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Storm Damage In South-Central Minnesota

Strong thunderstorms moved through south-central Minnesota on July 9 and 10, with large hail and strong winds. There were even a couple of tornadoes spotted in northwestern Blue Earth County late Sunday evening. There were reports of structural damage and tree loss from the storms, as well as significant hail damage in some locations. Farm operators and crop consultants are still in the process of analyzing the situation.

Some of the larger corn is very near the tasseling and pollination stage, which makes it quite vulnerable to hail damage. If corn tassels are severely damaged just prior to pollination, there could be significant yield reductions. Soybeans that are partially damaged could have some recovery following hail damage. However, damaged plants with severe stem injury could incur further losses later in the growing season. In most instances, final crop losses will probably not be known until harvest season this fall. Most producers are unlikely to replant crops this late in the season. Even the very earliest varieties of soybeans that are planted in mid-July in southern Minnesota would only have a realistic yield expectation of 20-25 bushels per acre, assuming there is even a harvestable crop.

Farm operators with hail insurance coverage may be able to collect an insurance payment, based on the assessed damage. Farmers with Federal crop insurance coverage will likely need to wait until after harvest to determine if there is a large enough loss to receive a crop insurance indemnity payment. A majority of farmers in the Upper Midwest insure their corn and soybeans with a crop insurance policy utilizing "enterprise units," which group all acres of a given crop in a county together for calculating potential crop loss. Enterprise units make it more difficult to receive insurance indemnity payments. By comparison, producers with crop insurance policies utilizing "optional units," insure crops down to individual sections within a township.

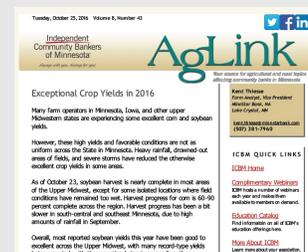
When it comes to crop production, most long-term farm operators are often heard saying that "no two years are the same." That statement is certainly true in many portions of southern Minnesota and northern Iowa as it relates to the 2017 growing season, in comparison to the previous year.

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The first half of the 2017 growing season has been much different, with some areas of the eastern Corn Belt dealing with late planting, while other portions of the Midwest experienced excessive rainfall and hail damage. Moderate-to-extreme drought conditions exist in many areas of North and South Dakota, with some enhanced dry conditions extending into portions of western Minnesota and Iowa. Various areas have improved considerably in late June and early July. Above-normal growing-degree units (GDUs), along with adequate soil moisture, have resulted in favorable growing conditions in certain locations.

The accumulation of GDUs at the U of M's Southern Research and Outreach Center totaled 995 from May 1 through July 5, 2017, which is about 4 percent above normal. Some of the corn in southern Minnesota and northern Iowa that was planted in late April was just beginning to tassel on July 10. Most of the corn in the region should tassel and pollinate from July 10 to July 25, which means that mid-July weather conditions in the Corn Belt will be very critical in determining final corn-yield levels for 2017.

June rainfall amounts were quite variable across the region, with some areas of the Upper Midwest, receiving excessive amounts of rainfall during mid-June, while other areas ended the month a bit dry. Total rainfall in Waseca during the month of June was 4.14 inches, which is slightly below the long-term average. The total precipitation for 2017 through June 30 at Waseca was just over 16.5 inches, which is very near normal. There were some areas of southern and western Minnesota, as well as western Iowa, that ended June quite dry. Portions of the region did receive some needed rainfall with the severe storms this past weekend. Most of North and South Dakota remained extremely dry heading into early July, with rapidly-worsening drought conditions in several areas.

Based on the weekly, July 2 USDA Crop Progress Report, 68 percent of the corn and 64 percent of the soybeans in the United States were rated "good" to "excellent," which is slightly above the 10-year average for early July. The 2017 crop ratings compare to 79 percent of the corn and 70 percent of the soybeans in the U.S. being rated "good" to "excellent" in early July 2016. As of mid-June, the USDA was projecting a 2017 national average corn yield of 170 bushels per acre and a U.S. average soybean yield of 48 bushels per acre. Many private analysts feel that the 2017 USDA crop-yield projections may be a bit optimistic, given some of the weather challenges that exist in portions of the Corn Belt.

In Minnesota, 80 percent of corn and 72 percent of soybeans were rated "good" to "excellent," with only 3 percent of the corn rated "poor" or "very poor." In Iowa, 78 percent of the corn and 72 percent of the soybeans were rated "good" to "excellent." By comparison, in the drought-stricken states of North and South Dakota, only 55 percent of the corn and 48 percent of the soybeans in North Dakota, and 48 percent of the corn and 36 percent of the soybeans in South Dakota, were rated "good" to

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"excellent." Nearly one-fourth of the corn and soybean crop in South Dakota was rated as "poor" or "very poor," and conditions in both states have been deteriorating.

For more information, contact Kent Thiesse, Farm Management Analyst and Vice President, MinnStar Bank, Lake Crystal, at: 507-381-7960 or kent.thiesse@minnstarbank.com.

Farmfest Forums

A U.S. House Agriculture Committee listening session on the next Farm Bill will highlight the feature forums at Farmfest this year.

The forum schedule for 2017 will include an exciting lineup of presenters with a heavy emphasis on key topics and agricultural policy issues affecting farm families and rural communities. More information can be found [here](#).

Volunteers Needed for Farmfest

ICBM is looking for volunteers for its booth at [Farmfest](#), August 1-3, at the Gilfillan Estate in Redwood County.

Farmfest is the largest outdoor agricultural event in the state and this year ICBM will have its own red-and-white striped tent in a prime location. Bankers are needed to staff the booth.



Please contact Kathy Burton at kburton@icbm.org to sign up for a time slot.

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