

Southwest Regional Report – May 17, 2012

Weather: Field conditions have been shoved into go and planters and drills are running everywhere. We anticipate that planting operations will be all but finished by the end of next week. Places where it was dry enough to plant early are pretty much done now.

Rainfall: Precipitation totals since May 1 averaged 1.22 inches of precipitation across the region and ranged from 2.07 inches near Benton Harbor to 0.56 inches near Grand Junction. The heaviest rainfall over the last week was in the northern portion of the region. Normal rainfall is expected in the 6-10 outlook and the region is in the boundary area between normal and below normal precipitation (lower rainfall expected in the southeastern portion of the region) over the 8-14 period.

Temperature: Southwest Michigan and Northern Indiana is expected to be the focal point for above normal temperatures in the eastern portion of the US in both the 6-10 and 8-14 day outlooks. Base 50 GDD's averaged 184 GDD's Base 50 since May 1. We normally accumulate around 11.6 GDD's base 50 during the next 5 day period. Warmer temperatures in the forecast will push that number ahead rapidly.

Corn: Early planted corn is at V2-V3. The most advance fields I have seen are in Cass and St. Joseph Counties. Recently planted corn should emerge very quickly with warm temperatures expected. Some of the early planted fields are a bit weedy, especially with small grasses. Remember, if you are planning on using strictly a pre-emergence herbicide program, grass weeds more than 1 inch in height can be problematic. Former MSU Corn Weed Control Specialist Dr. Wes Everman talked about [delayed pre-emergence programs](#) in an article from 2010. There are not many reports of damage from [black cutworm](#) larvae yet, but don't forget to keep an eye out for them. Threshold is 5% clipping and larvae present. Also for those seed corn fields where a cereal cover crop was maintained later, you need to keep an eye out for [armyworm](#). I continue to find white grubs, including a good percentage of AGB, in fields when I kick around the soil. I even found some in low numbers in a corn field following corn, which I have not seen in the past and I suspect is pretty rare. [MSU's Western Bean Cutworm Trapping Network](#) is getting underway. It will be interesting to see if the warm March soil temperatures will have any significant effect on their emergence patterns.

Soybeans: Early planted soybeans are emerging quite nicely now and look pretty good. Continue to watch for bean leaf beetle damage in early planted fields. Cutworms can sometimes be a threat to soybeans as well as corn. Keep an eye out for clipping damage. Geese can also cause damage to emerging soybean seedlings so be sure to look for the presence of clipped seedlings to help diagnose the true cause of the stand losses.

Wheat: The wheat is at full head emergence ([Feeke's 10.1](#)) this week. Many advanced fields are at the 50% flowering (Feeke's 10.5), so fungicide application window is at an end for some of the advanced fields. MSU Wheat Educator Martin Nagelkirk has written an excellent article on protecting [Wheat from Leaf and Head Disease](#). Pressure remains low in the few fields I have walked. There is some [powdery mildew](#) in the lower canopy. Start watching for [armyworm damage](#) in earnest now. Initial symptoms are ragged leaf margin feeding. Threshold: (4 or more worms per square foot before heading, 2 or more worms per square foot after heading to prevent head clipping) and products available for [armyworm control in wheat](#).

Alfalfa: Harvest has moved forward at a rapid pace with the drier weather. Virtually all of the fields in our area have been harvested in the last two weeks. It is important to watch fields for [alfalfa weevil, especially the early re-growth, where the thresholds to 25% tip feeding injury](#). I suspect that potato leafhoppers will be a factor soon as well with the return of warm air this weekend.