

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Updates
May 17, 2019

Here are updates from the MSU Extension Field Crops team in Southwest Michigan. If you have any items you would like me to include in future email updates—whether events you want others to know about or topics you would like to have addressed—please send me an email or call the office.

Tips for Planting Green

With unfavorable field conditions prevailing in most areas this spring, numerous fields remain under cover crops or winter annual weeds. The folks at Purdue and Indiana’s NRCS met recently to discuss the issue, and they wrote a bulletin (180-19-02) entitled “[Planting Commodity Crops into Green Cover Crops](#).” It is still recommended that growers terminate the cover crop 10-14 days prior to planting, but under “weather duress”, here are a few guidelines for planting green—a more complete list of tips can be found in the bulletin.

- Scout fields at least weekly for insects, slugs, voles, disease and weeds and be ready for to implement an IPM strategy if action thresholds are met
- If possible, plant soybeans instead of corn.
- Follow Herbicide Best Management Practices when terminating the cover crop. For example, use the full labeled rates, and only spray during the warming time of day in sunny conditions, when day and nighttime temperatures are consistently above 50 F.
- Avoid using a conventional planter or drill. The planter/drill must be able to plant into a no-till environment. Cover crops may “wrap” on some planters and attachments. Use smooth closing wheels or a deflector on spiked closing wheels to avoid wrapping
- Consider harvesting for haylage if not in conflict with a program that would prevent harvest. In talking with Brook Wilke, farm manager at MSU’s Kellogg Biological Station, they had good success harvesting a cover crop, planting, waiting a couple of days for any regrowth, then terminating the cover crop with glyphosate and product containing saflufenacil (e.g. Sharpen, Verdict).

AW and BCW Counts and Other Issues

Catches in Indiana’s northern tier of counties for BCW are still mostly in the single digits, but a few locations (St. Joseph, Pulaski and Whitley Counties) had as many as 38. Armyworm counts for Pinney (NW) were still respectable (51), but at NEPAC (NE) the counts continue to increase with 1222 caught between May 2-8. Counts from MI traps are below. Reminder: Purdue uses Hartstack traps while I use bucket traps so my numbers won’t be nearly as high as theirs, but we are looking for peak flight timing, not absolute numbers, in scouting and making management decisions

	Crop	3-May	10-May	17-May
Armyworm	Wheat	64	98	17
	Wheat	8	11	4
	Grass pasture	-	16	3
	Grass pasture	-	27	16
Black Cutworm	Alfalfa	0	0	3
	Grass/alfalfa mix	4	15	6
	Pasture w/ dandelion	1	2	4
	Alfalfa	1	0	3

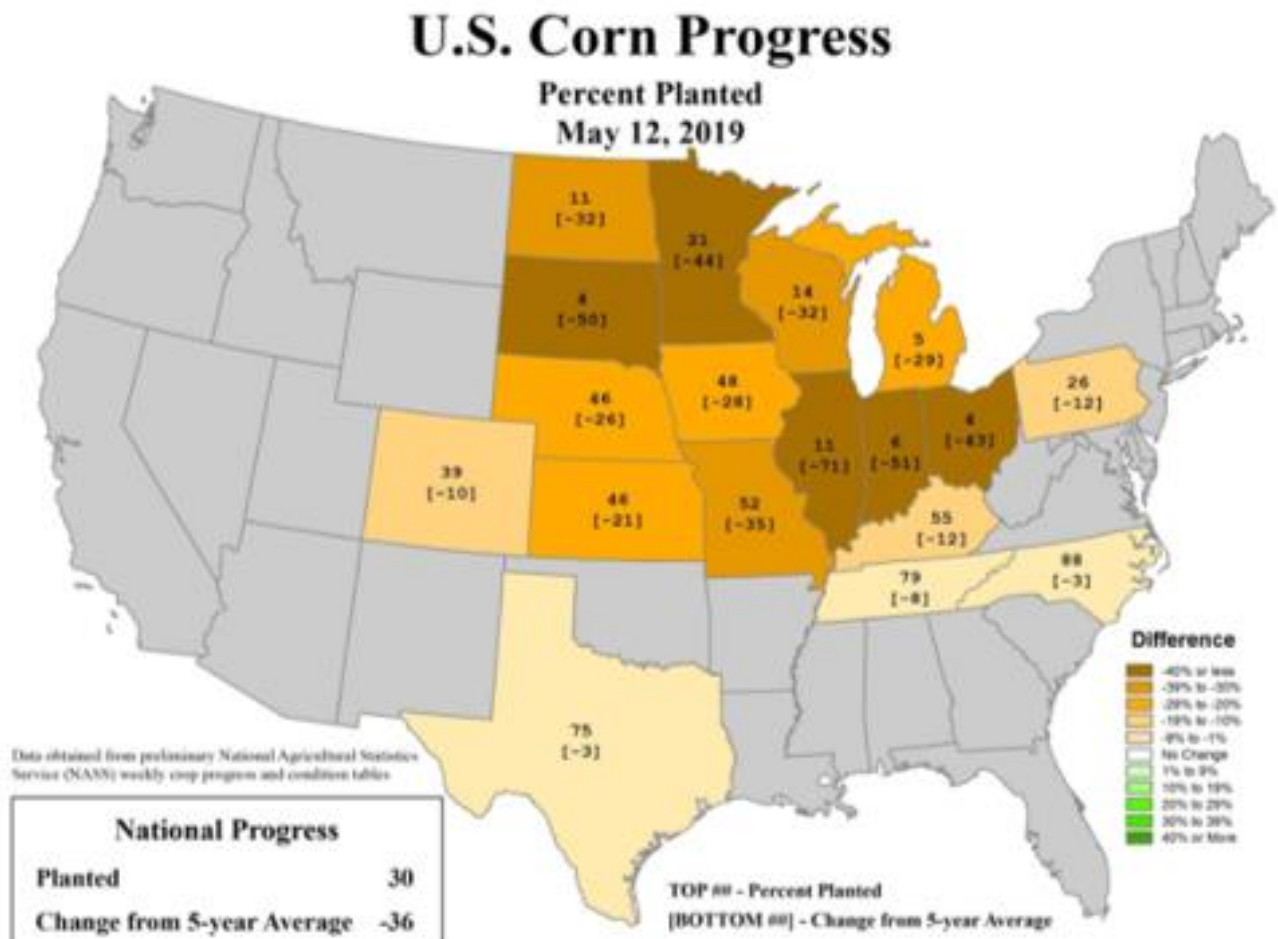
Moth trap counts for true armyworm (AW) and black cutworm (BCW).

