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The Slow Spring

Cool, Damp Weather Has Hindered Planting Season

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF
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When it comes to spring planting, Rich Schwartz figures one woman will decide when farmers can get into the fields.

"Mother Nature will tell us when she's ready for us to plant," said Schwartz, Yankton County executive director for the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

The cold, wet spring — which included the first measurable May snow in nearly 70 years for Yankton — has put farmers behind the pace of previous years, Schwartz said.

"We have 25 to 30 percent of our corn planted," he said. "That's behind normal, but it's pretty good with the temperatures the way they are."

Delayed planting isn't necessarily a bad thing, as many factors come into play, Schwartz said. Farmers should focus on favorable planting conditions rather than worry about meeting a self-imposed deadline, he said.

"You need to be looking more at the soil temperature than at the calendar," he said.

Field activity has started to pick up as temperatures rise. The forecast for the next week calls for the mercury to hit the mid 80s and possibly 90 degrees before slipping back into the mid 70s.

With those types of predicted readings, Schwartz looks for farmers to make up for lost time in the fields.

"When they get rolling, it won't take long with those big planters," he said.

The field situation could also bounce back quickly in northeast Nebraska with favorable conditions, according to an agriculture official based in Bloomfield, Neb.

"Corn planting has gotten off to a good start. One week of warm and dry weather would allow a lot of planting to be completed," said Rod Repenning, Knox County (Neb.) executive director for the Farm Service Agency.

Repenning believes the soil moisture has improved greatly in recent weeks.

"I don't have a good handle on how far the moisture has soaked



A farmer hits the fields this week near Mayfield in northern Yankton County, reflecting the increased activity after delayed planting because of a cold, wet April.

RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D

Wet Spring Forces Drought To Retreat

BY DAVID PITT
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — A wet spring continues to soak the soil across much of the Midwest, causing the prolonged drought to slowly retreat westward, the weekly drought report released Thursday said.

Sections of central Iowa, southeast Minnesota and western parts of Wisconsin and Missouri saw notable improvement in drought conditions during the week ending at 7 a.m. Tuesday, the U.S. Drought Monitor's report said. The drought also has subsided for nearly two-thirds of Iowa, most of Missouri and Arkansas.

West of those states, drought conditions remain, though snow and rain has led to some topsoil moisture improvement in western Nebraska. A smaller portion of far western Nebraska is in extreme drought, while exceptional drought in

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U.S. DROUGHT MONITOR

southwestern Nebraska retreated slightly.

"The combination of wet and cool weather this year has definitely dented or eliminated the drought in much of the Midwest, and if these conditions continue, additional improvement is likely," the drought monitor authors wrote.

The drought report, released by the National Drought Mitigation Center at the

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, classifies conditions on a scale ranging from abnormally dry to moderate, severe, extreme, and exceptional.

Improved soil moisture is good news for Midwestern corn growers, who prefer to have seed in the ground by now but have been dodging rainstorms in order to get in the field.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture said earlier this week that just 12 percent of the nation's cornfields have been planted, about a quarter of what is usually planted by this date over the previous five years.

It also marks the slowest start in decades in some states, including Iowa, where only 8 percent of the corn crop is in the ground. That's down from 62 percent planted in the nation's largest corn

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Workplace Bullying A Growing Issue

BY DEREK BARTOS
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With most area students on the verge of summer vacation, some of those who suffer from bullying may get a respite during the coming months.

However, other victims won't be as fortunate.

Bullying in the workplace has become increasingly common and is a serious issue for many employees, according to Don McCoy, trainer and consultant for the Avera Employee Assistance Program based in Sioux Falls. McCoy helps provide support services to individuals suffering from the impacts of bullying and also holds workshops on bullying prevention.

"It's real, it's happening, and it's growing in the workplace," he said. "I think it's a silent epidemic, and it's getting worse."

Workplace bullying is repeated, health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons by one or more perpetrators that takes the form of verbal abuse, work interference or offensive conduct which is threatening, humiliating or intimidating, according to the Workplace Bullying Institute.

"Examples would be yelling at subordinates or co-workers, threatening co-workers or trying to get a worker out of the organization — making their lives so miserable that they'll quit," McCoy said.

McCoy believes that there are three types of bullies that exhibit such behavior: the chronic bully, the accidental bully and the opportunistic bully.

Chronic bullies consistently harass others, he said.

"They're almost diagnosable as narcissistic personalities," he said. "The good news is they make up only 2 to 3 percent of the bullies."

Accidental bullies have what McCoy calls "low emotional intelligence."

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INSIDE TODAY



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Spillway Gates Rehabilitation Begins At Gavins Point Dam

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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The most expensive portion of approximately \$20 million in upgrades to the Gavins Point Dam is getting under way.

Gavins Point operations project manager Dave Becker said rehabilitation of the spillway gates will account for nearly \$10 million of those expenditures.

"It is going to be a two-year project," he stated. "They will be re-painted. Any structural defects will be fixed. There will be new cables and brakes installed."

The repairs that began on the dam last year are needed both due to the 2011 flood along the Missouri River and the fact that the structure is 55 years old.

Becker said most of the questions he has received lately are about a portion of the project unrelated to the spillway gates. People have noticed the collection of black tubes on the downstream side of the dam. Becker said the tubes, which are approximately three feet in diameter by 10 feet long, are manholes for relief wells.

"The dam does not lie on solid bedrock," he explained. "It lies on river alluvium (which consists of material like silt, sand, clay and gravel). We have relief wells that go 70-100 feet down in that material to catch water that seeps under the dam."

"After the flood, our dam safety experts determined that we need more relief wells. We had 25 new ones installed last year," Becker continued, noting it brings the total number of wells to 73. "Now, they need to install the manholes over those relief wells so people have access to get in there and monitor them."

The water that comes up through the relief wells is piped into Lake Yankton.

Work is also continuing on the spillway slab below the dam.

Approximately 3,000 tons of debris was recently removed from the spillway, where it had become stuck on baffle blocks. The concrete blocks are about halfway down the slab and are approximately six feet tall by 10 feet wide.

"They acted like the tines on a rake and



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

These large tubes have been lining Toe Road below Gavins Point Dam recently. These tubes, which are 10 feet long and three feet in diameter, are manholes for relief wells that are being installed along the dam. The tubes will allow inspectors access to the wells. It is part of an approximately \$20 million package of upgrade in the dam area.

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