

Winnebago County Crops Quick Update

Assembled by Nick Schneider, Winnebago County Agriculture Agent

October 6, 2009

Wisconsin Crop Progress: October 4 2009. Source: USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field Office

Full report at: <http://www.nass.usda/gov/wi/>

Soil Moisture		
	East Central Wisconsin	State Average
Very Short	2	7
Short	13	19
Adequate	81	65
Surplus	4	9

Wisconsin Weekly Weather								
City	Temperature		GDD (50 base)		Last Week	Since Sept 1	Precipitation Sept 1 dep. from normal	Year to date
	Avg.	Avg. dep. from normal	March 1 to Oct 4	Normal				
Green Bay	49	-5	2226	2309	0.77	1.69	-1.62	-4.24
Madison	51	-5	2521	2710	1.31	5.32	2.02	3.53

Wisconsin Crop Progress						
Crop and percent of acreage	Central		State Average			
	Central	East Central	This Year	Last Year	5-Year	
Corn mature	58	22	33	49	65	
Corn silage harvested	75	56	53	79	80	
Soybean harvest	5	6	4	16	19	
Fourth cut hay	60	56	64	60	59	
Fall tillage	15	14	10	2	4	

Crop Conditions: Corn: Very Poor=3%, Poor=8%, Fair=26%, Good=48%, Excellent=15%

Soybeans: Very Poor=1%, Poor=7%, Fair=24%, Good=54%, Excellent=14%

Observations of the week: Small Plot Yield and Moisture Checks

On Monday, Doral Kemper, retired USDA scientist, and I harvested eight small corn plots from two fields west of Oshkosh. I do not have the hybrid RM, but they were planted on May 4th and May 8th. The field planted on May 4th, corn-on-corn, was at 30% kernel moisture, with yields of 150 to 170 bu/per acre, moisture corrected to 15.5%. Stalks were clearly getting weak and were easy to break with a little push. The May 6th planted field, corn-on-soybeans (it was a failed wheat planting after soybeans), had moistures between 30% to 36%. Yield was checked over a wider range conditions in this field. A dried-up hillside had a yield of 120 bu/acre. A section near a waterway had a yield of 220 bu/acre. It is hard

to say how the entire field will average, but that plot was something special. Black layer was reached on all but a few kernels.

The brisk winds last week brought out some stalk health problems. If we see widespread poor stalk quality and continued high grain moisture, this is going to create quite a dilemma. The need to field dry in order to save cost is understandable, yet we must weigh how much corn will be lost when the ear hits the ground. In document "Some Pros and Cons of Letting Corn Stand in the Field Through Winter" by UW Corn Agronomist Joe Lauer, <http://corn.agronomy.wisc.edu/WCM/W160.aspx>, he writes:

"Since we cannot predict the weather, the most prudent decision would be to harvest after a reasonable period of drydown. In some years with heavy snow cover, grain yield can decrease significantly. For example, during 2000 grain yield decreased 65% by March and by spring yield decreased 37% from an October harvest date. This is contrasted with the winter following 2001 (little snow cover) when yield only decreased 18% by February and by spring was 10% lower than October harvest.

Greatest grain moisture loss occurs during October and November. Drying continues through the winter, but at a slower rate than October and November. This is especially true for later planting dates. By the following spring there is little difference in grain moisture for early versus later planted fields. Grain test weight changes are minimal regardless of planting date. Since grain moisture changes are minimal past December and grain yield losses can be significantly affected by environment, the best decision is to complete harvest by December (or the typical first heavy snowfall, if you are good at predicting such things)."