Weather and Crop Update

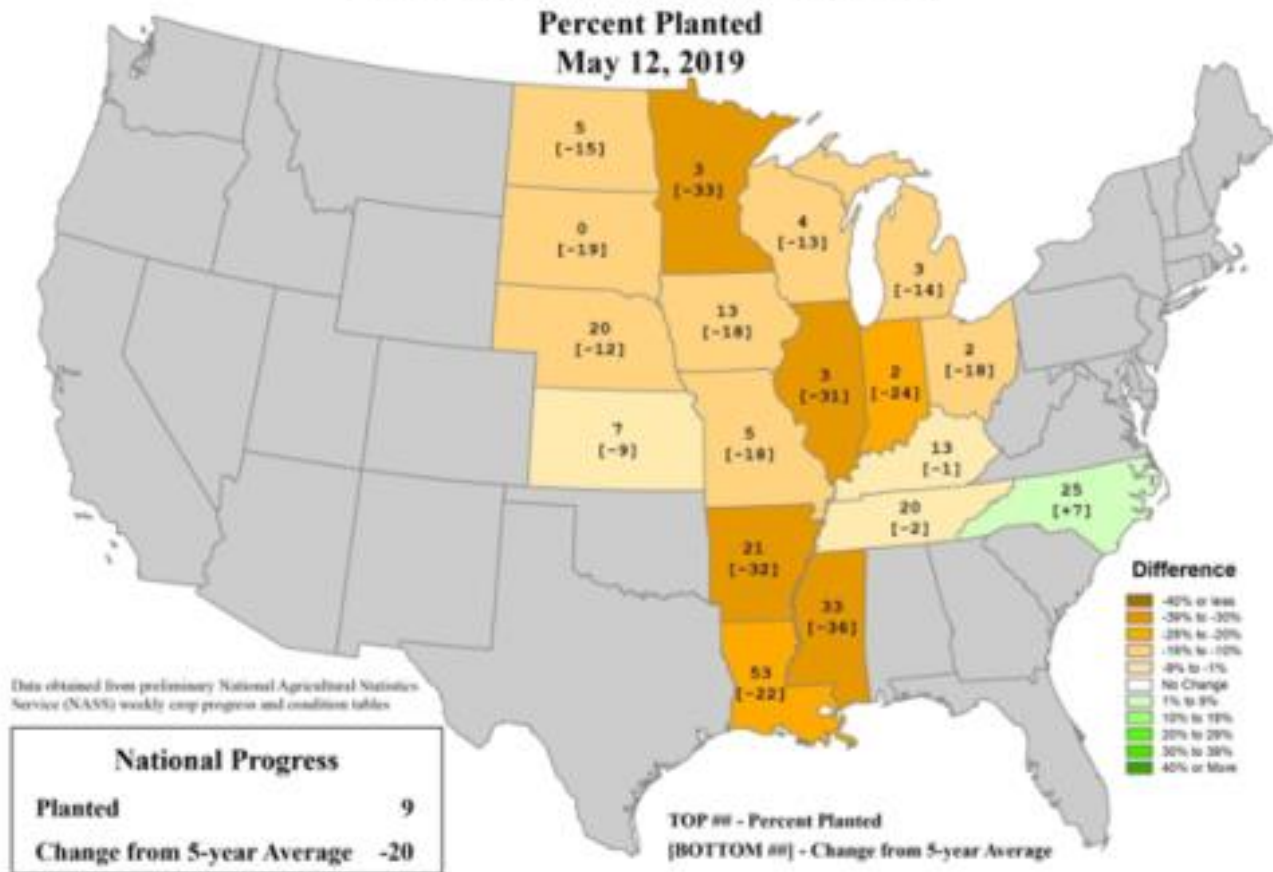
Wheat: According to the current USDA Crop Progress stats, only 13% of MI wheat is rated as excellent with an additional 30% each rated good or fair. There appears to be expansion of yellowing conditions in areas of some fields that are lighter in texture—a sure bet that it is not a lack of moisture this year. It could be an indication that nitrogen has begun to move in areas that have received more than 250% of normal rainfall over the last 4 weeks. However, root growth in these areas looks to be much less vigorous than in greener areas of the fields. Advanced wheat is still in Feeke’s growth stage 8, with the ligule of the flag leaf not yet visible. Overall, the crop looks pretty good except in drowned out areas of fields.

