

Extension Notes

Personal Column for August 23, 2010

By Gary Hall, ISU Regional Extension Education Director

Ready, Set, Harvest!

Guessing when the corn and soybean harvest might start is always a fun game. This year I might gamble a little and make some educated guesses. With the information gathered from the fields it might not be much of a gamble.

Corn growing degree days accumulated from April 21 to August 23 have been above normal compared to last year when everyone was sweating about if the corn would make a crop before frost. This year the growing season has provided the corn with 92 growing degree days (GDD) above normal in the Nashua area at 2,279 GDD. Near Kanawha, 2,289 GDDs have accumulated which is 118 above normal.

The stage of development of the corn is moving right along too. Most corn is currently in late dough stage to full dent. That is a broad range of development but it can still provide a window of time when we can expect harvest. When corn is at dent at $\frac{1}{4}$ milk line the corn would be mature in 18-21 days. Who wants to bet the corn would be mature in mid to late September? How about late September to early October? Place your bets!

Soybeans can keep you guessing a little too but most soybeans in north Iowa are in the R6 to R7 stage. Soon we will be seeing the soybeans turning color naturally (instead of due to disease) in another week. When the initial leaf color starts to turn you can anticipate the plants to be mature in about 18 days.

When the soybean plant has one pod on the main stem showing mature color, plan on another 7 days until the plant is mature. Once the plant reaches this stage (R7) it is frost safe.

The crops are ahead of schedule. The safe bet is to get your harvest equipment ready to roll. The time to get ready for the 2010 harvest may be shorter than you think.

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