

SCOUT CROP FIELDS FOR PROBLEMS!



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With most of southeast Nebraska receiving much needed rain the past few days and rain predicted for this week, it will be an excellent time to scout crop fields for potential problems. Many areas received torrential rains with the possibility of having flooded crops or even some crops washed out, with erosion in fields.

One of the first things that can be checked out is stand counts in corn and soybean fields. Dry field conditions in some areas and lack of rain contributed to poor planting conditions and subsequently less than ideal stands in some fields. Also several fields of both corn and soybeans have been really slow in emerging with slow grow rates due to the cold temperatures we have had this spring. If you have a poor stand, should you replant? Before replanting there are several factors to consider. For corn, what is your original target plant population or intended plant stand and what is it now? How is the uniformity of the plant stand, do you have large areas of skips in the field or a very erratic stand? It is important to consider the original planting date and possible replanting date and what are estimated yield potentials. Finally what are possible replanting pest control and seed costs. If there are doubts where you would gain any advantage from replanting, it may be better to leave the field as is. With all the rain received and saturated field conditions, you may not be able to replant for a while, plus rain has really been sporadic this year and difficult to predict summer precipitation.

For soybeans, research in Nebraska over 13 years has shown soybeans do an excellent job of compensating for low plant populations. Plant populations of 100,000 plants/ac have yielded comparable to plant populations of 150,000. In Wisconsin, research has shown even plant populations of 50,000 plants/acre in early planted soybeans only yielded 2 bu less than replanted soybeans with an optimum plant stand between 100,000 – 135,000. If you only have a plant population of 50,000 plants/ac, but it is fairly uniform, weeds are not an issue and plants are healthy, chances are soybean yields will not be improved significantly by replanting at this later date.

You should have a few days to make a decision in regard to replanting corn or soybeans. In the meantime, be sure to do several populations checks throughout your fields. It may be a situation where you just replant a part of the field that has a poor stand. Also check with others, your neighbor, seed dealer, ag supplier, crop consultant, agronomist or local Extension Educator to take a look at the field(s) that you are considering for replanting.

If you have a good plant stand, other important things to check in your fields is health of your plants and potential pest problems. Earlier this year we discussed monitoring cutworm moths and true armyworms in southeast Nebraska. We did have a significant capture of black cutworm moths, back in April with the potential for cutworm damage to crops in late May or early June. Seeding corn is susceptible to cutworm damage through the V5 stage. There can also be damage to soybeans from cutworms, although very seldom. There were captures of the true armyworm moths. These moths usually lay their eggs in grass-like cover, such as a cereal rye cover crop. While there have been no reports to date, if you planted green into cover crops, it is important to check these fields for pests.

Finally weed control is key for a successful crop. With the dry weather limiting herbicide activation and the effectiveness of some herbicides, weeds may have already gotten a head start. The wet conditions may limit your ability for getting back in the field to control weeds, so be diligent in scouting fields and knowing where you biggest weed issues are. The 2020 Weed Guide Nebraska Extension Publication EC-130 is an excellent resource for weed control recommendations.

If you have specific questions about these issues, feel free to contact Gary Lesoing at glesoing2@unl.edu , (402) 274-4755 or (402) 274-9639 (cell).

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