If one had to sum up the 2022 crop season in one word, variable would be a suitable choice. Variable both in terms of temperature and precipitation led to variable crop conditions and yields.

Planting came later than expected, with many starting corn and/or soybeans around the first week of May. Delays were mainly the result of a stubbornly cold and damp April, following a cold winter with deep frost the cool spell persisted well into May, as planting was slow to progress. Planting was intermittent between rain delays and storms; usually there was at the most 48 hours suitable for field work in each window. In early June temperatures swung quickly from below normal to well above. Many days of ninety plus degrees and low relative humidity resulted in fields rapidly drying out and corn beginning to roll leaves throughout the afternoons. The stress of these warm days would linger throughout the summer.

July brought some moderate temperatures and some needed precipitation to areas. Rains were spotty all year, with few thunderstorms and large rain events in June and July. These moderating conditions helped with corn pollination depending on maturity and planting date. Rain from here out played a large factor in yield determining seed weight. The dryness also led to higher than normal pest pressure. Corn rootworm beetles appeared in large numbers once again. As a result corn rootworm management going forward will need to be a major component of 2023 cropping plans. As corn rootworm reared its head, soybean aphids began to infest many soybean fields across the area, flourishing in some damp high humidity mornings and evenings. Number proved to be significant with untreated fields suffering significant losses.

The end of August turned hot and dry again and as September began, the heat and lack of rain proved detrimental to the soybeans. It was not uncommon to find pods with only two beans where three should have been. While temperatures were above average for most of the season, helping to push a late planted crop along, it all came to an abrupt end in late September with an earlier than average frost. Rebounding temperatures and wind led to rapid dry down of both corn and soybeans, allowing harvest to proceed at a rapid pace.

Yields reflected the weather patterns during critical developmental periods of both crops and rainfall for the respective area. Some subsoil moisture and timely rains played a major role in keeping corn yields above expectations and soybean yields average to slightly below average. Given the challenges of 2022, there are good learning experiences to be mindful of in future decision making.

There will surely be challenges in 2023, tillage and some fertilizer applications have proved difficult given the dry fall conditions. Some rain and snow will be needed to help recharge subsoil moisture heading into 2023. There are many challenges heading into next year, but making sound decisions will help navigate them and lead to another successful growing season.

Best of luck,

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Larson Seeds Agronomy Team