

EXTENSION

Time for Summer Crops

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While driving throughout north central Oklahoma last week, I noticed some corn has already been planted and has starting to come up. It seems planting has come to a quick halt due to lack of moisture. In review of Mesonet data, the current 4 inch percent plant available water for north central Oklahoma on April 11th falls between 14 and 37 percent. More rain is needed to get full season crops established.



Some corn and soybean planting has already started and many more acres will follow. Mid to late May planted soybeans have shown to be relatively consistent for many in the region the past five or so years. We have favorable soil temperatures to favor good germination, but soil moisture at planting depth is hard to find for most.

I've been receiving more questions about seeding rates on soybean the past couple of years. Recent field work from Kansas State University has shown there are some trends to follow. When comparing rates based on yield environment, higher rates at 109-144,000 plants per acre were needed in low yielding environments and about 76-114,000 were needed in medium to high yielding environments. Keep in mid we normally will expect only about 80% of planted seeds to become plants. Both low yielding and later plantings benefited from increased seeding rates due to reduced potential growth per plant.

Inadequate weed control is one of the most yield-limiting factors, as some research has shown yield losses as high as 79%. Certain herbicide programs may seem expensive, but can still be economical if yields are protected. From soybean emergence to the V3 growth stage (third trifoliolate) is the most critical period to limit weed competition to protect yield potential.

As always, we recommend soybean producers to rely on residual herbicides instead of solely relying on traits that allow the postemergence applications of glyphosate, glufosinate, 2,4-D (Enlist) or dicamba (Xtend). ALS herbicides (such as Classic, FirstRate, and Pursuit) have good activity on many broadleaf weeds but can be weak on pigweeds and waterhemp. PPO herbicides (such as Cadet, Cobra, Reflex, Resource, and UltraBlazer) have activity on many problem broadleaf weeds and have also been a good option if some weeds are suspect of ALS resistance. Assure II, Fusilade DX, Poast and Select are some good options if grass control is needed.

Recent field trials by OSU have shown that pairing preemergent herbicides with postemergent herbicides resulted in higher yields (about 10-15 more bushels) and fewer weeds. These trials

looked at planting date and postemergence application timings with and without a preemergence. Later planted soybeans generally benefited more from the pairing of a preemergence and postemergence.

To save yield potential, it is best to start clean and stay weed-free for the first few weeks of crop growth. Soybean producers must first decide which herbicide traits is best for their operation, develop a herbicide plan, and also make a backup plan if herbicide applications are delayed or fail satisfactory control. Weed control strategies need to consider future crop rotations and should also be a long term investment in managing herbicide resistant weeds. Going cheap now may become much more expensive later.

With grain sorghum and feed crops, such as forage sorghums, sudangrass, and sorghum sudans, some of the same principles apply. The main plain should start clean of weeds, used residual products, and use postemergence products if needed until the crop can canopy over to shade out later emerging weeds. Group 15 herbicides, such as Dual, Bicep, Warrant, etc., are good options for residual control of many grasses and small seeded broadleaves. If a group 15 herbicide is used make sure to use safened seed, such as Concept treated, to prevent herbicide injury to the crop.

Contact your local OSU County Extension office with any questions about crop options and herbicide options for your farming operation.



Don't Wing-It with Backyard Poultry

Dana Zook, NW Area Livestock Specialist

It seems fitting to talk about chickens in the springtime, but I have noticed that chickens and other poultry have become quite popular despite the season. The endeavor of raising poultry is one that I believe links people back to the basics and it helps them feel like they can connect with their food source. I think this is great! However, I feel that people should fully understand the big picture before diving in. Here are a few first steps to take when contemplating a small flock of poultry.

Safety and Health. This might be a strange place to start but I think it extremely important to mention the potential hazards of poultry to human health. Birds carry diseases like *Salmonella* without showing signs of sickness. For this reason, we may not realize that birds naturally shed these organisms in their manure and encountering these pathogens can cause serious infections. Those most often impacted are young children, older individuals, pregnant women and those with diminished immune systems. The best way for people to protect



themselves is to practice good hand hygiene and encourage others about its importance when they are around poultry.

Location. Is the place you wish to keep the birds in an urban or rural setting? Rural settings offer more flexibility on housing and coop design and are rarely hindered by regulations or zoning. If you live in an urban setting, consult the rules and regulations of the town you live in. Details to look for include property zoning, number and type of chickens allowed and requirements for building and setback of the chicken dwelling. Research homeowner's association guidelines as they may supersede city regulations. Do your homework ahead of time to prevent neighborhood complaints.

Veterinary Care. Locate a veterinary practice in your area that can help you with poultry health issues. Reach out for information about becoming part of their practice. Most Oklahoma veterinarians do not specialize in poultry, but they are a good health resource and often more than willing to help you through a problem.

Shelter and Nutrition. Coop design is an essential step in making a dwelling appropriate for the size and number of birds you wish to own. Avoid overcrowding as this can cause aggressive behavior, illness and cannibalism among the flock. Most backyard flocks are confined to a coop and attached run. Coops should be built to have 3-4 sq. feet per bird inside and a minimum of 10 sq. feet per bird in the run. Other necessary features are nesting boxes (for egg layers), feeders and waterers. Feed is probably the easiest part of the poultry endeavor. Find a consistent local retailer for a bagged feed blended specifically for the type and age of chicken you are raising. Bagged feed takes the guesswork out of nutrition and provides balanced vitamins and minerals needed for peak production.

Do you know that OSU Extension and its agricultural educators are a good resource for backyard poultry information? We even have an online poultry course that covers the basics of poultry keeping. This self-paced interactive course provides activities, video content, and quizzes focused on husbandry, health, and management of poultry. A link to this course and other interesting courses can be found at <https://learn.extension.okstate.edu/>. The course is \$20 and takes 3-5 hours to complete. People who complete the course will receive a certificate of completion. Some municipalities are using this certificate as a requirement to get a license for backyard poultry.



Farm Management Resources on Your Smartphone

The e-Farm Management website showcases resources to inform producers about farm financial management and production, marketing, and risk management topics. This site contains videos, tools, and publications for farmers and ranchers to strengthen their farm financial management skills.

One example is the video, Equitable Lease Arrangements. In this video, viewers learn about historical crop and pasture rental rates in Oklahoma. The video looks at the advantages and disadvantages associated with cash and share lease agreements. Lastly, it provides details on several methods for determining equitable rent.

To view this video and find additional information on lease agreements, visit:

<https://extension.okstate.edu/programs/farm-management-and-finance/e-farm-management-training/developing-equitable-lease-agreements/>.

More information on this and other farm management topics may be found: 1) by contacting your nearest Extension Educator 2) on the e-farm management website

(<https://extension.okstate.edu/programs/farm-management-and-finance/e-farm-management-training/index.html>) or 3) on the OSU Ag Econ YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/OkStateAgEcon>).



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