Corn: According to the latest crop progress report, Michigan was still only 5 percent planted as of last week which puts us nearly 30 percent behind the norm for this time of year. I have seen corn up in early-planted fields, but most still has yet to emerge.

Soybeans: Along with corn, not many fields have emerged yet. Very little progress was made in Michigan during the week of May 7, and only 3 percent of soybean was planted as of last week compared with 17 percent planted as an average. Fields planted during the last week of April have been extremely slow to emerge.



U.S. Soybeans Progress



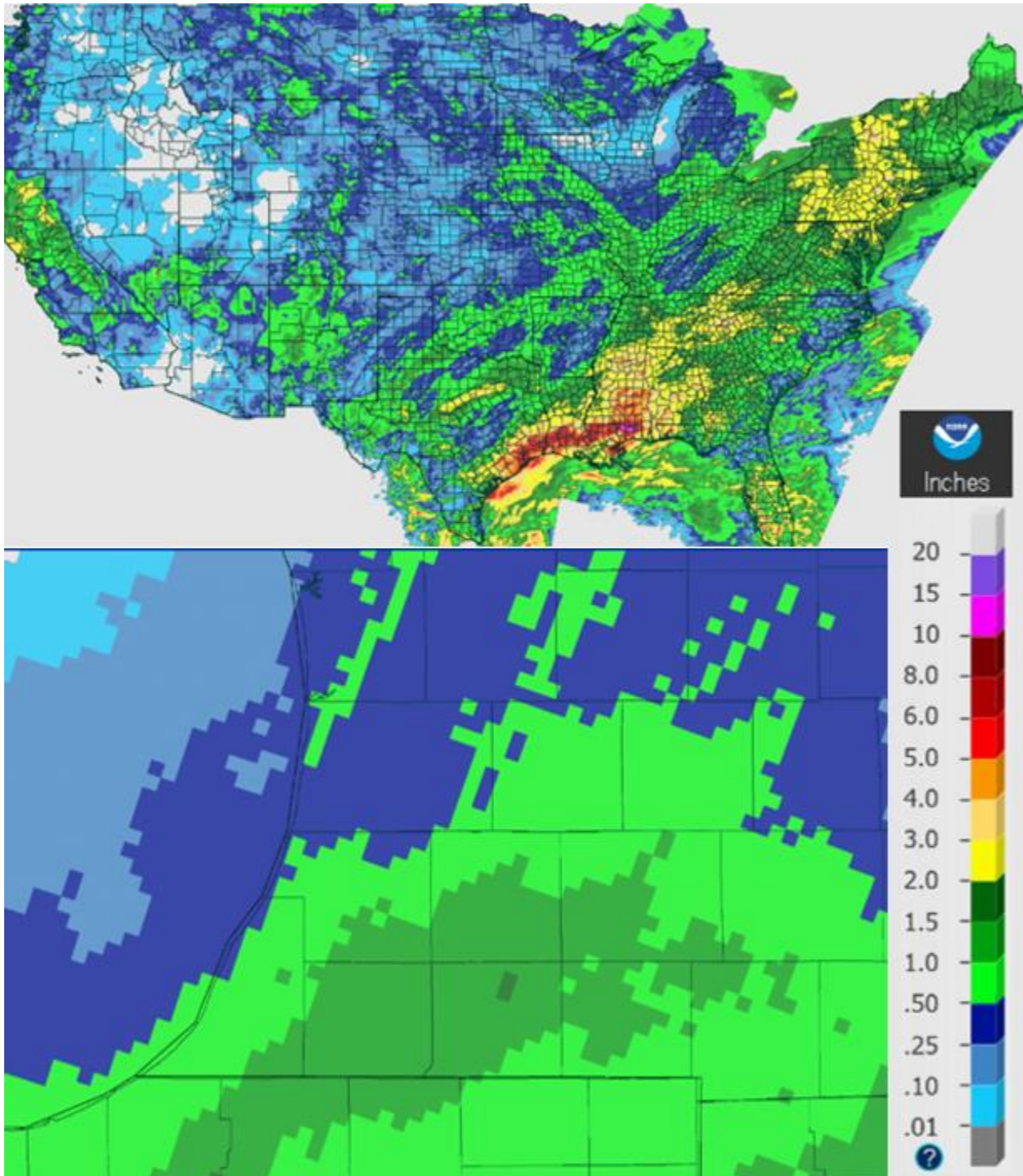
Planting progress for corn and soybean in the U.S. as of May 12, 2019.

