

The Weather's Impact on Crop Production

It is spring time in Indiana and we are definitely experiencing that crazy weather we are known for. That crazy weather can cause farmers to be frustrated as they try to patiently wait to get into the fields and start planting. As they wait, there are things to keep in mind that might impact their production.

When it comes to wheat production, the concern now is about the growing point. As long as the growing point is below ground, wheat can tolerate temperatures in the low teens. However, once jointing begins (Feekes 6), the growing point is above ground and the plant becomes more vulnerable to the cold. It takes a few days after cold damage occurs for it to be visible (typically 5-7 days). To look for cold damage, slice open the growing point and see what color it is. If it is brown, then damage has taken place. Additionally, if the stem is hollow, then it has been injured and will eventually bend over.

Wheat is not the only crop that can be injured by the cold weather. Cool season grasses utilized for forages can also be damaged in the form of leaf burn and potential yield loss. Likewise, white bleaching can occur in alfalfa. If you are utilizing alfalfa or clover for grazing, there is also an increase potential for bloat. To help manage the bloat potential, don't allow cattle to graze these fields in the morning and make sure cattle are well fed prior to being released into the alfalfa.

When it comes to corn and soybean fields, the concern is not to get out in them too early. Across the state, cover crop burn downs are behind scheduled, however it is a little too early for burndown in no-till fields. For burndown to occur in no-till fields, temperatures need to be in the 50s for a couple of days to ensure the plant is actively growing.

Once temperatures are up and soil conditions are correct, then it is time to start planting. Make sure the soil conditions are correct because if they are too wet, it can cause compaction issues. If you plant corn in cool soil conditions, please realize that starter fertilizer can help yield potential, however this impact has not been proven consistent from year to year.

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 12 – Small Farms Clinic, Parke Co. Fairgrounds, 6-8 PM, \$5 per family, Register at 765-653-8411

April 13-24 Putnam 4-H Paper Clover Campaign at Greencastle TSC

- April 21 – Indiana Personal Property Tax Filings and Assessments Webinar, 12 Noon – 1 PM,
register at <https://ag.purdue.edu/Extension/wia/Pages/webinars.aspx>
- April 22 – Gardening Brown Bag – Growing Herbs, 12 Noon – 1 PM, Extension Office
- May 5 – Leader Lesson Conference, Greencastle Middle School 5:00 PM
- May 6 – Gardening Brown Bag – Gardening for Pollinators, 12 Noon – 1 PM, Extension Office
- May 14 – Purdue Master Gardener Plant Auction, Putnam County Fairgrounds, 10 AM
- May 15 – Due date all online 4-H livestock enrollment (except poultry, rabbit meat pen, steers).
- May 15 – Last day to drop or add a 4-H project for 2016!
- May 20 – Gardening Brown Bag – Coping with Wildlife, 12 Noon – 1 PM, Extension Office