

RAISE

Ideas for Producers Raising a NON-GMO Crop



PLANTING EARLY: IS INCREASED CROP STRESS WORTH THE RISK?

by Joe Budreau, Agronomist/Certified Crop Advisor

As I write this, it's about 37° outside. Compare that to the last 48 hours where my area experienced a heat wave with a daytime temp averaging around 60° degrees. What can I say? That pretty much sums up March in the Midwest. One day it's spring and the next day it's winter. Those warm days, as odd as they were, had my mind on planting and I bet I wasn't the only one! With that said, some of you may be thinking about pushing your planting date on corn. Let's look at some of the pros and cons to getting corn out early.

PROS	CONS
Plant early and odds are your crop will tassel and silk prior to the hottest periods of the growing season.	Plant early and run the risk of inconsistent soil temperatures resulting in inconsistent emergence.
Plant early and by the time you've reached silk, roots should be well established and lodging shouldn't be an issue.	Plant early and run the risk of excess precipitation at colder temps leading to the potential of imbibitional chilling.
Plant early and corn will mature sooner, allowing for plenty of time for drydown which means you may avoid drying costs associated with high moisture corn.	Plant early and run the risk of a compromised stand and a replant that could lead to more wear and tear on the soil not to mention your fuel budget.
Planting early may result in a shorter-stature corn plant which can lead to improved late season standability	Plant early and run the risk of delayed germination which could leave the seedling vulnerable to early season insects

As you begin to pin down timing, carefully study the weather forecast. Then, take your boots to the field and see what you've got to deal with. If average temps are on a warming trend and soil conditions are improving, dropping seed early is worth the consideration! Especially if you are going to get some of that early field work done like fertilizer application. If you don't feel confident with the forecast or if you feel the soil needs a few more warmer days to create an ideal environment, you'll be hard pressed to convince me it's worth the risk of planting early!

When you go to the field take a thermometer and check the temperature at planting depth—say around 2 1/2 inches. If the temperature is below 50° and with a cool forecast, I suggest waiting for warmer soil temps before planting. If you are going to plant early, make sure the hybrid has a strong seed emergence and early vigor score to help you get even stands at emergence.

If you'd like to discuss the pros and cons, don't hesitate to call me at 866.400.9468.

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