



ADVANCED AG SYSTEMS'

Crop Soil News

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

April 2018

"It is the crops
that feed the
cows that make
the milk
which creates
the money."

Managing in a Cold Spring

Don't panic. Spring and summer will arrive. After this warm burst, the weather is forecasted to be below normal temperature through May. Except around the great lakes region, the summer is predicted to be above normal, especially in the center of the country. The great lakes and southeast is slated to be slightly wetter than normal. We have had this weather multiple years before and survived. Learning from those years, there are a few key steps to take and some to avoid.

As discussed in the March 2018 letter, (see web site) for northern areas it is not to late to add nitrogen to even manured spring grains which will pay back 2:1 in savings on soybean meal through higher forage protein. This weather is perfect for cool season grasses; capitalize on it. Fertilizing fields with greater than 50% grasses the same way (with the critical **sulfur** included with the nitrogen) will also increase the protein in that crop. Cool weather will optimize yield and quality from cool season grasses and legumes while slowing maturity.

If you **harvest by date** you are going to be **way off this year**. We have had no spring and so perennial/winter annual crops are delayed in yield and maturity. There will be a warm burst the beginning of May to move things along, but harvest is driving by physiological maturity (heat units), not calendar date. Remember to start **harvesting cool season grasses when the alfalfa in or near by is 13 inches tall**. That is when cool season grasses are at peak yield and quality. This is based on Dr. Cherney's excellent research found in <http://www.forages.org/index.php/tools-grassman> where you can calculate how soon your grass, grass alfalfa, or nearly all alfalfa fields are ready. Take advantage of this to focus on very high-quality forage harvested through wide swath same day haylage system to reduce the cost of producing milk, especially in a high forage diet. As was pointed out in the February newsletter, this system can deliver **16% more energy** to your cow's mouth. If a field gets rained out of its harvest window, skip it and move on to the next one at peak quality.

As with cool season grasses, the weather is what winter forages also prefer. It is supposed to cool after the warm burst next week. This will slow the maturity rate of winter forage and give you a bigger chance to get it harvested on time. Physiologically "on time" is when the flag leaf is all the way out. Winter forage planted early or later will have different maturities as will south facing vs north facing, or well drained vs poorer drained fields. This could spread out your maturities so you can achieve timely harvest for all of your fields. We don't know what the rest of the year will bring, so why throw away winter forage in order to plant corn that does not yield as much milk /ton as flag leaf winter forage. Just because the corn crop is delayed some, there is no need to panic and flush the winter forage down the drain in a panic to get corn planted. Ironically, the winter forage you are considering to kill

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or plow down produces more milk/ton than even BMR corn silage. Further harvest information and discussion can be found in the short presentation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmIounLulms> In trade for the slight delay in corn planting, the winter forage can give you 5 – 10 tons of very high-quality silage/acre. Utilizing a clearing coulter and pop up nitrogen, no-till corn can be directly planted into the stubble, getting jump on the season without the negative impact of allelopathic compounds. The other alternative discussed in January 2014 news letter is to use winter forage as a step to seedings. <http://advancedagsys.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/January-2014-seeding.pdf> Legumes no tilled into winter forage stubble in the end of May or early June have done better than April seedings for me.

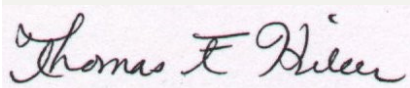
I would not worry about the impact of delayed planting on maturity of the corn unless you get past the third week of May. As longer season corns are planted later they shrink up their days to maturity. That being said, I would NOT push the season. In the Great Lakes area it will be cooler than normal—adjust for it. For other areas of the upper Midwest and Northeast, you may be planting slightly later if the cool wet weather continues. That area is forecasted normal, to warmer than normal, summer weather which could quickly make up for delays in corn planting. The other advantage of slightly shorter season corn is that our research has clearly shown that to optimize winter forage it needs to be planted on time (two weeks before wheat planting date) for high yields and earlier harvest next spring. Winter triticale forage is higher milk producing than most corn and warrants the advantage of planting on time, which means getting mature corn off earlier. The yield and milk/acre gained in the winter forage more than makes up for that lost in shorter season corn.

A major on going concern that I mentioned in both the March 2018 and the previous April 2017 newsletter (see web site), is **DO NOT MUD THE CROP IN**. Planting corn in cold **WET** soil is a prescription for disaster. We had some do exactly that last year. The crops planted earlier into mud were horrible. The crops (shorter season corn or sorghum) planted later into soils with the proper moisture out yielded the earlier planted when the soil was to wet.

With milk prices between abysmal and downright horrible, money has to be stretched further. Spreading manure and immediately covering it with a light disk will increase the nitrogen available nearly three times greater than simply spreading and leaving it. 8,000 gal of manure spread and allowed to dry on the surface will give you 42 pounds of nitrogen for the next crop. The same amount of manure immediately covered will give you 162 pounds of nitrogen – more than enough to meet the needs of the crop. The disk does not need to dig to China and burn a lot of fuel. Keeping the wheels down on the disk so it just skims and about an inch of soil is thrown over the manure. This will also allow you to cover the manure immediately after spreading without the tractor sliding all over (been there, done that!) Our research with an airway at a shallow angle, and a tine/roller basket to crumble and smooth will have the same result saving manure nitrogen as immediately chisel plowing. Your normal tillage for corn can be done after that.

Finally, this is one of those years where the time will come that hay crop and/or winter forage are ready and you are still planting corn. **STOP PLANTING CORN AND HARVEST THE FORAGE**. Every economical analysis I have seen or done myself clearly says this is a no brainer. You make more money harvesting the cool season forage on time than you do planting corn. Last year I planted 82 day corn on June 15, and harvested 30.5 tons of 35% dry matter silage in September. Cool season forages wait for no one. The corn can wait.

Sincerely,



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Hand
to Better
Agriculture**

