



The State of Corn

Too Late to Plant Corn? NO, in fact it is the perfect time to do so!

Dr. Ron Heiniger, NC State University Extension Corn Specialist

Many of you are asking if it is getting too late to plant corn. The answer is an emphatic – NO! In fact, given this year's climate pattern we are just starting into the optimum corn planting window. From now till May 15th is the best time of the season to plant corn. With cooler weather this summer this planting period should place pollination in the best time for good rainfall. So, as Dave the cable guy says, "Let's get 'er done!" When would I stop planting corn? We can plant corn even into June, but there are penalties for planting after May 15 both from the standpoint of reducing yield potential due to less light captured and from increasing disease and insect pressures.

The other question that is on everyone's mind is where are these commodity prices heading? Here is what I would encourage you to think about. What commodities do we need right here in the United States to produce food, fiber, fuel, etc.? These are the commodities that will see the quickest recovery in demand. The worldwide problem is how to ship or transport commodities given the travel restrictions and break down of the processing and distribution networks. Commodities that can be processed and used locally in areas with low CoVid infections will see the most value. So, what commodity do we use locally to make meat? CORN – of course! So, I expect North Carolina grown corn to be in great demand come July.

Finally, above all stay safe. The corn field is a perfect place to be right now.

All of Dr. Heiniger's slides from the winter meetings, as well as the 2019 yield contest winners are now on our website; www.nccorngrowers.com.

News from the Foothills

Tim Hambrick, Ag Agent, NC Cooperative Extension
Forsyth, Stokes, Surry, Yadkin

Like much of North Carolina, row crop farming has been hit-or-miss so far this spring. Lot's of water with a few good days thrown in as a teaser. Now, we are back to a little too wet, and some much cooler weather, all which has slowed things up considerably.

Like everybody else, we are struggling with the societal changes that the coronavirus has brought upon us. Social distancing may be good for the health, but it can be hard on the soul! The economic effect of coronavirus is being felt on the farm, as well.

We all watched the prices. They weren't very good to start with and now they have rapidly deteriorated. It appears that profit will depend on exceptional yields across the board. That's a difficult prospect to get excited about.

Still, Foothills farmers are a resolute bunch. They are putting a crop in the ground every day that spring will allow. And that's one of the things that I love about farmers, particularly North Carolina farmers. The odds may not look good, but to the field they go. When the world straightens up again, there will be food on the table!

As an NC Cooperative Extension agent, I'm encouraging my farmers to know their costs. Lock in some profit if it offers itself and don't pass that profit up hoping for an extra nickel or dime. Maybe the best you can do in 2020 is to lock in less loss. Be careful to watch inputs and make future input decisions based on what the weather gives us to work with. Don't spend money on a 200 bu crop when the long-term average is closer to 155. If you've got high fertility levels, this might be a good year to draw that down a bit. Keep costs more in line with what the crop is worth.

This is a year to make it through, as well as put yourself in position to do it again next year. Do I have faith in my farmers? You bet I do! I am privileged to work with some of the best farmers in the whole state. But I also worry about them. They aren't just farmers. They are friends and neighbors, people who laugh with me, sometimes at me, and vice versa. And that's why I worry about them. Why I pray for the right rain and for the best temperature.

Someday, we'll look back on 2020. We'll talk about its challenges; we will also talk about what we learned from it. And we'll get the planter out and do it one more time!

The Coronavirus and Potential Impacts on the Agricultural Economy

Nicholas E. Piggott
Professor and Extension Specialist
NC State University

Introduction

The impacts of the coronavirus on the U.S. and NC agricultural economies are unfolding and fluid, so it is going to take time for agricultural economists to measure the full impacts. The purpose of this brief is to outline four significant concerns and questions I foresee for the U.S. and NC agricultural economies, with what we know presently, for policymakers and legislators to consider as they respond to the crisis. These four concerns and questions are as follows:

1. Farming will likely be unprofitable in 2020 with most commodity prices currently tanking to double-digit percentage losses since the crisis began;

2. Can the agricultural supply chain function at capacity given that processing of meats, poultry, and produce are labor-intensive which makes social distancing difficult and means workers could contract and spread the coronavirus, forcing processing plant shutdowns?;
3. Can the agricultural supply chain transform to support how Americans are now consuming food due to stay at home and social distancing rules?;
4. A significant spike in unemployment and loss of income will shift and change the demand for food. Some Americans will spend less on food due to having less disposable income, and they will change their preferences to less expensive basic foodstuffs for at-home consumption;

To read Dr. Piggott's article in its entirety please click on the link below:

<https://cals.ncsu.edu/agricultural-and-resource-economics/news/the-coronavirus-and-potential-impacts-on-the-agricultural-economy/>

Cool, Wet Weather Can Affect Residual Herbicides

**From Dr. Charlie Cahoon
NC State Extension Weed Specialist**

I am no weather expert like Dr. Heiniger, but I think the current weather pattern could be classified as cool and wet. What does this mean for corn and residual herbicides?

