



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Hardin County Extension News Release

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For Immediate Release – March 19, 2020

2019 Challenges Linger

Hardin County – As farmers are preparing for the 2020 cropping season, the challenges of 2019 may still linger. There are basically 3 scenarios which will influence 2020 cropping practices.

Corn or soybeans were planted: Yes, there were some acres of corn planted last year in NW Ohio. Storage of low test weight and higher moisture corn is creating mold and damaged grain. Above normal winter temperatures and humid air have interfered with proper aeration of storage bins. Farmers need to monitor grain bins and be prepared to unload before spring temperatures rise. Also, fall tillage was not done due to wet soil conditions. This may change tillage plans this spring. No-till soybeans into corn stalks are a better alternative.

Soybeans were planted later than normal in 2019. As a result, less wheat was planted last fall due to the late soybean harvest. Will more acres of 2020 soybeans be planted into those same 2019 soybean fields? If so, then choosing the correct soybean genetics is important so as to provide the best protection against soybean disease and cyst nematodes. Soybean seed treatment is especially important for second year planted soybeans to protect the young seedlings.

Prevent plant with cover crops: Over 1 million acres of Ohio farmland did not have corn or soybeans planted in 2019. As a result, most farmers took advantage of cost sharing government programs and planted cover crops on the idle soil. Spring management of these fields will depend on the type of cover crops planted. If winter-killed, such as oats or radish, then the 2020 grain crop could be no-till planted into any remaining cover crop residue. If an overwintering cover crop, such as cereal rye, was used, then termination of the rye this spring will be needed. Termination can be done by tillage, crimper-roller, or herbicides. Herbicides are the most popular method. Timing of the herbicide application can be done as early as when spring growth begins, or delayed until planting of the grain crop to allow maximum biomass accumulation.

Prevent plant with bare soil: This is the most challenging scenario for 2020. Since nature strives to keep soil covered, if a crop is not planted, then weeds will invade. During the summer and fall of 2019 farmers were challenged to control weeds on this bare soil. Tillage or herbicides were used and those effects will carry forward to the 2020 season. Tillage may have created compaction layers in the soil which can reduce yields. Herbicides may not have been 100% effective and surviving weeds can develop herbicide resistance which is passed on to 2020 germinating weeds. The 2020 herbicide program for these bare soil fields will require the correct chemistry to overcome resistant weeds. This can be more expensive and if control is lacking, then weed pressure reduces crop yields in 2020.

With continued wet spring soil, farmers must be careful not to ruin soil structure and need to wait for dry conditions. The effect of one machinery pass can cause compaction of soil that lasts for years. Continuing to use cover crops and no-till is the best management farmers have to overcome weather related challenges.

Article written by Alan Sundermeier, OSU Extension-Wood County and edited by Mark Badertscher, OSU Extension-Hardin County.