Alfalfa: Plants continue to grow well. The average number of growing degree days (base 41 for alfalfa) for all Enviroweather stations in the south central and southwest regions was at 438 since March 1st. With [optimal cutting to begin at 680 or 750 GDD₄₁ depending on silage storage](#), first cutting is a ways off. However, with warmer weather in the forecast, we should be near 650 by May 23rd. Keep an eye on alfalfa weevil activity. Threshold is 40% tip feeding with harvest more than a week out.

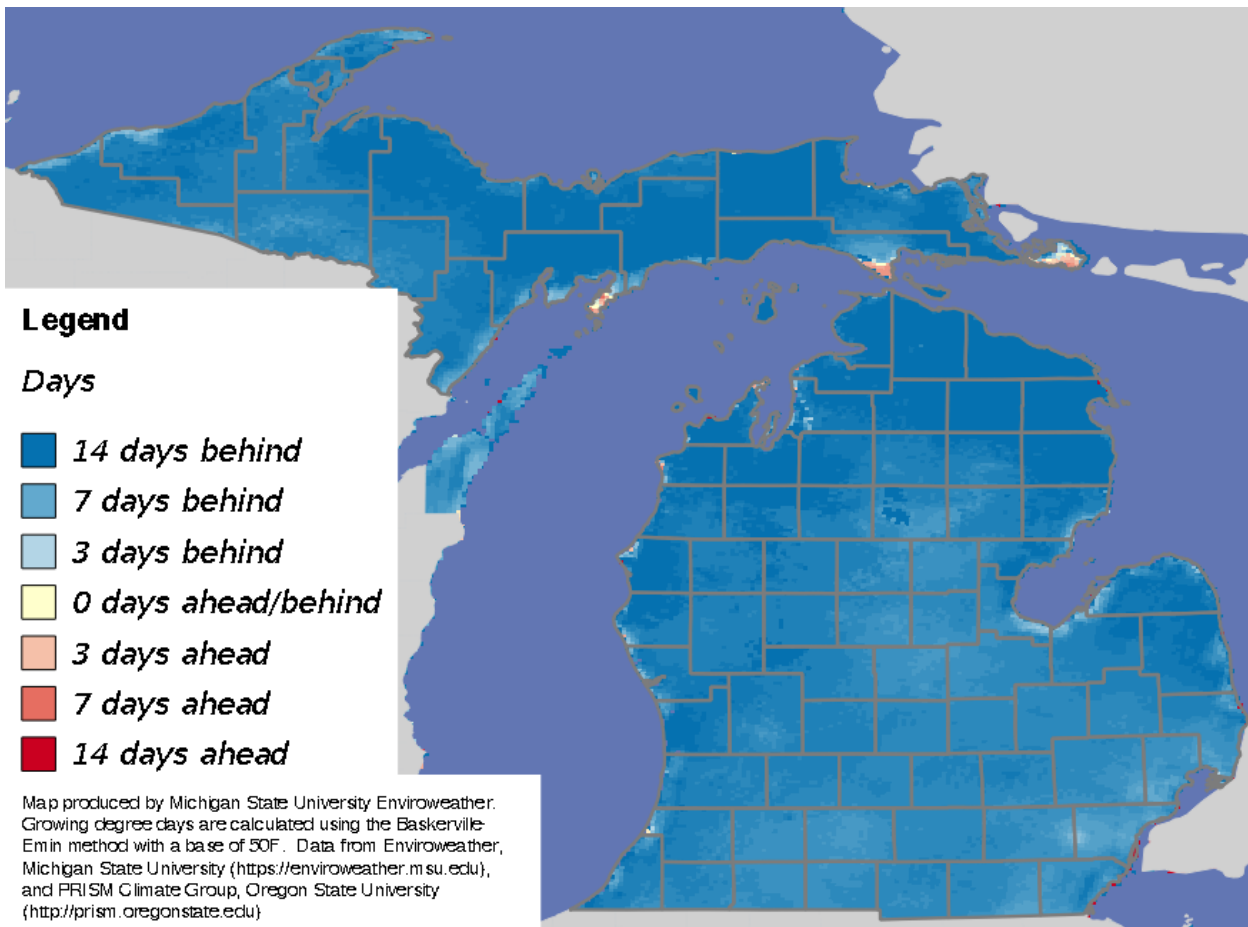
On this week's Virtual Breakfast session, MSU's forage and cover crop specialist Kim Cassida talked about winterkill in alfalfa stands. Though most alfalfa stands in our region look very healthy, Kim said she's had reports of as high as 80% loss in some fields this spring. The main signs are that alfalfa crowns have been heaved well above the soil surface, dead patches, and uneven growth with many plants being late to break dormancy. Contributing factors include cold temps, lack of a snow cover, ice sheeting, late fall traffic on wet ground, harvesting in fall during the no-cut window, and low soil potassium levels – it's potassium that helps plants survive cold weather. When assessing a stand, count the number of stems as it is difficult to count individual plants without digging up roots. A healthy stand will have over 55 stems per square foot, an iffy stand will have 40-55, and less than 40 likely requires immediate action. You should also dig up some roots and slice open stems to assess the level of root rot. One option to fix the problem would be to overseed the field with grass or clover—the choice of species depends on how long you want the stand to last—but leave the alfalfa. You can't overseed with alfalfa because the plant secretes chemicals that keep its own seed from germinating to limit competition. The second option is to tear up the alfalfa stand and plant a different forage like red, berseem or crimson clover while you wait for the autotoxic chemicals to work their way out of the soil.

