

As of the May 10<sup>th</sup> USDA Crop Progress & Condition Report, Missouri had planted 39% of its intended corn acreage. At the same time in 2008, corn planting was only 32% complete; however on average, corn planting is 22 days behind the normal pace of 75% complete. Specifically looking at progress in west central Missouri, the May 10<sup>th</sup> USDA report stated that 28% of the intended corn acreage had been planted and 60% of the spring tillage had been done.

As of the May 10<sup>th</sup> USDA report, statewide corn emergence was only 21%. There have been numerous reports of emergence problems, with many corn producers considering replanting some or all of their corn acres. Although seed treatments do provide some level of protection for the seed in “less-than-optimum” soil conditions, poor emergence can still result. Once the seed begins germinating, the seed coat is torn and the tears in the seed coat are entry points that allow pathogens and insects to invade the seed. As Bill Wiebold (MU Extension State Corn Specialist) notes, “once germination begins, it is a race between seedling establishment and the seedling enemies”. If soil conditions deteriorate after planting and the germination process is slowed down, the germinating seed will be put at risk and poor emergence can result. Producers are encouraged to scout their planted corn acres, calculate plant populations, evaluate plant spacing variability, and examine seedling vigor and health.

Although 2009 planting progress is behind normal, it is still slightly ahead of last year’s pace. Despite poor spring weather conditions in 2008 however, the 2008 statewide yield average was 144 bu/acre, which was the second highest yield average on record (Figure 1). This is important to keep in mind, as reasonably high yield potential can still be obtained when corn is planted in mid to late May. However, yield potential is strongly dependent on weather conditions during the summer months of July and early-August.

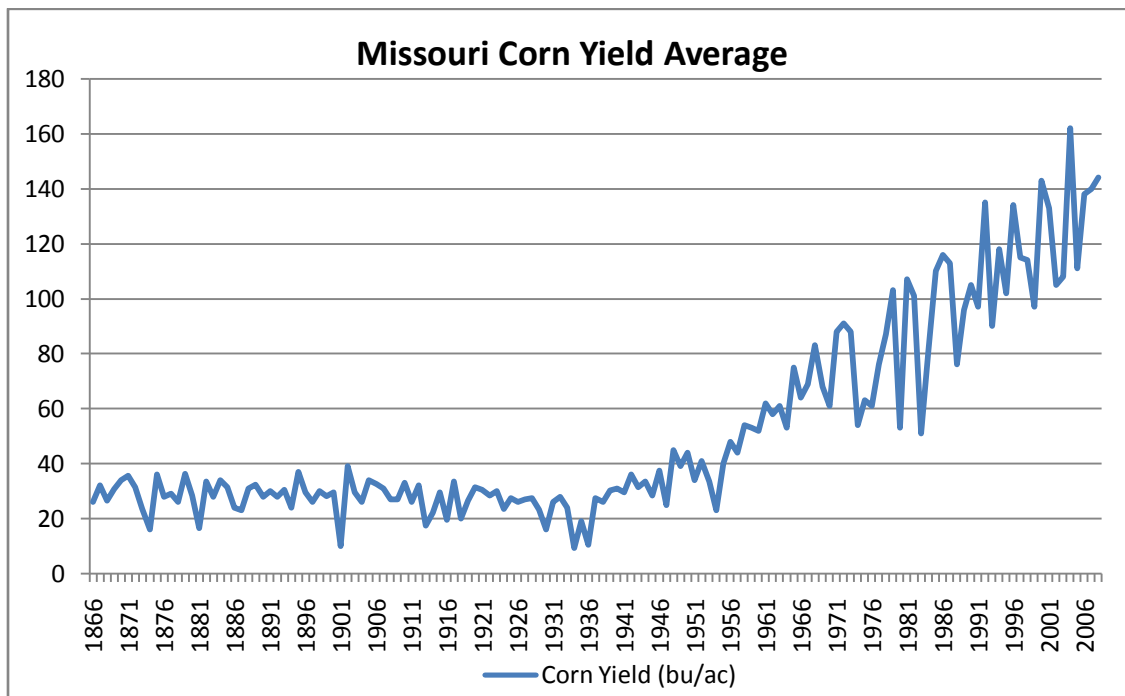


Figure 1 Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS): <http://www.nass.usda.gov/>

Lastly, corn producers who applied their nitrogen in the fall or early spring months and have experienced excessive rainfall are encouraged to test the soil’s nitrate-nitrogen levels. The preplant N test is recommended by fertility specialists when losses of nitrogen fertilizer may have occurred due to excessive rainfall. The test requires sampling the soil to a depth of two feet. The results from the soil preplant N test will help growers determine whether additional nitrogen is required. For more information on the preplant N test, see the MU Extension Guide #G9177 titled “[Preplant Nitrogen Test for Adjusting Corn Nitrogen Recommendations](#)”.