How Late Can We Plant

After a month and a half of persistent rainfall, most growers are deciding final crop acres to plant on their farm. Corn, rice, and cotton acres will be down, while more acres of soybeans will be planted on fields that stayed wet during our recent monsoon.

We expect a few late acres of corn to go in during mid-May. University research shows these late plantings can make a profitable crop with the insect tolerant hybrids available to farmers today. Make sure to be timely with herbicide, fertilizer, and irrigation applications on these fields. They are also at more of a threat to late season disease development.

Many farmers are scratching their heads on how late to plant rice. Land grant research shows you can still achieve 85% of a field’s maximum yield potential with a mid-May planting. Yield potential will begin to plummet as we head into late May. The Extension service does not recommend planting rice in north Arkansas after June 10th.

While early May is the prime window to plant cotton in north Arkansas, it can still make a decent crop planted during late May (June 1 is the cut off date). Remember that yield is set for cotton in its first month of development, so be vigilant with thrips control and be ready to watch for plant bugs and spider mites during June. Apply recommended fertilizer by fruiting time and be ready to water if needed.

Soybeans can be planted through early July. Keep in mind that as with the other crops, yield potential does head south for soybean plantings made after late May. Late seedings will also be at more risk to late season pest pressure, so plan to scout, and budget for fungicide and insecticide applications.***

Which Flag Color

Most folks in the AG community are adopting the “Flag The Technology (FTT)” program. Different color bicycle flags are used to identify the type of crop technology being used in fields.

The primary goal for implementing FTT is to keep crops safe from herbicide injury which sometimes occurs from off target drift or miss application. For example, a farmer growing a field of Liberty Link soybeans does not want his neighbor growing Roundup Ready soybeans across the turn row to drift glyphosate onto this crop. He also wants to make sure he and his employees know not to spray glyphosate on this particular field.

Currently four types of crop technologies are being identified with bicycle flags. The flags are placed conspicuously around field borders and at entrances to fields. The flag color codes include:

RED – Conventional crop (contains no genetically engineered herbicide tolerance trait – will not tolerate applications of glyphosate, glufosinate, or imazethapyr (Newpath)).

GREEN – Liberty Link crop (will tolerate glufosinate applications.)

WHITE – Roundup Ready (will tolerate glyphosate applications).

YELLOW- Clearfield & STS crops (will tolerate imazethapyr applications).

To help speed up adoption of the FTT program, the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board has funded a grant proposal from the U of A, Division of Agriculture for a second year, to enhance the Extension educational program about FTT in soybean growing counties. A limited number of flags will be available in Greene County. Check with your local AG retailer or the County Extension office.***
Corn and Rice Herbicides

The rain has prevented some farmers from getting out pre-emergence herbicides and in other cases has delayed the application of postemergence herbicides. In the next few weeks growers will be diligently working to get chemicals applied to keep weeds in check.

Remember for corn you have a cut off application size of 12 inches (6 leaf) for atrazine and 30 inches (8 leaf) for Calissto (mesotrione). With our wet weather, the Plant Board did approve a section 24c special local need label for the aerial application of Halex GT on glyphosate tolerant corn. This will help on early planted fields where herbicide application has been delayed, but farmers and applicators are cautioned to read the 24c label and to be mindful of potential drift and injury to adjacent crops and landscapes.

Most of our conventional rice planted received a Command or other pre or delayed pre herbicide application at planting. These fields will need scouted closely to see if grass weeds break before the flood is established.

Propanil, Facet, Regiment, Ricestar, and Clincher are the post products to consider to control emerged grass. Don’t forget about sedges and aquatics which may be more abundant this year with all the rain. Ricebeau and Duet are popular package mixes containing propanil which have a pretty broad spectrum of weed control. Grasp and Strada are also a couple of herbicides to consider for aquatic weed control. Both are in the class 2 family of herbicide chemistry and the grower should closely follow their labels for best weed control results and to avoid crop injury.

On your Clearfield rice remember to follow label rate restrictions. Clearfield hybrids are more sensitive to Newpath than their conventional counterparts, with 4 and 6 ounce rates recommended for each, respectively, for each of your sequential applications. Hopefully on your early Clearfield rice you put out a soil incorporated or Pre shot of Newpath. The warmer weather seen this week should allow our Clearfield rice to handle Newpath applications with a minimum of crop injury.

You may have heard the plant board recently lifted the restriction on the use of 2, 4-D in Northeast Arkansas to allow its use for treatment of broadleaf weeds on rice levees. The primarily purpose in this move is to allow for control of glyphosate resistant pigweed on levees. This restriction is lifted on levees only (small levee size booms, mudmasters etc.). Do not infringe on the other restrictions in place for 2,4-D. Don't forget that although levee applications are allowed, you must still adhere to restrictions regarding distances and wind to sensitive species that were in place in addition to the overall ban. ***

Other Rice Considerations

Once again we want to remind growers, consultants, and retailers to help us get rice planted in Greene County signed up in the DD50 program. The DD50 report is a very helpful one page summary for what to expect on your crop throughout the season. Growth stages, pesticide cut off dates, pest scouting windows, and fertilizer timing are just a few areas listed on the report. Remember to list the total number of acres you plan to manage with each report generated for your farm.