Weather: Cold and wet have obviously been the main story this spring, and last week we were 3-6 degrees colder than normal for this time of year. We are still 7-10 days behind on heat units, and soil temperatures have dropped

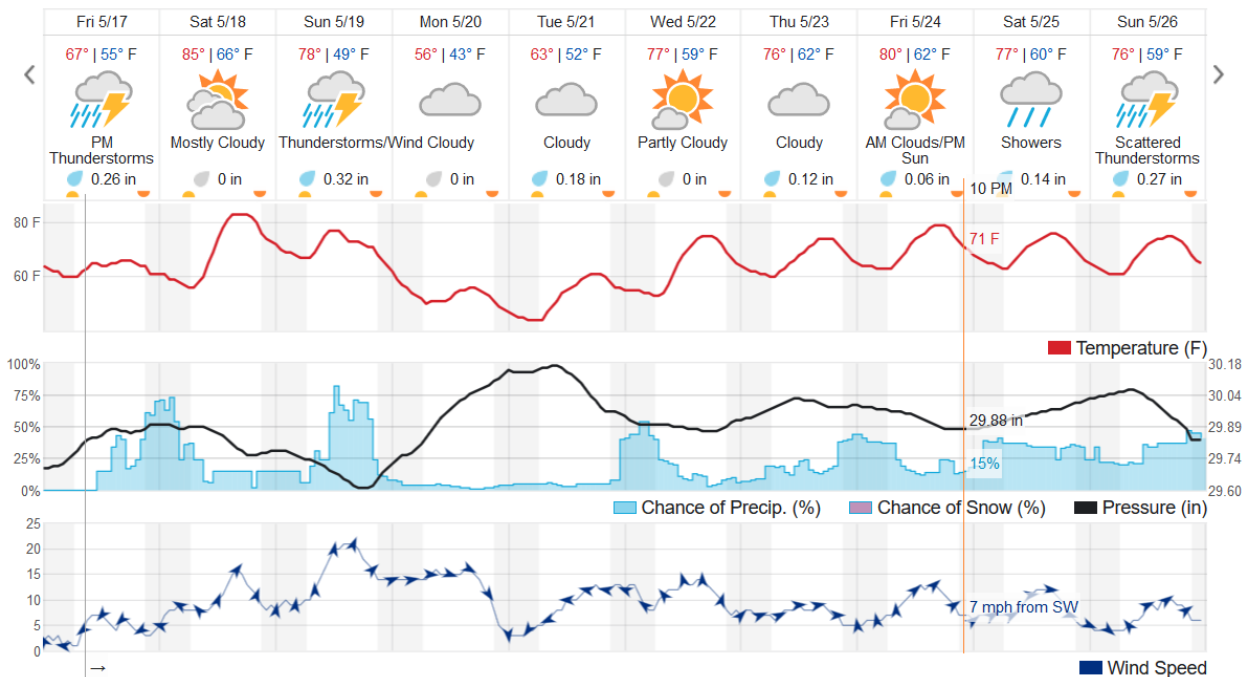
about 5 degrees since the first week of May. Rain events beginning Thursday evening will likely continue in waves throughout the weekend with ½ to 1 inch possible. We will have dry but cool conditions on Monday and Tuesday next week, but weather fueled by warm gulf air will return the middle of next week for an additional predicted ½ to 1 inch. Both the 6-10 and 8-14 day outlook from the National Weather Service call for warmer and wetter than normal conditions. Below you'll find several charts and graphs with commentary to give you a picture of where we've been this past week weather-wise and what the predictions are for next week.



