



The Chem Gro Crop Watch, Issue #1, 4/29/14

Lonne Fry, CCA, Sales Agronomist, lfry@chemgroil.com, 309-221-5000

“Farmer’s Itch”. After suffering through the most cold, boring, and mundane winterEVER... several of us started scratching when the frost finally got out of the ground. We had the itch, the “Farmer’s Itch”. It is the same itch that compels us to do things that we normally wouldn’t do in the sake of being bored to death. Tractors began to get hooked up to vertical tillage machines and tillage was being done on soils that were “fresh”. As a point of reference, the term “fresh” was described as a soil condition back in 2011 in one of my Crop Watch newsletters:

1. Ground is too wet = there is water still running down through the draws and you will probably get stuck.
2. Ground is heavy = means you can get across the fields, however, you really ought to have at a minimum a front wheel assist tractor, but the ground works up “chucky”.
3. Ground works like a garden = the most ideal ground conditions to work ground and plant; ground is mellow, dry, and crumbles in your hand.
4. *NEW for 2011...Ground is fresh = means ground is not wet or heavy; it works like a garden in tith but it does contain too much moisture to follow immediately with planting.

The “freshness” was very evident this year as the tractor and tillage tools left the fields and drove on the blacktop roads as there was a trail of freshness that peeled off the tires for about 1/8 of a mile long. When the freshness aired out in the fields, corn planting soon followed into conditions that were garden like. Soil temperatures were cold, but these fields have finally begun to emerge after being 2.5 - 3 weeks in the ground.

Voodoo Days for 2014? So far, knock on wood, I don’t see a true Voodoo Day as of yet. Many of you have called me and asked the question if you should plant ahead of the rain fronts over the last 7-10 days. One of the fronts looked severe at the time. There was one on April 24th that looked like we were going to get punished by. I told several farmers not to plant because I was expecting the worst. Luckily hardly anyone listens to me anyways (“Well.... we just started this field and we are going to keep going”, or “The ground is working so good right now that we are going to keep going”, or “We are going to keep going because I just want to get done !!!”) Luckily that front broke up when it hit the Mississippi River and we only got ¼ to 1/3 of an inch of rain.

However, I do foresee the rains of April 27th & 28th creating a hiccup for the planting dates of April 25th – 27th. Although we have received roughly 2 inches of rain in the last two days, I don’t believe that it will create a true Voodoo Days of having to replant corn for the following reasons:

- The subsoil is extremely dry and it will wick down any standing water relatively fast.
- Topsoil conditions were ideal for planting (garden like)
- The rains were warm, which will not shock the seed as it pulls in moisture for germination (unlike cold water does).

The problem that I do foresee of April 25th – 27th planting dates is uneven emergence, particularly by soil types within the fields. There are a small amount of areas in these newly planted fields that are

temporarily saturated by water. This in itself will create uneven emergence from one end of the field to the other. Looking at the short term weather forecast of no more rain, I am expecting 90% + emergence on these planting dates. Time will reveal the story in about two weeks, and I have been wrong before (just ask my wife).

“Farmer’s Itch, Part II”. Another direct consequence of the Farmer’s Itch is beating the planter to the fields before the sprayer can get there; especially in fields that are no-till or strip-till. These fields (to be done properly) require that the fields need to be sprayed about 1 week or more before planting to kill all existing weeds; particularly marestalk. Many agronomically sound burndown herbicide programs use a high rate of 2-4D with the combination of Glyphosate and other residuals to kill and prevent marestalk from growing. Without 2-4D in the mix, the chances of killing emerged marestalk greatly diminishes (especially in a soybean crop). However, depending on the rate used of 2-4D there is a 7+ day waiting interval from the day of spraying to the day of planting. A few chose to plant prior to spraying, as the “Itch” drove the desire and need to “just get it done”. A few friendly phone calls were made to some of my farmer friends as I kindly explained that although he can plant in 30mph winds, we cannot spray in those conditions and that we will not get it sprayed before the 7 day interval. I reminded him that there might be some marestalk growing in his soybean fields that we may not control. He said jokingly “That’s ok, I will just put up a Chem Gro sign next to it”. I then said “That’s ok, too....I will have some signs made up that say NERVOUS FARMER and put it next to my Chem Gro signs”. We both agreed that “it is what it is”. Just as a reminder, the picture to the right was taken from a field of Roundup Ready soybeans that glyphosate will not kill. There were many soybean fields last year that had areas that looked like this.



Glyphosate resistant waterhemp! It has already been confirmed by the University of Illinois that West Central Illinois has waterhemp populations that are resistant to glyphosate (Roundup). Last year, the U of IL offered a free service to test for glyphosate resistance in waterhemp, so I figured “what the heck, why not”. I submitted tissue samples of waterhemp from two growers in Hancock County where there was random waterhemp plants that did not die after a rate appropriate dosage of Roundup. I could have submitted many, many, many more plants from several fields and growers, but I just did 5 plants each from 2 different growers. Ten months later (yesterday) I finally got the results back. They all tested positive for glyphosate resistance and PPO-inhibitor resistance (conventional soybean herbicides like Cobra and Flexstar). Knowing both of these farmers, here is what I find interesting:

1. These fields have been 50/50 rotated with corn and residual herbicides always used in the first pass herbicide for both corn and soybeans. The second herbicide pass in the corn used an additional site of action to kill waterhemp escapes along with the Roundup.
2. Some of the first documented waterhemp plants in the United States to become resistant to glyphosate were in continuous Roundup Ready soybean fields with glyphosate applied as the only herbicide. These 50/50 rotated fields with multiple applied herbicide chemistries are no longer following this cookie cutter approach to create herbicide resistant weeds.

High rates of residuals with multiple sites of action will be our best defense in combating waterhemp and soon to arrive Palmer Amaranth. Kill-em before they get out of the ground!!!

That’s my 2 cents worth.....the choice and decision is always yours.

Lonne