of plants per foot will also help push through crusted soil, decreasing emergence time.

If you have missed the window to plant corn and soybeans, there are alternative crops to consider. Sunflowers and buckwheat are other grain crops that can be planted

very late. Forage sorghum, sorghum-sudan crosses or sudangrass can help boost forage supplies and can be planted into July.

Please call the Extension Office if you have further questions about late planting options at 715-485-8600 or visit our web page at <http://polk.uwex.edu> then click agriculture.

Growing Conditions Update. As one would expect, growing degree days are down this year as compared to last year. For April, we accumulated 94 GDD as compared to 111 in 2003. In May the total was 219 as compared to 261 in 2003.

Total rainfall for May was a little better than seven inches, which is almost double the 20 year average. We are ahead of schedule for the year and out of our running deficit dating back to July 2003.

Alfalfa Quality Update

Four alfalfa fields have been monitored in Polk County over the last few weeks. The sites were located in Cushing, Balsam Lake, Deronda, and Clear Lake. Many producers were likely to begin cutting alfalfa last weekend (weekend of June 5th and 6th). Here is a quality update from Friday June 4th:

The Cushing site had an estimated RFV of between 175 and 179, with 21.1% crude protein. The Balsam Lake site had an estimated RFV of between 173 and 179 with 22.7% crude protein. The Deronda site (first full production year) was a little behind at between 188 and 196 RFV with crude protein at 22.5%. Finally, the Clear Lake site had an estimated RFV between 177 and 185 with crude protein at 22.5%. All fields were in the bud stage.

Producers should be encouraged by the decent crude protein numbers, especially in light of reports from the eastern side of the state suggesting that protein was down. Sheboygan County samples from late May indicated alfalfa in that area was between 190 and 200, but the crude protein ranged as low as 17%, with presumably another 3 to 5 days to go until harvest.

For more information on local scissors clipping visit the Polk County UW-Extension website at <http://polk.uwex.edu> or call 715-485-8600.