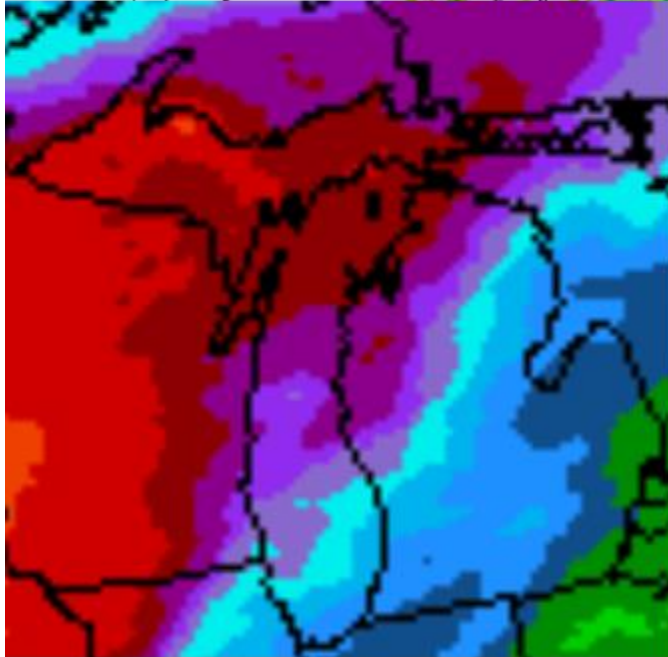
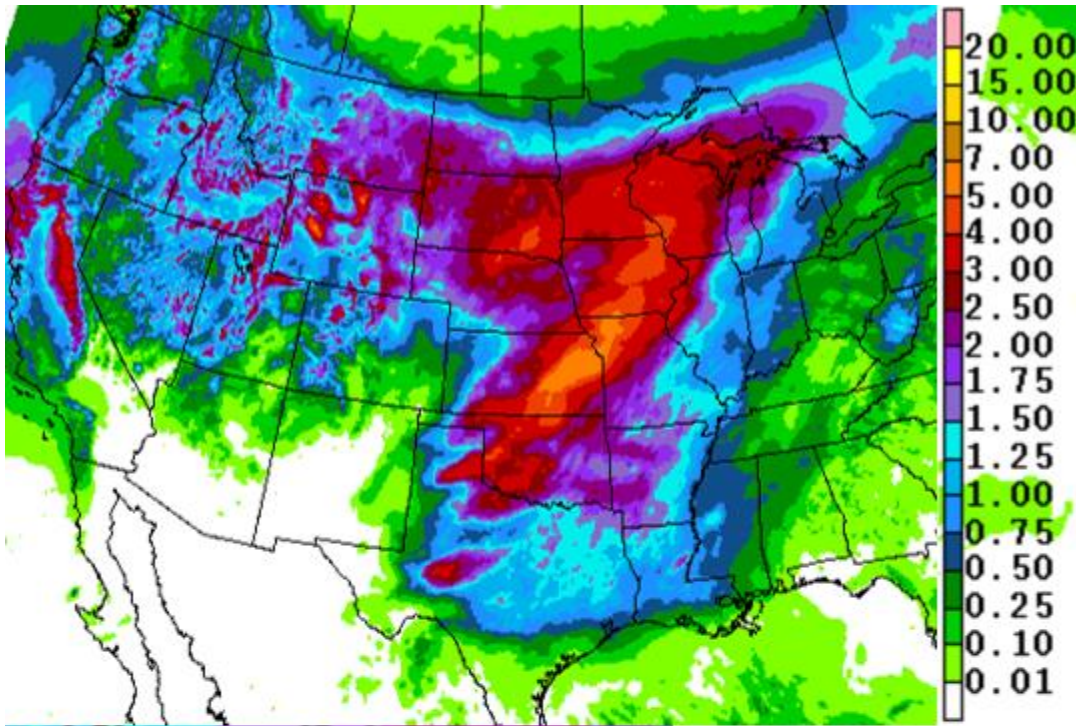
Precipitation totals for week ending May 16, 2019. Fortunately, this past week most of the rain fell in the Southeast, but we still received 0.5-1.5".



