We would like to welcome you to another season of Doane’s Weekly Crop Weather Update Progress Chartbook. The goal is to provide a quick visual overview of a number of the key gauges for the progress of the major field crops through their important growth and development stages, culminating with the harvest progress updates.
USDA surveyors found the U.S. corn plantings are just 3% complete as of Sunday, April 14. That marked a weekly rise of just 1%, which, given last week's winter storm across a sizeable portion of the country, wasn't terribly surprising. This figure matched the slow 2018 pace at this point, but clearly lagged the 10-year average rate at 6% rather badly. Still, it's quite early in many areas, as emphasized by the fact that plantings have been recorded in just 7 of the 18 reporting states. The northernmost states' recording plantings are Kansas and Missouri, both of which were seen at 6% complete. In contrast, Texas plantings are stated at 57% complete, which is three percentage points ahead of the five-year norm.
USDA stated U.S. cotton plantings as of April 14 at 7% complete, up just 1% from the previous weekly result. The result lagged last year’s pace and the 10-year average by 1%. Thus, while recent weather clearly hasn’t been particularly conducive to active plantings, that’s not all that unusual for this time of year. As one would expect at this relatively early date, planting progress was reported in just 6 of the 15 reporting states. Arizona plantings are already 30% complete and California farmers are 15% done. Both of those are actually running behind their five-year averages. Texas plantings have climbed to 11% complete, which is slightly ahead of the five-year norm. Alabama, Georgia and Oklahoma plantings are at 1%, 2% and 3% done, respectively.
In most of the six major rice-growing states, rice planting is starting at a slower rate this spring than in past years. The overall progress is 26% this week, up 7% from the week before. This 26% is still 8% below the 10-year-average and 4% below last year’s progress. In Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas, rice planting progress is between 9 and 15 percent below the 5-year average for progress at this time of April. In Louisiana (77% complete), Missouri (15% complete) and California (no progress made yet), this week’s rice-planting progress is one point below the average for this time of last year. As with most of the planting delays, wet weather has played a part in farmers’ ability to work in the fields.
U.S. spring wheat seeding advanced just 1% in the latest week to reach 2%-complete as of April 14th. This is 11% behind the previous 10-year average. Progress has been slow in the Pacific Northwest, where the first seedings of the spring generally occur, as rains this past week limited days suitable for field work. Last week’s “bomb cyclone” also likely expunged any prospects for an early start to spring wheat seeding in South Dakota and Minnesota this year. Of the six states that report spring wheat seedings, only Idaho, Montana and Washington have begun reporting. Idaho farmers showed good progress in the week advancing seeding by 15% from the previous week while progress slowed to just 6% in Washington. Just 1% of intended spring wheat acres have been seeded thus far in Montana. Wet conditions remain a concern for areas of the northern Plains that have been saturated by heavy precipitation levels this winter and early-spring. While it is still too early to be concerned, the market will remain focused on weather forecasts this year, especially in light of USDA’s smaller-than-expected spring wheat Prospective Plantings estimates issued at the end of March.
USDA pegged the condition of the 2019 U.S. winter wheat crop unchanged this week as 60% of the crop was rated in either “Good” or “Excellent” condition compared with just 46% of the winter wheat crop in the 10-year average. This week’s rating was consistent with both the average of published trade guesses and Doane’s pre-report expectation. Looking at state-level conditions, ratings in either the Good or Excellent categories improved in Montana (+12%), South Dakota (+7%), California (+5%), Texas (+4%) and Kansas (+1%) while conditions declined in Arkansas and Colorado (-8% each), Nebraska (-6%) and Oklahoma (-2%). Of the 18 states that report weekly wheat conditions, 10 states saw improving conditions, 5 showed declining conditions and 3 states’ ratings were unchanged for the week. Looking at historical relationships, this year’s mid-April condition reading suggests that an above-trend type yield is possible for this year’s U.S. winter wheat crop so long as there are no major adverse weather developments in the next two months.
We are kicking off the 2019 Crop/Weather weekly updates with the past week delivering a major contrast in extreme weather patterns, with agricultural and personal devastation accompanying. The northern Plains and northwestern Midwest were socked by a spring blizzard. According to World Weather, Inc, snow totals of 8 to 25 inches were common from western Nebraska across the majority of S Dakota and from 4 to 12 inches in much of Minn. and WI. The greatest snowfall outside of S Dakota occurred from the interior southern portions of Minn. into central WI., although a few areas in SE N Dakota into interior northern Minn. reported 3 to 9 inches. There were seasonal heavy rains from W Texas into the central South and lower Midwest. That storm system also brought deadly tornadoes from E Texas into the Delta. Those areas with above average precipitation bracketed a very dry central Plains with little to no rain.
The map displays Monday’s seven-day rainfall forecast to next Monday morning. If the forecast verifies, the week will find much of the eastern two-thirds of the major row crop production region experiencing rains. And in many areas, amounts project to be heavy and certainly disruptive to most field work. The rains would sweep across during this week, beginning north on Tues-Wed and then south and east from Wednesday into the early weekend. Another round of rain shows the potential to develop west over the weekend. Forecasters are saying that may bring mostly light rains to the Midwest. Forecast maps suggest another rain event late next week. We are seeing sentiment that favors longer periods of rain free weather later in April and into early May to favor plantings at that time.
DOANE ADVISORY SERVICES
A DIVISION OF FARM JOURNAL MEDIA
300 S RIVERSIDE PLAZA SUITE 825
CHICAGO, IL 60606
PHONE: 314.240.1510    FAX: 319.277.7982
WWW.DOANE.COM    WWW.PROFARMER.COM    TWITTER: @DOANEAG_NELSON

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Economists:
Bill Nelson, bnelson@Farmjournal.com
Dan Vaught, dvaught@Farmjournal.com
Rob Hatchett, rhatchett@Farmjournal.com

Editor: Margo Dill Balinski, mbalinski@Farmjournal.com
VP of Revenue: Riley Higby, rhigby@Farmjournal.com
President and CEO: Grey Montgomery, gmontgomery@Farmjournal.com