

Seed Starter May Offset Problems of Cold, Wet Spring

The state of Kentucky has received 25.25 inches of precipitation since January according to University of Kentucky's Ag Weather Center Meteorologist Tom Priddy. So far, this is the wettest spring since 1885. All of this rainfall is continuing to delay planting. According to the USDA, corn acres in Kentucky are only 17% planted, compared with 68% at this same point last year and a 5 year average of 45%.

This story is being repeated across the Midwest and the delayed planting is resulting in a shorter growing season, fewer GDU's, and generally, a corresponding decrease in growth and output. To offset this, many farmers are tempted to head into their fields while the ground is still too wet to be worked. CCA Joe Dedman, cautions, "If farmers start too early they could be facing problems with compaction, sidewall compaction, inadequate germination and poor root growth." That combination can lead to additional problems all season long.



Seed starter programs gain importance in years like this because, in a shortened year, rapid germination is essential. "The longer that seed is in the ground before germination, the more susceptible it will be to disease and insect pressure and the fewer days it will have to reach its optimal yield potential," according to Gary Coughlin, a CCA and Research Agronomist. Additionally Coughlin added that seed starters help by "creating the right environment around the seed zone to encourage more favorable germination and faster development. That is always beneficial, but this wet season it's critical because the window for planting is closing and the soils are cooler than they should be at this point in the season."

During a season that is setting up to be full of crop stress, a quality seed starter program can be an important management tool for many producers. Monty's Corn Blend is a specially formulated seed starter containing macro and micro nutrients with added zinc and boron. This product has been created to help corn producers create a favorable environment to aid germination, seedling vigor, root development and stamina in corn, which taken together, may help salvage lost yield potential.

Dedman recommends applying ½ to 1 gallon of Monty's Corn Blend seed starter per acre directly on the seed, in furrow for optimal response. However, he added, "If a farmer is not set up to apply product in-row, it can be applied 2x2."

Farmers cannot control the weather and they can't risk making a bad situation worse by moving into the field too early. However, with proper planning and the right management practices, they can potentially recover some of the yield that is slipping away with every day of delayed planting by using a seed starter.

Editor's Note: The delayed planting in corn is setting up a domino effect that will impact soybeans later this month. For growers raising full-season beans, using Monty's Soybean Blend seed starter helps to create a better environment around the seed for germination.



For more information call (800) 978-6342