

Farmers Are Seeding The 2023 Crop Into Area Fields

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acres that remain will be seeded to wheat, sugarbeets, soybeans and a few specialty crops. The ratios will likely be in the order that was just presented.

Wheat may take a little nibble out of soybean acres this year. Beans have not been the consistent producer that farmers hope for. They have been erratic in production for the past few growing seasons while wheat has been relatively steady as far as yields.

Beans take less fertilizer while wheat has been producing better. The other advantage of wheat is that it is harvested early and is not mixed up in the late fall rush of combining and beet harvest.

Fertilizer plants at both Barnesville and Wolverton have been able to keep up with demand. That has a lot to do with the dry fall last year. Conditions were right to apply fertilizer last fall which means less time spent applying fertilizer this spring. Fertilizer is expensive but available with no shortages being anticipated.

Heavy equipment was rolling through the fields in all areas going into the first weekend in May. Then weekend rains shut things down for a while in the Rothsay, Barnesville and Rollag areas. There was about an inch and a half of rain recorded over that weekend.

There was heavier rain in the Comstock and Wolverton area with over two inches of rain coming down that first week of May. That shut things down until the mid-point of the following week.

On Tuesday night and Wednesday morning, May 10-11, everybody got



It takes a lot of equipment for a very short period of time to get a crop in the ground. This fleet of vehicles was busy putting seeds in the soil last week west of Rothsay last week.

rain again. Quite a lot of what we didn't need in the form of heavy showers. Thunderstorms rumbled through the area from midnight until Wednesday morning. There was a tremendous thunder and lightning show that preceded the rain.

There was a big discrepancy in how much rain actually fell. Some rain gauges showed less than an inch while other showed well over two inches of rain in them. It all depends upon where you were when the storms moved through. All readings are probably right for a small area.

Those showers that fell mid-week

shut things down for a few days but farmers were cautiously back in their fields by the weekend when they got rained out again. Saturday, May 13, the opening of fishing season brought more showers. An all day, scattered rain Saturday, dumped another inch of moisture plus on already soggy ground.

Mother's Day Sunday, May 14 brought one of the nicest days of the year. We climbed into the 80s with bright sunshine and just a gentle, drying breeze out of the south. By Monday, the mid-point in May, there were farmers working fields again. The rains pretty much held for the rest of the week allowing

farmers to get the crops they wanted into the ground.

There were very few complaining about the moisture delays after a very dry fall at the end of the harvest season in 2022. There is now good moisture in the ground and the soil has warmed up to the point where germination will begin as soon as the seeds are laid down.

Much of the corn and wheat has now been planted around the region. The other big crop around the area is sugarbeets which are also planted as early as possible. Beets are on a contracted amount of acres and not every farmer has them so they are a big but somewhat specialized crop.

Yet to go in the ground are soybeans and other late specialty crops that may be planted. Soybean farmers that jumped the gun in the spring of 2021 came to regret it as a late May frost nipped the emerging beans and killed them. Beans do not like cold weather or too much water. There was a good deal of re-seeding done in 2021.

This year, with the cold ground and a somewhat late start, soybeans are likely to be put on the back burner until some time around the Memorial Day weekend. That is a typical planting time for beans around here. That will still have soybeans being harvested in September in a "normal" year if anyone knows what that is.

Other specialty crops that may see some activity this year are sunflowers. This crop is making a big comeback after almost disappearing in the early 1980s. The yellow flowers used to light up the valley before disease, declining yields and bird depredation all but shut sunflowers down. But newer varieties are proving to be profitable again.

Other specialty crops seen are oats under contract for horse feed and barley for delivery to breweries for use in making beer. Alfalfa has also proven to be a good cash crop if you have a pre-determined market. Or you just want to gamble on a hay shortage somewhere.

