AGRONOMIC ALERT

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Late Planting Soybean Recommendations - ND and MN

Due to excessive rains in some areas this spring, many farmers will be planting soybeans later than normal. Late planting of soybeans requires a few more management considerations, such as soybean maturity, row spacing, weed control, planting rates, and insurance options.

Soybean Maturity

Yield decreases can take place when late-planted, full-season varieties do not reach adequate height for setting pods or frost damage occurs before maturity. North Dakota State University reports a 0.6% yield loss per day when soybean planting takes place in late May[2]. Switching soybean maturities at the appropriate time can help alleviate some of these physiological disadvantages and help maximize yield potential at later plantings.

Soybeans can have the ability to compensate when planted late. The University of Minnesota indicates that planting the same variety two to three weeks later in the spring will result in only a few days to a week in delayed maturity[1]. In North Dakota and Minnesota, switching maturities from full season soybeans adapted to the region, to earlier maturing soybeans is not recommended until June. North Dakota State University recommends switching maturities the first week in June[2]. The University of Minnesota recommends waiting to switch until the 2nd week in June[1]. If a decision is made to switch soybean maturity ratings in early to mid-June, choose a variety with a relative maturity rating that is 0.5 units shorter than the original soybean choice. If planting is delayed until late June, select a soybean maturity rating that is one whole unit shorter than what would normally be planted.

It can be a tough decision to switch soybean maturity ratings when planting late. Dr. Hans Kandel, North Dakota State University, points out that even if not ideal, a farmer might choose to stay with the maturity they already have in hand as taking the time to check on seed availability can delay planting even further.

Weed Control and Row Spacing

Weed management is a priority for late-planted soybeans due to the potential for the lack of a canopy coverage to compete with weeds. Starting clean with a good burndown, using a pre-emergent herbicide, and timely post program is critical for managing the rapidly growing weeds that will compete with the crop that can delay it even further and impact yield potential. Always follow pesticide label directions when making applications.

Utilizing a narrow row spacing is another good agronomic management tool that can hasten canopy closure, increase sunlight interception and biomass accumulation.

Considerations for Late Planting of Soybeans

- Depending on your geography, North Dakota State University and the University of Minnesota recommend switching soybean maturities the 1st or 2nd week of June.
- If choosing to switch to a shorter maturing variety:
  - Choose a variety 0.5 units earlier until mid-June.
  - In late June, choose a variety 1.0 unit earlier.
- Narrow or drilled rows should be used where feasible.
- Planting rate should be increased 10% to 15%.
- Implement a timely weed management program.
- Follow the herbicide label instructions regarding plant-back restrictions.
- Evaluate insurance options.

Planting Rates

Planting rates should increase 10% to 15% to compensate for plants that may not reach optimum yield potential.

Replanting to Soybeans

When a field originally intended for corn is being switched to soybeans, it is important to know the plant back restrictions for the specific herbicides that have already been applied. Herbicide plant-back restrictions found on the labels should be followed to prevent any carryover damage from further delaying the crop.

Insurance Options

Contact your local insurance agent for insurance coverage and options. In addition, the USDA Risk Management Agency has developed the following web page of fact sheets and examples: http://www.rma.usda.gov/news/currentissues/prevented/index.html, which includes examples for both soybeans and corn.

Sources: [1]D. Hicks and S. Naeve. 2009. The Soybean Growers Field Guide For Evaluating Crop Damage And Replant Options, University of Minnesota. [2]G. Endres, et al. Replanting or Late Planting Crops. North Dakota State University. Publication No. A-934; Additional references used in developing publication: P. Pedersen. 2008. How late can soybeans be planted? Iowa State University, Integrated Crop Management News. June 2, 2008; Prat, K. 2009. Late Planting Complicates Soybean Production. Southeast Farm Press. June 15, 2009. Purdue University Corn & Soybean Field Guide. 2007 edition.