



ADVANCED AG SYSTEMS'S

# Crop Soil News

<http://www.advancedagsys.com/>

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**“It is the crops that feed the cows that make the milk which creates the money.”**

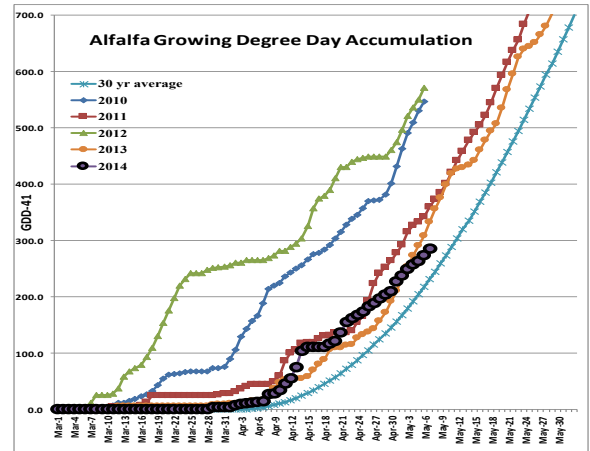
## The Un-Spring

The Northeast, and North central U.S. and Canada are still in the center of much below normal temperatures and now, considerable rainfall. Farms who in the past several years had seedings and corn in the ground, are just getting started – and the cold keeps returning. The good news is that this pattern is starting to break with warmer temperatures creeping in. Unfortunately, what I pointed out in the March newsletter is coming true – areas around the Great Lakes and immediately to the west of them will continue below normal temperatures. Hopefully our warmer conditions will move that direction.

It is not the end of the world (in spite of Al Gore & the UN). As you can see by the graph above for Cornell’s Valatie Research Farm in NY, we had been spoiled in 2010 and 2012 (and for a number of years before). With the switch in the temperature oscillation of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans (Pacific has switched cooler and Atlantic warmer), the earlier than normal springs we had been getting, are now reverting to what we used to have a number of years ago. This year is approaching the 30 year average of 1965—1995. We survived then and will survive now if you adjust to the new (old) normal spring.

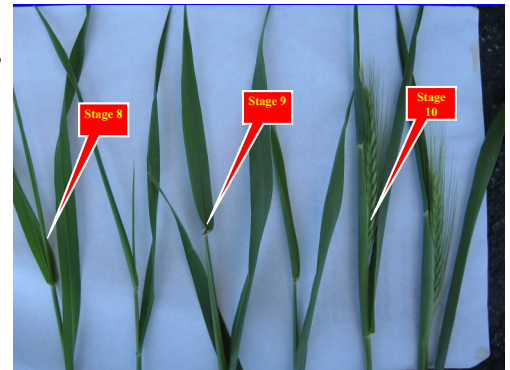
There are a number of key steps that can be taken. The more successful farms are using one pass minimum tillage or one pass deep zone tillage (set zone for shallow 6 inch if soils are wet deep). That allowed them to slip in acreage on well drained fields the few sunny days. Those who took advantage of fall killing their sods are going in and successfully no till planting. The biggest “mistake” is to mud in a crop in a desperate attempt to “plant something somewhere.” I have seen many examples of this and they are all disasters. The yield loss in corn for being slightly late is far less than the 14 – 27% yield loss from soil compaction. There is even greater loss from squishing the seed in instead of placing it in an optimum soil condition. With duals you can get over soils that **should not be driven on**. That compaction yield loss will stay for this and many seasons after.

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade. We have cool and moist conditions. Capitalize on crops that give peak quality in cool moist conditions. Winter forages, although starting slow because of the cold temperatures, are producing more high quality forage than any yield of mudded in early corn. 50 F



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has occurred very frequently this spring – too cold for corn – but winter triticale is growing deceptively fast. **Wait until stage 9 for harvest** (see photo previous page). **Don't rush in an erroneous decision to get the corn in sooner.** Last year stage 8 occurred on a Thursday. Stage 9 occurred on the following Tuesday. In that time frame yield went from 8 tons of 35% dry matter silage to over 10.5 tons – **a 32% yield increase.** There was no change in feed quality. Stop planting corn to take time to get in the best forage you can grow this season. You may give up a ton or two of corn silage, but you are gaining 8 – 10 tons of high quality forage. We learned last year that if temperatures drop to the **low 30's** at night you might be able to leave winter grains in a swath overnight with very little loss of sugars. If it only cools to the 40's or more it is critical to make haylage in a day to preserve the energy. Regardless of the moisture, with the high sugars and homolactic bacteria, we have been able to get perfect fermentation. We suggest **increasing the length of cut to an inch at least.** This dramatically **reduces the leachate** from the silos and, like bmr products, gives **more effective rumen fiber** for this rapidly digestible product.

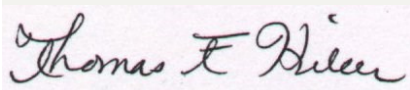
The other cool season forage is your first cutting haycrop, Every analysis I have seen shows significant profit advantage to stopping corn planting and get the first cutting in at peak quality. **YOUR INDIVIDUAL FIELDS SHOULD DETERMINE WHEN YOU SHOULD START HARVEST,** using **YOUR alfalfa as a predictor.** The height of alfalfa can predict when it and grass fields, in your local climate, condition, and individual field, should be cut. It simply involves using a ruler and the following table:

Alfalfa near a Grass field is 13 inches tall	Start to Cut Your Pure Grass Stands
Alfalfa in 50% Alfalfa 50% Grass Stands is 23 inches tall	Cut Your Mixed Stands
Alfalfa is 30 inches tall in > 80% Alfalfa	Cut Your Mostly Alfalfa Stands

A better system is to go to <http://www.forages.org/index.php/tools-grassman> Dr. Cherney of Cornell developed this slick, accurate system. Click on the grass, alfalfa-grass, or the alfalfa estimator. For the latter two insert the alfalfa height, percent grass, NDF target, and the weather (normal, hot, cool) and **it will tell you how many days until that field on your farm under your conditions is at peak quality** for harvest. Using the predictor system to determine what fields to harvest first, allows you to harvest early fields and later fields at peak quality. Thus you have high quality forage from **ALL** fields, even though the harvest may have started a week or more later for some fields. If you have fields that are in a low, warm, sheltered location, they **are ready earlier** than the rest of the farm. A well drained soil will have forage ahead of a poor drained soil. A north facing slope will be further behind a south or south east facing slope (especially after this winter). For some farms, their clear alfalfa on well drained south facing field may be ready before a mostly grass field on a wet north facing slope.

Finally, going back to the old style weather will hit farms who are pushing the envelope for long season corn. Farms in our area who are normally the first to plant, have started 10 or more days behind. The long term forecast is for a more normal summer. Even if the El Nino kicks in, temperature above 85 is not going to help because the corn stops growing at that temperature. Corn of optimum maturity will make more milk than longer season corn that *"might?"* make more tons of wet material. You still have to pay for the corn even if it doesn't mature. So to aggravate the seed sales people I am standing by my March suggestion of trading in your very long season for something shorter to bring the **average maturity of your corn down to normal.**

Sincerely,



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