We are a little bit late getting into fields around the region this spring. But even with the rain delays we are well ahead of the start of the 2022 growing season. That crop turned out just fine, even with some crops seeded out into June. A late start

in 2019 resulted in somewhat of a flop year for many farmers with low prices and a cold spring and summer.

It's really more a matter of what happens over the summer than it is about a firm planting date. Timely rains and the right amount of heat degree days determine the yield and quality of the crop.

Farmers are going to have to get a little lucky this year to surpass last year's crop. While the 2022 crop yield was not a bin buster by any standards, it was better than average. The quality

was great. And, for the first time in a number of years, the price was good. All things considered, there are many who rank the 2022 crop year as the second best in the history of farming.

While prices are not super this year, they are better than average. In some cases they are double what they were only four years ago when light corn was less than \$3 per bushel on the boards. After dockage for light weight and excess moisture, some farmers were lucky to get a buck a bushel for their 2019 corn.

The 2019 crop year also saw thousands of acres of flooded, unharvested sugarbeets freeze in the ground. That resulted in farmers having to pay the factories over \$300 per acre for unharvested beets.

Last year saw harvest time prices at good levels. Sugarbeet growers are never exactly sure what they are going to get for their crop but last year saw a big yield with growers realizing over \$70 per ton.

Going into this year's planting season, corn is worth somewhere around \$6.00 per bushel. New crop corn is worth a buck less per bushel if you want to forward contract it.

Soybeans are boringly steady. They're bringing about \$13.25 per bushel about as far out as they eye can see. New crop beans are being offered on a contract at about \$11.50 per bushel for October with very few takers at that money.

Wheat is \$8.25 per bushel no matter where you look. Today's market for new crop wheat for

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May Is Mental Health Awareness Month

Spring has finally arrived—and with it some much-needed sunlight. Self-care tip: Spending even 15 minutes in the sun each day can improve your mental health. So, keep the sun shining throughout the day!

For more than 20 years, the month of May has been designated as National Mental Health Awareness Month, and this year we also celebrated National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day on May 11. This is a special day to recognize that our children's mental health matters—whether they are a toddler, preschooler, or teenager.

Many myths are circulating about children's mental health and especially early childhood mental health (from 2 years of age to kindergarten entrance and beyond). Mental health symptoms can begin to develop in young children. They're learning how to identify their feelings. In fact, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in 6 children, ages 2 to 8, in the United States experiences a mental health disorder, behavioral disorder, or developmental disorder each year.

Approximately 50 percent of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14. Very young children may and can show early warning signs of mental health concerns, but often they're brushed aside with comments such as "kids will be kids." Symptoms in children experiencing mental health



challenges can include excessive worrying or anxiety, struggles about going to bed at night, frequent aggression or not following the rules, and temper tantrums.

Early mental health services can help a child before problems interfere with developmental growth. The most common mental health disorders young children experience are attention deficit disorder, behavioral problems, and depression.

Remember that mental illness is not your fault. Research suggests many causes, such as genetics, environment, and traumatic life events, impact a person's chance of developing a mental health disorder.

If you feel like your child's behaviors have changed, seek help from your child's healthcare provider. Fill your language with positive words and encouragement when spending time with your child. And don't forget to use the sun!

This article was submitted by: Marsha Erickson, West Central Initiative Early Childhood Specialist, and Carolyn Strnad, Early Childhood Mental Health Network Coordinator.



It has been a "hurry up and wait" spring for both farmers and suppliers as they dodge rain showers. Maple River Grain of Barnesville and Rothsay have a big fleet of spreaders and tender trucks that are kept busy when needed. Keeping up this year has been a little easier than most for Maple River and C-W Coop as there was a lot of fertilizer spread last fall. The rains have also spread out the demand for who needs what in the form of fertilizer or chemicals this planting season.

MNSCO Seeking CoCoRaHS Volunteers

The Minnesota State Climatology Office is looking for volunteer rainfall monitors for the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS). The network includes more than 20,000 volunteers nationwide who measure precipitation in their backyards using a standard 4-inch-diameter rain gauge.

