


MESSENGER-INQUIRER

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Extension Service



Farm Update

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES
EDUCATION

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December 28, 2024

2024 in Review

If we were to reflect on farming words or phrases heard most often in 2024, we would remember waterhemp, low prices, too wet, too dry, tar spot, southern corn leaf rust, early planting, late planting, replanting, too hot, unusually mild, and not going to make any money this year.

The 2024 crop started early and grew well across the Midwest, pushing prices lower throughout the growing season. On May 6, the 2024 fall delivery price available for soybeans was \$12.01. Two dollars less than the best 2023 fall price, some sold at that price, most didn't. A mistake that would not be given opportunity for correction in the 2024/2025 marketing year. As a result of the low price received for so much 2023 carryover and the low prices paid for this 2024 crop, working capital will be greatly reduced for all farms going into the 2025 growing season.

January was a little different than normal in this area. While those with contracts to fill delivered those bushels, grain hauling was slow during winter. Many people held onto grain until late summer, reluctant to sell at a price lower than available in the past fall. The first half of January was cold and dry. The third week was in the teens, followed by warmer air and heavy rain across much of the county.

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Weather in February was much of the same: warmer, sunny, and dry. This continued through March. Soil dried out significantly to the point of concern for some that subsoil moisture was not recharged. By mid-March, many were in the fields spraying and applying fertilizer. By the last week, it felt like May in Kentucky. Planters went to the field and planted thousands of acres on the higher drier fields. The first week of April brought enough rain to slow activities but didn't get fields wet. Planting resumed in the second week with dry soils and sunshine. Rain was becoming more frequent by the last half of April with more than an inch falling in storms across much of the county on April 18, followed by additional showers on the 29th. By the end of April approximately half of the corn and soybeans were planted.

May was a month of rain and severe weather that resulted in long planting delays. Over 4 inches of rain came in two events in the second week of May, including a storm that brought a tornado near West Louisville. More than 5 inches of rain was received in certain areas on Sunday June 26 which led to considerable flooding in Panther Creek watershed affecting thousands of acres.

Nice weather arrived in June. Corn and soybean planting, tobacco setting, hay harvest and spraying were all underway. Some rain fell early in the third week keeping crops growing well, despite very hot temperatures at the end of the month. The earliest planted corn could be found full tassel by June 23.

Despite some intense heat in June, July was a welcome change from normal. Lower temperatures and low humidity were enjoyed much of the month. Rain came on July 4 followed by light rain and wind carried to the Ohio Valley by Hurricane Beryl. Another nice rain came on July 16 with the month finishing dry but cooler than normal.

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By August, the late crops needed rain. Less than an inch came on August 1 and included severe wind that caused some lodging of corn and tobacco. No rain came the rest of the month and it was hot and humidity was low. The third week did bring a reprieve to the temperature with unusually cool temperatures, followed by another hot week at the end of the month.

Hot dry conditions continued into September. Hurricane Francine gave us hope but arrived in the Ohio Valley with nothing but a shower on September 13, not even pausing harvest. Hurricane Helene moved in the evening of September 27 and stayed with us through the 30th. Three days of nearly constant moisture delivered exactly what we needed.

The very earliest soybean yields were disappointing for some, and the late-planted corn has certainly not broken any yield records. But in general, Daviess County will finish the year with good overall corn and soybean yields.

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