Corn tolerance to labeled residual herbicides is good under optimum conditions for germination. However, many products warn that injury can occur when cool, wet conditions persist. It important to remember corn tolerance to many herbicides is metabolism based.

Therefore, any stress that slows the corn's plant metabolism can subsequently increase herbicide injury. Corn response to HPPD-inhibiting (Capreno, Callisto, Laudis, Halex GT, Resicore, Realm Q, Impact/Armezon, etc.) herbicides applied postemergence is a prime example. Each year we get a few complaints of bleached corn after being sprayed with a HPPD-inhibiting herbicide. Most often, we can tie injury back to a dip in temperature that slowed growth of the corn.

Again, growth slows and the plant is not able to metabolize the herbicide in time to avoid some injury. A similar issue can occur with residual herbicides if cool, wet conditions dominate our planting window.

Now, I know your question before you even ask it. Should I leave out residual herbicides if I am planting into cool, wet soils?

My answer.....absolutely not! We should always use a residual herbicide preemergence. In most situations, injury from preemergence herbicides is largely cosmetic and will not affect yield. Lastly, Dr. Heiniger mentioned he has seen some pictures of what looks like splash injury from residual herbicides. I routinely run into this issue in cotton, where cotton plants seem to stay in the cotyledon stage for weeks.

However, it can occur with corn if we get a rain around emergence. Again, injury is mostly cosmetic. Medium and fine-textured soils are more predisposed to splash injury as the treated soil particles are more easily "splashed up" compared to larger soil particles typical of coarse-textured soils.

USDA Announces Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced Friday the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). This new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program will take several actions to assist farmers, ranchers, and consumers in response to the COVID-19 national emergency. President Trump directed USDA to craft this \$19 billion immediate relief program to provide critical support to our farmers and ranchers, maintain the integrity of our food supply chain, and ensure every American continues to receive and have access to the food they need.

CFAP will use the funding and authorities provided in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES), the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), and other USDA existing authorities. The program includes two major elements to achieve these goals.

1. Direct Support to Farmers and Ranchers: The program will provide \$16 billion in direct support based on actual losses for agricultural producers where prices and market supply chains have been impacted and will assist producers with additional adjustment and marketing costs resulting from lost demand and short-term oversupply for the 2020 marketing year caused by COVID-19.

The approximately \$16 billion in direct assistance to farmers/ranchers is broken down as follows:

- \$9.6 billion for the livestock industry (\$5.1 billion for cattle; \$2.9 billion for dairy; \$1.6 billion for hogs)
- \$3.9 billion for row crop producers
- \$2.1 billion for specialty crops
- \$500 million for other crops

The program will be comprised of a single payment to producers using two different price calculations:

- 85% of the price loss experienced between January 1 – April 15th
- 30% of the expected price losses from April 15 through the next two quarters.

For a commodity to be eligible, that commodity must have experienced a 5% price decrease between January and April.

Payment limitations will apply (\$125,000 per commodity with an overall limit of \$250,000 per individual or entity). The Department has indicated they are pushing to have assistance out to growers by the end of May.

2. USDA Purchase and Distribution: USDA will partner with regional and local distributors, whose workforce has been significantly impacted by the closure of many restaurants, hotels, and other food service entities, to purchase \$3 billion in fresh produce, dairy, and meat. We will begin with the procurement of an estimated \$100 million per month in fresh fruits and vegetables, \$100 million per month in a variety of dairy products, and \$100 million per month in meat products. The distributors and wholesalers will then provide a pre-approved box of fresh produce, dairy, and meat products to food banks, community and faith-based organizations, and other non-profits serving Americans in need.

On top of these targeted programs USDA will utilize other available funding sources to purchase and distribute

food to those in need.

·USDA has up to an additional **\$873.3 million available in Section 32 funding** to purchase a variety of agricultural products for distribution to food banks. The use of these funds will be determined by industry requests, USDA agricultural market analysis, and food bank needs.

·The FFCRA and CARES Act provided an at least **\$850 million for food bank administrative costs and USDA food purchases, of which a minimum of \$600 million will be designated for food purchases.** The use of these funds will be determined by food bank need and product availability.

Further details regarding eligibility, rates, and other implementation will be released at a later date.

For all the information on USDA's work during the COVID-19 pandemic and resources available, please visit <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>.

Associate Memberships Now Available

Corn Growers Association of North Carolina is now offering Associate Memberships. If you are a corn farmer, you don't need to do anything, the Association pays your dues to National Corn Growers. If you are in an allied industry, or just want to support corn production in North Carolina and across the country, go to www.JoinCornGrowers.com and sign up! Dues are \$25 a year, or \$60 for three. Choose your state, North Carolina, and Associate Member

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to the Corn Growers office at (919) 803-4778.

We're on Social Media!

See what's going on with YOUR Corn Growers Association on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/Corn-Growers-Association-of-North-Carolina-184110285439453/>

Visit our website <http://nccorgrowers.com/> Lots of good information there!

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