These rainfall monitoring activities are performed by individuals at home who submit their reports online. Climatologist Luigi Romolo said the data from backyard rain gauges are helpful and important in many ways.

"These volunteers help the DNR verify high rain and snow



totals after big events, monitor drought and flooding, make our precipitation maps more accurate and provide needed guidance on Minnesota's changing climate," Romolo said. "This is also a great educational activity for families with kids and a rewarding hobby for anyone interested in weather or climate."

Volunteers are particularly needed outside the immediate Twin Cities metro area. Volunteers receive training on how to observe weather trends and how to submit their precipitation and weather event reports. All training material is available online. They must

purchase or provide a standard 4-inch-diameter rain gauge (available at discount through CoCoRaHS) and have internet access to submit reports.

For the past three years, Minnesota has won the "CoCoRaHS Cup" for recruiting the most new volunteers of any state. "We're hoping Minnesotans will again come through in 2023, to keep the Cup in Minnesota and, more important of course, to improve our state's precipitation recording," Romolo said.

To sign up or for more information, visit CoCoRaHS.org or contact Luigi Romolo at luigi.romolo@state.mn.us.

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Visitors To DNR Lands Urged To Take Precautions

Due to varied conditions across the state, including snow cover, flooding and storm damage, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources recommends people check the DNR website for current conditions of the DNR-managed land they plan to visit before leaving home.

As snow melts, trail and campground conditions are being assessed by DNR crews. Work to clear winter storm damage continues in some areas. Recent snowfall in parts of the state has delayed this work, and some recreation amenities and facilities might open later than usual. In addition, spring snow melt has caused flooding in some locations. The DNR urges visitors to prioritize safety over sightseeing and follow all signs and closures. Flooded areas should be avoided.

DNR webpages can help the public identify current conditions, temporary closures, and safety considerations:

Use the park locator map (mndnr.gov/park-locations) to locate individual state park and recreation area webpages for updated information on each park.

Learn about closures to state forest roads and all types of trails on the temporary closures page (mndnr.

gov/trailconditions).

Specific to off-highway vehicle trails, the summer riding season officially begins on May 1, but weather and trail conditions may prevent riders from accessing some off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails. Although clubs and DNR staff are working hard to get the trails ready, many trails in northern Minnesota are still snow covered and some will likely not be open by May 1. To learn which trails are open, visit the DNR's OHV trail closures webpage (mndnr.gov/ohv/closures.html).

Contact the local wildlife area office (mndnr.gov/areas/wildlife) for the latest conditions at Wildlife Management Areas.

Visit the DNR's river levels webpage (mndnr.gov/river_levels) to learn about current river levels and paddling conditions. Most river levels are reported as medium, high or very high as of April 27; and with cold water temperatures, paddlers should take extreme caution on the water. Be sure to review cold water safety (mndnr.gov/safety/boatwater/cold_water.html) information before heading out on the water.

Boat access site conditions are also variable. With a later than average ice out this spring, crews

have not yet been able to inspect and repair boat ramps or place docks at many locations. Boaters should inspect ramps above and below the water to ensure they are in good condition and avoid rivers with high water and lakes with ice remaining. The DNR has a 2023 Lake Ice Out Dates webpage (mndnr.gov/ice_out) that offers the latest information about which lakes have open water, and which are still ice covered.

People should be prepared to encounter mud on trails and state forest roads during spring snowmelt and after heavy or multi-day rainfall events. Waterproof footwear is recommended for hikers. To prevent erosion, widening of trails and damage to plants, hikers and OHV riders are encouraged to go through muddy areas and not around them, or turn back if it's unsafe or if continuing forward could damage the trail.

Visitors seeking more detailed information than what's available online are encouraged to contact the DNR Information Center. The DNR Information Center can be reached by emailing info.dnr@state.mn.us or by calling 888-MINNDNR (646-6367) from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday.

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