

Across the Fence

The calendar says it's time to plant corn, so whether the soil temperature can back that up or not, corn planting has begun in Iowa. Up-to-date soil temperatures can be found at:

<http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/NPKnowledge/soiltemphistory.html>

Usually corn planted from the end of April through about the 10th of May has the best yield potential. While this didn't completely hold true in 2008, date of planting studies across the state show that earlier is better than later.

Spring nitrogen application is "hot". Last fall became a struggle to get the crop out in some areas, let alone get the ammonia applied. This spring has been pretty wet as well so much of the ammonia got applied in early April. Problems with anhydrous ammonia burn to roots are generally more of a concern in dry conditions than wet, however, waiting at least 7 days after application before planting will minimize potential for burn. An article written in last season's ICM News addresses this issue.

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/CropNews/2008/0505JohnSawyerRogerElmore.htm>

When to use treated soybean seed? Some bean planters have been running as early as the corn planters this spring. Early planting into a cool wet environment can delay germination and leave the seed vulnerable to disease. To alleviate this stress, a seed treatment may be helpful to protect the seed until the soil warms and the seedling can get growing. Treatment may also be helpful if seed quality is poor, or in a replant situation where the soil is already rich in disease organisms from the initial planting. Either way, the seed treatment should be viewed as a yield protector, not a yield enhancer.

Pesticide applicator updates. Record keeping requirements for commercial applicators now must include the time when a pesticide application begins and ends. A new twist on the old "Bee Rule" also sets forth a specific time frame for commercial applications as well as an on-line registry where apiaries can be listed.

Changes in how aerial applicators operate in Iowa will include the need for an aerial applicator consultant. This change has come about in part to ensure that aerial applicators in the state of Iowa are registered to apply pesticides in this state and that they comply with the safe and proper application of the pesticides. Both of these changes can be found in further detail at:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/CropNews/2009/0413schaefer.htm>