One last reminder about the University of Arkansas Nstar program. It is the Extension service’s newest way to determine nitrogen (N) fertilizer needs for a rice crop. Nstar methodology is backed by research. Its success depends in large part on the consistency of your crop rotation along with how well you manage irrigation water. So far, some fields using the program have called for more N fertilizer to achieve optimum yields while others have called for less N. Call the Extension office for more details on soil sampling for the Nstar program.

As you flood your rice fields, or if you have water seeded, make sure to scout for signs of rice water weevil (RWW). As we get more hybrid fields, this too, often results in thin stands and open water which attracts this pest. In general, you have a 3-5 day window to scout for leaf scar feeding after flooding to determine if enough adults weevils are present to warrant an insecticide application. Check the U of A’s Insecticide Guide (MP-144) for more details. Fields planted with insecticide treated seed should be safe from damage by the RWW.***
Lots of Soybeans Expected

More fields will go into soybeans this season due to rain delays on planting corn, rice, and cotton. For the sustainability of your operation, plan to plant a good mix of technologies and maturities. By growing some Roundup Ready soybean varieties, Liberty Link varieties, and even some old school conventionals, you will be able to use different herbicide families on your farm to control our number one weed pest, glyphosate resistant (GR) Palmer pigweed. You can minimize pest and weather related yield loss risks even more on your farm if you will plant a good range of maturity groups.

According to Dr. Bob Scott, Extension Weed Scientist for Arkansas, to control GR pigweed, step one is to start clean at planting. This year many fields will require tillage if you were unable to get out your burndown herbicide this spring, especially if ryegrass, horseweed, or pigweed are present in the field.

Step two is to get out a residual herbicide at planting for all types of soybean systems - Roundup Ready, Liberty Link, and conventional. Your herbicide options can come from Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) class 2 (Scepter, etc.), class 3(yellow herbicides), class 5 (metribuzin, etc.), class 14 (PPOs like Valor and Authority), and class 15 (Dual, Zidua, etc.). Check out page 20 in the 2013 MP-44 (Recommended Chemicals for weed and brush control) for more information about the herbicide families. Also keep in mind that none of the residual herbicides will work very well unless they are activated by moisture (generally 1/2 inch or more needed) before weeds begin to sprout.

The class 14 and 15 herbicides have been the most consistent in control of GR pigweed, generally providing up to 3 weeks of residual control. Zidua is a new class 15 product from BASF available this year. In University tests it has provided control equal to and sometimes better than the popular standbys, Valor and Prefix. Keep in mind if you use Zidua at the 3 ounce rate, there is a 18 month plant back restriction for rice and grain sorghum.

Zidua is also being sold this year in a premix with Valor, called Fierce. In University research, Fierce has provided 4 or more weeks of residual control. The supplemental soybean label for Fierce allows for pre plant or preemergence application. Applications made after soybeans start to crack the soil will result in severe crop injury. The label also cautions against using class 15 (Dual, Outlook, etc.) tank mix partners to avoid crop injury.

Step three is to be timely with your postemergence (POST) herbicide timing. Applications made early with WSSA class 14 herbicides or premixes –Flexstar, Blazer, Cobra (pigweeds need to be < 2 inches for these products to work) have provided the best results in University trials with Roundup Ready and conventional soybeans.

For Liberty Link soybeans, your POST Liberty application will also need timed early when weeds are less than 3-4 inches. Two POST applications of Liberty may work but timing is very critical. If you run a day or two late you may lose a lot of control as pigweeds become too big – this is why it is best to use a residual early to give a little more flexibility with time.

A couple of other key components for a GR pigweed management system are the use of crop rotation and narrow rows. Most growers have taken this to heart as can be seen with more corn and grain sorghum being planted the last 2-3 years. Many herbicides used in these crops do good controlling pigweed and bring more herbicides families into your program. This helps delay resistance being developed by pigweeds to other herbicide families, particularly Class 14. In regard to narrow row planting, the goal is to get your crop to canopy closure as quickly as possible to shield pigweed seed from sunlight needed to sprout.

Shifting gears, if you haven’t starting using insecticide seed treatment on your soybeans, consider giving it a try. In 80% of recent research trails conducted in Arkansas and other southern states, a significant bump in yield has been recorded when insecticide seed treatment was used.***
Other Topics of Interest

Overall the wheat looks good considering all the rain and cold weather seen this spring. Wheat is well into kernel fill and will soon start maturing. Remember that after flowering we should outrun disease. Fungicides are generally not beneficial after this point. On the other hand, one last pest to monitor is armyworms. Recent research indicates worms can strip the leaves during May without affecting wheat yield. However, as foliage disappears we need to make sure the armyworms don’t start cutting heads. You will also want to watch seedling crops adjacent to your wheat to make sure the armyworms don’t march on them over night! Sometimes a border treatment is needed.

Did you hear about the supplemental label for Facet L use in sorghum recently approved by the Arkansas State Plant Board? This may help in control of grass and broadleaf plants in some situations. It can be applied from planting up until your grain sorghum is 12 inches in height. Make sure to follow the label for best results. You will also need to comply with the State Plant Board regulations on use of Facet.

Warmest regards,

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