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Challenges Emerge with 2016 Crops

In mid-April, it appeared that 2016 might be an ideal planting and growing season in the Upper Midwest.

However, after the encouraging start to the growing season, there have been several challenges across the region, including delayed planting, poor emergence, and frost damage. Fortunately, favorable weather during the week of May 16-21 has improved crop conditions in many areas.

Very cold temperatures settled across the Upper Midwest from May 14-17, with widespread frost damage occurring across most of Minnesota and northern Iowa, as well as in North and South Dakota on the mornings of May 14 and 15. The frost damage ranged from light to severe--damaging only portions of fields in some areas, and nearly all fields in other areas. Much of the early-planted corn that emerged, received light-to-severe leaf damage. Most of this corn should recover, since the growing point on smaller corn plants is still below the soil surface.

The soybeans that received significant frost damage will likely need to be replanted. There were reports of thousands of acres of soybeans needing to be replanted in portions of southeast Minnesota and northern Iowa. One positive with replanting soybeans is that it is early enough to replant and still get close to optimum yields.

Sugar beets, alfalfa, and other early-planted crops were also impacted by the frost damage.

Producers are encouraged to be patient with crop recovery from frost damage, as it takes a few days for new growth to appear, especially with the cooler temperatures that were experienced

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during the first few days following the frost. Growers also need to be certain that the injury they are evaluating is frost damage, and not crop injury from other causes. Some corn has shown yellowing from the extended period of colder weather and cool soil temperatures during early May. Those weather conditions have also lead to injury symptoms on newly-emerged soybeans that were treated with pre-emergent herbicides.

Most corn replanting thus far has not been due to the frost damage, but rather the result of cool, wet soil conditions, and below-average temperatures that persisted throughout the first half of May. Some of the corn that was planted in late April (just prior to this weather pattern), has struggled with poor germination and uneven emergence, which resulted in some growers replanting a portion of their corn crop. There may be some reduction from optimum yields when planting corn around May 20. However, yield prospects should still be very good in most areas.

An ongoing challenge in a large portion of southwest Minnesota, northwest Iowa, and southeast South Dakota has been saturated field conditions that prevented planting. Some parts of these regions received 6-8 inches of rain in late April and early May, which stopped fieldwork for about three weeks. In some areas, only a small percentage of corn was planted by May 18 and virtually no soybeans were planted. Very wet conditions have also delayed planting in portions of Indiana and Ohio. Fortunately, a drier weather pattern occurred during the week of May 15-21, and many growers in affected areas were able to return to the fields by May 20 to get corn and soybeans planted. However, another above-normal precipitation pattern is likely during the week of May 22-28.

If crop producers have questions or concerns on frost damage, herbicide injury, or other early-season crop issues, they are encouraged to contact their crop consultant or agronomist for assistance. The University of Minnesota Extension website also contains useful information. The website is located [here](#).

Based on the May 16 USDA Crop Progress Report, 96 percent of Minnesota's corn and 76 percent of the state's soybeans were planted, compared to five-year (2011-2015) averages of 64 percent for corn, and 32 percent for soybeans.

As of May 16, Iowa had 89 percent of corn and 45 percent of soybeans planted, compared to five-year averages of 78 percent

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for corn and 37 percent for soybeans.

South Dakota had 81 percent of corn and 39 percent of the soybeans planted by May 16. Much of the remaining corn to be planted in all three states was in wet areas that were described earlier.

Nationally, 82 percent of corn and 41 percent of soybeans were planted by May 16, which is ahead of five-year averages of 70 percent for corn and 32 percent for soybeans.

Overall, the early planting dates for corn and soybeans in most areas should be beneficial for 2016 crop-yield prospects. However, the inconsistent early growing season, together with the very wet conditions in some areas, will likely have an impact on overall statewide and national crop yields for the year.

In the Upper Midwest, conditions in the early growing season of 2016 have not been as favorable as in 2015, when Minnesota, Iowa, and other states achieved record corn and soybean yields.

For more information, contact Kent Thiesse, Farm Management Analyst at: kent.thiesse@minnstarbank.com or 507-726-2137.

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The event will be held July 19-20. Registration and program information is available [here](#).

Questions? Contact Patti Coles, ICBM Meeting and Event Planner at pcoles@icbm.org or 651-789-3987.

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