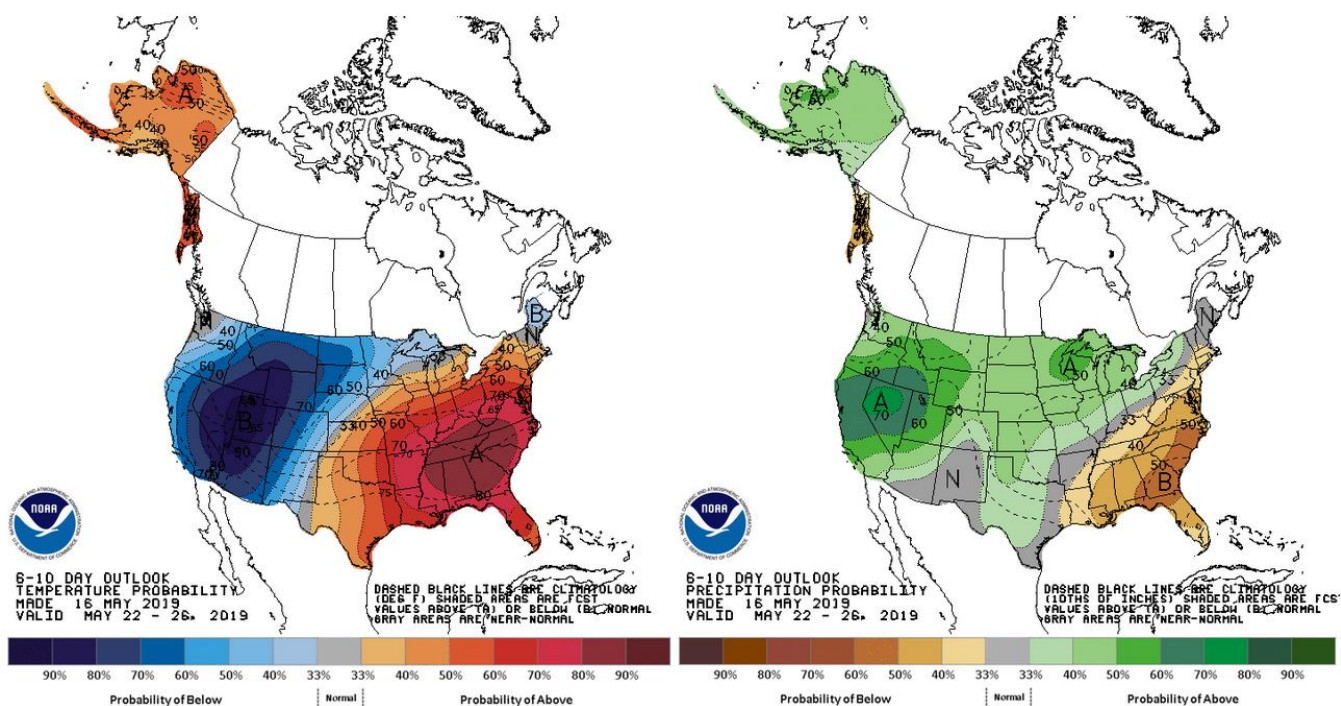
Growing degree day accumulation compared with normal, March 1 through May 16, 2019. We are still lagging behind by 7-10 days in the region, and soil temps dropped 5 F since the first week of May.



The 10-day forecast for Centreville according to wunderground.com. Temperatures will be warmer this coming week for the most part, but more rainfall expected won't help in making progress in the field.



Forecast for precipitation totals for the week of May 17-24, 2019. If this holds true, we can expect another 0.5-1.0 inches in the next week.



National Weather Service 6-10 day outlook (May 22-26) for temperature (left) and precipitation (right)—the 8-14 day outlook is nearly identical. The darker the color, the greater the chances of cooler and wetter than normal conditions. According to MSU ag climatologist Jeff Andresen, the NWS meteorologists gave these two outlooks a confidence rating of 5 out of a possible 5, a rare occurrence.

