

Checking the Back Forty



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Weekly Growing Degree Days and Rainfall thru May 29, 2011

Station	Temperature (°F)			Growing Degree Days (GDD) (Base 50°F)					Precipitation (Inches since 4/1/2011)				
	High	Low	Avg	Departure from normal	Week of May 23-29	Since May 8	Departure from normal	Since May 22	Departure from normal	Week	Departure from normal	Season	Departure from normal
Cobleskill	84	49	67	9	119	212	74	119	61	0.33	-0.55	9.07	+2.39
Morrisville	81	48	64	8	102	210	78	102	47	1.23	+0.33	11.4	+4.86
Norwich	85	48	65	8	109	236	95	109	50	1.42	+0.54	13.23	+6.37
Oneonta	87	49	66	10	115	227	102	115	62	0.75	-0.23	14.39	+6.90

*From the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service New York Field Office and the New York Department of Agriculture and Markets
 Weekly accumulations are through 7:00 AM Sunday Morning*

I will be keeping track of Growing Degree Days (GDD) during the season using 50°F as a base temperature. There will be two dates of reference for these GDDs, May 8 and May 23, 2011. Rainfall accumulation will be from April 1 on.

Corn needs around 110 GDDs to emergence and soybeans are similar. So weeks with 80 degree temperatures like last week should see corn out of the ground in 7 days or less.

Update on RM and Maturity Groups

Dr. William J. Cox, Department of Crop and Soil Science, Cornell University

Editors Note: This is an email Bill sent out to extension educators on Saturday, May 28. K.H.G.

Unfortunately, it is time for an update on selecting relative maturity (RM) for grain corn and silage hybrids and Maturity Groups for soybean varieties.

May 25th has come and gone so any grain corn that was planted last week should have been about 5 days shorter in RM. Given the recent rains, most planting won't resume until about June 1 so it is time to scale back by another 5 days in RM for grain corn when planting from June 1-June 5 or so. So if growers typically plant a 100 day hybrid by May 15th, a 90 day hybrid should be planted for the week of May 31-June 6. We average about 170-190 growing degree days (GDD) from May 16th-May 31st so we cannot make that up even with the more rapid maturity for late-planted corn.

I realize that many are saying that the cut-off date for grain corn in Ohio and other Midwestern states is June 5th but I think that we can go to June 10th with the appropriate RM. We average

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about 125-150 growing degree days during the first 10 days of June so hybrid RM has to be scaled back another 10 days or so. So if a grower typically gets a 100 day hybrid to mature and yield well with a planting date by May 15th, the grower should be planting an 80 day hybrid or so from June 5-10 for dry shelled corn.

Another option for cash croppers is to switch some of the corn acres to soybeans (although soybean on soybean ground is not the most preferred practice but there is only about a 5% yield hit if white mold is not a problem in that field) during that first week of June. Again, soybean has a much broader optimum planting date window so the yield penalty is minimal up until June 5th or so. We conducted a study at Aurora in 1992-1993 (I know-old varieties!) with Group 00,0,I, and II Maturity Groups planted about May 15, May 25, June 5, and June 15 (What's Cropping Up?, Vo.4, No.1, p.6-7, 1994). The two Group II varieties yielded about 55, 53, 50, and 32 bushels/acre, whereas the two Group I varieties yielded 44, 48, 48, and 31 bu/acre, respectively across the four planting dates. So it looks like Group II varieties should be planted up until June 5th or so. The Group 0 varieties yielded 40, 43, 43, and 33 bu/acre, respectively. So I would suggest Group II varieties until about June 5th, Group I varieties from June 5th to June 15, and Group 0 varieties from June 15-20th. After June 20th, I would probably call it quits on soybeans. If growers are planning on planting wheat after soybeans, Group I or Group 0 varieties should be planted as soon as they can get into the field.

How about hybrid RM for corn silage? Well, May 29th is upon us so it is time to scale back 5 days in RM for the June 1-5 period. Once the dairy producer is planting in the June 5-10 period, it is time to scale back another 5-10 days or so. For corn silage, I think that we can plant until June 10-15 with a scale back in RM of another 5-10 days because we are rapidly losing GDD as June progresses. So if a dairy producer typically plants a 100 day RM hybrid by May 20th, the producer should be planting a 95 day hybrid until about June 5, an 85-95 day hybrid from June 5-10, and a 75-80 day hybrid from June 10-15. Unlike grain corn, corn silage needs a timely harvest for quality so we need a little wider spread on the RM. Once we get past June 15th, I defer to the forage people.

So it is a dire situation. I remember back in 1994, a grower was bemoaning the delay in corn planting but lo and behold his Pioneer 3925 (about 10 days earlier in RM than he usually planted) planted on June 3rd yielded 180 bushels/acre. Also, in 1991 and 2005, our June 15th soybeans yielded the highest-better than mid-May or late-May planted beans. So to quote that great 20th century philosopher, "it is not over until it is over".

**Grain Marketing Webinar:
Emerging Price Trend Shifts and Your Profit Potential**
Tuesday June 7th, 12-1pm

In this live online webinar, Pennsylvania Cooperative Extension Marketing Educator John Berry will review current trends and events that impact marketing risk. Some of you may be familiar with John from the Managing the Margins and Winning the Game seminar's he has taught in our area over the past few years. To register for the webinar go to:

<http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AP/CropInsuranceEvents.html>

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Weed of the Early Season:
Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*)

I have had a number of questions about horsetail this spring. It is a persistent weed but I don't know that it causes much yield loss for our field crops. It seems to do well on sandy soils but also clay soils that stay wet. A common denominator seems to be that it does well where it has little competition from surrounding plants nor does it appear to tolerate a healthy hay crop or forage harvest over time. This is the good news as there are no agricultural herbicides that are particularly effective against it.

The plant has no leaves just upright stems that produce whorls of leafless branches giving it a bottle brush appearance. It spreads by creeping rhizomes that bear small tubers. Considered a primitive or old species it reproduces by spores not by seeds although in our cropping systems it is most likely spread by the rhizomes and tubers.



Horsetail can be poisonous (thiamin-deficiency symptoms) to horses if it ends up in hay or they consume enough on pasture. Provide enough good pasture and hay so they avoid the horsetail and also just exclude animals from areas where it is present.

References:

- Uva, Richard R., Joseph C. Neal, and Joseph M. DiTomaso. *Weeds of the Northeast*. Cornell University, 1997.
- <http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/plants/php/plants.php?action=faqs&num=335>