If one had to sum up the 2024 crop season in one word, ***variable*** would yet again be a suitable choice. Timing of precipitation and temperature swings led to variable crop conditions and yields.

Coming off an extremely mild winter in 2023-2024, with very little snowfall there were high hopes of a very good early planting window. Field conditions for spring tillage were about as ideal as it gets and there were multiple fields of corn and even soybeans planted in early April, and into May. Post planting, conditions were cool with not a lot of heat units or GDU’s (growing degree days) to drive early stand establishment. Some corn sat in the ground for at minimum 2-3 weeks before emergence, and as a result there were some uneven stands. Late April and early May also brought substantial rain fall to a lot of areas, causing anaerobic field conditions accompanied by the before-mentioned lack of GDU’s. Many area corn fields had drown out areas, and for the majority of these fields by the time they dried out in June the corn was too far along to make replanting corn an economical choice. Bean fields also had drown out areas, but for the most part bean replanting was still a viable option for these areas. Needless to say, all of the variables had effects on pre and post emergence herbicide applications as well.

As we entered mid-June through the month of July a few more scattered showers came through, and GDU’s continued to stay at the historical trendline. With wet spring conditions we had there were some visible nutrient deficiencies rearing their head in both corn and beans. Once we hit rapid growth in corn (V6-V8) and some of this symptomology started to go away. If there was any type of silver lining to the rainfall we received early season, I believe it did drown out at least one, maybe two lifecycles of corn rootworm larva. While some root feeding was present, it paled in comparison to previous years pressure found in area fields.

By the time the middle of August turned around the water turned off and we started to get hot and dry. As September began, the heat and lack of rain proved detrimental to the later RM soybeans. It was not uncommon to find pods with only two beans where three should have been, with dramatic seed size variances. For the most part frost wasn’t really a factor in 2024 for crops, as the increased GDU’s through September and October carried us through harvest.

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 average to above expectations and soybean yields average to slightly below average. Given the challenges of 2024, there are good learning experiences to be mindful of in future decision making.

There will surely be challenges again in 2025. 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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