Calendar

(Note: titles are clickable links to online content when highlighted and underlined)

- May 17** **MFP Deadline Extended.** Market Facilitation Program deadline extended until May 17.
- May 21** **Educational Industrial Hemp Seminar** 8:30am-4:00pm. SWMREC Conference Center, 1791 Hillendale Rd, Benton Harbor, MI. The Benton Harbor Conservation District and MSU Extension are cohosting a seminar on industrial hemp. **SOLD OUT** The cost is \$35 including lunch. Register online at the above link.
- May 23** **Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Free Webinar.** Thursdays 7:00-7:30 AM. This week: “Fusarium Head Blight Control in Wheat” with Dennis Pennington. Join via computer or mobile device (audio and video, <https://msu.zoom.us/j/552324349>) or by phone (audio only, **669-900-6833** and enter meeting ID **552-324-349**). To receive a weekly reminder of the Virtual Breakfast, sign up at <http://eepurl.com/gm-PIv>
- June 26** **MSU Weeds Day.** 8:30am-12:00pm. 4450 Beaumont Rd, Lansing, MI. Registration information will be available soon.
- July 15** **Deadline for FSA Acreage Reporting.** Deadline for 2019 acreage reporting for spring seeded crops. Contact your local FSA office for details.
- July 26** **Ag Innovation Day.** 8:30am-5:00pm, MSU Research Farm, East Lansing, MI. Day will be split into morning and afternoon tours with a free lunch. Attendees are asked to register beforehand (coming soon) to help with logistics and food ordering.

August 20-21 2019 Bridging the Experience Gap. Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center, 3775 S Reese Rd, Frankenmuth, MI. This program provides a platform for professionals to gain experience, network with their peers and ask questions from knowledgeable instructors without fear of rejection or criticism. Cost is \$350, supplies and lunches included, register online.

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

Southwest Michigan field crop update – May 16, 2019

PUBLISHED ON MAY 16, 2019

Fields dried out in between rain events over last weekend and this week. Field operations continued, but with more rain on the way, progress will be slowed once again.

MSU Cover Crop Team Webinar Series: Cover Crops in Michigan - Interseeding Cover Crops

PUBLISHED ON MAY 16, 2019

The first webinar in this series highlights research at MSU on interseeding cover crops into standing corn.

Central Michigan field crop update - May 16, 2019

PUBLISHED ON MAY 16, 2019

As cool wet conditions persist, planting is off to a slow start.

Field Crop Virtual Breakfast on May 23 will address management considerations for this season's wheat crop

PUBLISHED ON MAY 16, 2019

The next session of MSU Extension's weekly Virtual Breakfast utilizing Zoom video conferencing is set for May 23 with managing Michigan's wheat crop in 2019.

The art and science of variable rate seeding

PUBLISHED ON MAY 16, 2019

Variable rate seeding could reduce input costs in low productivity areas and increase your yields in high productivity areas.

Farmers in southeast Michigan talk about nitrogen sensing technology

PUBLISHED ON MAY 15, 2019

How variable nitrogen application through the use of nitrogen sensing technology is helping farmers to minimize nitrogen losses and reduce costs.

Understanding base saturation ratios on your MSU soil test report

PUBLISHED ON MAY 14, 2019

The "% of Exchangeable Bases" on your MSU soil test report gives insight into nutrient balances in your soil.

Tips on quality hay and pasture for beginning farmers: Part 2 – Legume species for hay and pasture

PUBLISHED ON MAY 14, 2019

Whether planting new, or working with what you already have, understanding the legume species that make up your forage can help you succeed.

Using soil moisture meters to compliment irrigation scheduling

PUBLISHED ON MAY 13, 2019

Soil moisture monitoring can be used as an irrigation management tool.

Potential survival of potato volunteers in Michigan, 2019

PUBLISHED ON MAY 13, 2019

Begin scouting for volunteer potatoes which may serve as possible sources of late blight inoculum. Observed high risk of survival throughout the state.

Top production tips for irrigated corn production

PUBLISHED ON MAY 13, 2019

Follow these tips for trimming corn production costs while keeping yield potential high.

Reducing irrigation costs

PUBLISHED ON MAY 13, 2019

Tips for reducing irrigation costs while keeping yields and returns up.

Don't guess, get a test from MSU Plant & Pest Diagnostics

PUBLISHED ON MAY 10, 2019

Learn how to collect, handle and submit the ideal grape sample for virus testing.

Tar spot and irrigated corn: What we saw in 2018 and will it happen again?

PUBLISHED ON MAY 10, 2019

Based on the rapid spread last season, we anticipate there will be plenty of spores to go around in southwest Michigan and northern Indiana in 2019.

European corn borer resistance confirmed to Cry1F Bt corn

PUBLISHED ON MAY 10, 2019

This is the first case of European corn borer resistance to any type of Bt corn. Watch out for and report unexpected corn borer damage in any type of Bt field and follow these recommendations.

Eric Anderson

Michigan State University Extension

Field Crops Educator - St. Joseph County

612 E. Main St., Centreville, MI 49032

(269) 467-5510 (Office)

(269) 467-5641 (Fax)