

Spring Farming Considerations

This time of year farmers are always itching to get out in the fields and get started planting. As conditions improve, there will be an increased number of slow moving vehicles on county and state roads making it important that all motorists are on the lookout.

Depending on the size of the equipment being used, it could take up the entire roadway. No matter what size it is, it is important that everyone shares the road. To help with this, farmers need to make sure their equipment has working lights (front, rear, and turn signals) and that they have a slow moving vehicle (SMV) sign posted where everyone can see it.

Slow moving vehicle signs are small red triangles with orange around the outside edges. If you come up on a vehicle that has a SMV sign, don't honk your horn or try to pass; that puts everyone in danger. Instead, keep a safe distance between you and the farm equipment so you are able to stop quickly if the need arises. Farmers should be reminded to make sure their SMV signs are in good condition, can easily be seen, and replace them if they are damaged.

However, farmers need to stay calm and not rush to the fields too quickly this year because of all the wet weather and relatively cool nights we have been having. One thing to keep in mind is there is not a strong relationship between early planting and yield when it comes to corn. So it is best to be patient and plant when conditions are right.

In addition to holding off on planting, the wet soil conditions may have also prevented some winter wheat from getting top dressed with Nitrogen. If that is the case for your farming operation, there is still time to get some top dressing in. As you are looking over any winter wheat, look out for wheat virus diseases which will make the plant look pale colored and may look similar to a Nitrogen deficiency. If you are toying with the idea of using fungicide on winter wheat, it is still a little early to be doing this. Instead, farmers should wait until flag leaf emergence to make the decision on whether or not a fungicide application is needed.

In preparation for the 2015 crop, farmers will need to remember that burn down herbicide applications need to be made when weeds are actively growing. Also, growers should not be making these applications following nights of cool temperatures (upper 30s to mid 40 F range). It is best to terminate all cover crops prior to planting. If you do not terminate your cover crop prior to planting, you will drastically reduce your herbicide options once the crop has been planted.

For all livestock producers, it is important to note that there is still time to seed cool season forage species this spring. Take time to walk your pasture and forage fields to decide whether or not to reseed. Be on the lookout for weeds that look like forages such as wild garlic, wild onions, and chickweed. It is a good rule of thumb that you should see less than 10% of the soil when looking at a cool-season grass or cool-season grass and legume pasture and that there is

at least 2 legume plants per square foot. If it does not meet the rule of thumb criteria, then you should consider reseeding the pasture.

Visit our homepage at www.extension.purdue.edu/putnam or you can contact the local Purdue Extension Office by calling 765.653.8411 for more information regarding this week's column topic or to RSVP for upcoming events. It is always best to call first to assure items are ready when you arrive and to RSVP for programs. While many publications are free, some do have a fee. Purdue University is an equal access/equal opportunity institution. All times listed are Eastern Time.

Upcoming Events:

April 20 Area V Health and Human Science Leader Lesson registration due

April 23 Exploring 4-H Meeting, Fairgrounds, 6:30 pm

April 24 Performing Arts Area V 4-H Contest, Vermillion County

April 27 Fair Board Meeting, Fairgrounds 7:30 PM

April 28 Indiana Extension Homemaker Association Spring Dessert, 6:30 PM, Fairgrounds

April 29 Kim Miller Retirement Reception, Extension Office, 4:30-7:00 pm

May 1 Area V Health and Human Science Leader Lesson, Vigo County 10:00 am

May 15 Livestock 4-H Enrollment Deadline (except poultry)