

AGFAX: SOUTHERN GRAIN

Corn • Soybeans • Wheat • Grain Sorghum

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Here is this week's **AgFax: Southern Grain**.

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OVERVIEW

Damage assessments continue to be made following the Easter weekend freeze.

A small amount of wheat harvest might start in Louisiana as early as the first week of May.

Soybean planting is picking up speed in the lower Mid-south and central Alabama.

CROP REPORTS

Chris Main, Tennessee Extension Wheat Specialist:

(WHEAT) More than 80% of our crop will likely be undesirable due to freeze damage. These would be cases where we would recommend planting something else. The idea that Larry Steckel (Extension Weed Specialist) and I have been going with is 40 oz/acre of Gramoxone to desiccate leaf tissue and dry down the stems so that it will lay down when the planter goes through."

Edward Twidwell, Louisiana Extension Wheat Specialist:

(WHEAT) "Our wheat looks pretty good. Knowing what other states are going through after the freeze, we feel fortunate. A little scab is showing up, but I don't think it will be of any real significance. We have some wheat in the soft dough stage, so growers could be cutting a little in a couple of weeks. Our only bad wheat is on heavy soils where it never should have been planted."

Dewey Lee, Georgia Extension Grain Specialist: (WHEAT)

"As time goes on, we're finding more and more pockets where temperatures reached well below 30 and down to 27 and even 26. Damage was severe in those areas. Just today (Friday), I was in a farmer's oat field that he had

been thinking was fine. But the internodes had frozen, and now the plants are beginning to discolor and collapse. That scene is being repeated in areas where temperatures got lower than farmers thought.

"It will probably be next week before we have a good handle on the percentage of severely damaged acreage. In southwest Georgia, losses will be minimal. East of I-75, poor vernalization on longer maturing varieties delayed development, and wheat didn't suffer as much injury. Because of poor vernalization, those fields already had lower yield potential, but at least they weren't lost.

(CORN) "Corn is certainly trying to regrow. We've got quite a bit of damage. It's even highly variable within fields, depending on topography. In lower lying areas, 75% of the stand might be lost, but 80% of the stand is viable as you go up hill. Low temperatures after Easter slowed potential regrowth. Regrowth also is pinched and slightly goosenecked due to new tissue trying to slip away from old tissue. How much yield loss this causes remains to be seen."

Dennis Delaney, Alabama Soybean Specialist: (SOY-BEANS) "We started planting the early soybeans in the last week or so. The ground really cooled off with that Easter weekend cold snap, but it's warming up now. Planting has been underway, mainly in central Alabama. With the corn freeze and wheat injury in north Alabama, the focus there is on replanting corn, if they have seed. But I'm sure that at least a few soybeans have been planted there, as well.

(CORN) "Several of the regional agents and specialists were in north Alabama on Monday and Tuesday assessing corn. Some is coming back, and some isn't. It got down to 22 in places and stayed there several hours. That froze the growing point in a lot of cases. In central Alabama, we got down to 32, and injury appears mainly to be in frosted spots. It was low enough to burn back leaves in some corn but not enough to kill the growing point."

(Continued)

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David Lanclos, Louisiana Soybean and Feed Grain Specialist: (CORN) “We have adequate moisture right now. Over the last weekend, there were good rains in many areas, and we’ve been waiting for soils to dry up. Less than 5% of our corn is probably left to be planted. We won’t be in a replanting situation to any extent.

“We are finding a little effect from the Easter cold front, but no fields have been lost. Herbicide work has to be the focus right now in corn. With dry conditions earlier, our pre-emergence applications didn’t activate. I’m seeing weed pressure in many areas that could lead to at least a 5 bu/acre yield loss, so this needs to be addressed.

(GRAIN SORGHUM) “Growers are concerned that plant populations aren’t adequate in some cases. The target is 70,000 per acre, but we can get by with somewhat less if stands are uniform. Grain sorghum seed are in shorter supply this season than corn seed. Most grain sorghum planting started 2 days ago. **(SOYBEANS)** Some early fields have emerged, but it will be another 2 to 3 days before it’s dry enough in most areas to start planting.”

Brian Ward, Mississippi Soybean Verification Program, Delta Coordinator: (SOYBEANS) “Dry conditions reduced our earlier planting, and everybody just started planting yesterday and today (Thursday). At the rate things are rolling, we could have 40% of the state’s crop planted by late next week. Where beans were up before Easter, we’re finding just a little leaf burning around the edges. Growing points look good. I have seen some injury from residual herbicides that were applied in February but remained on the soil surface during the dry weather. They splashed up on small soybean plants when we finally got a hard rain. Until this last good rain, it had been mostly dry in a large part of the Delta since February 24.”

Jim Herbek, University of Kentucky Extension Grain Specialist: “We’re now able to better assess damage caused by the Easter freeze in both wheat and corn. The weather remained cold after Easter, which delayed symptoms and made it hard to make determinations until this week.

(WHEAT) “This week, the effects in wheat are obvious. Plants are changing colors, stems are collapsing, and the growing point and developing head is starting to turn color. Some fields will be lost. Others have minor damage to moderate damage, and we still need to wait a few more days to decide whether to take them to harvest.

“We have fields planted later – mainly in eastern Kentucky – that were not damaged. But in west Kentucky, there’s damage from south to north. If you find a field in west Kentucky that wasn’t badly hurt, it’s maybe because the site was somewhat protected. But those are few and far between. Some others won’t have full yields, but they may

do okay if secondary tillers come on strong.

“Some damaged fields already are being sprayed, destroyed or cut for hay. Probably 50% of our wheat acreage won’t be kept, but we’ll have a better idea about that later.

(CORN) “Damage to corn appears to be worse than anticipated, and warmer weather is now throwing it one way or the other – either plants are dead or they’re putting on new growth. In some cases, the growing point has been alive but not doing anything. I would consider those gone. Although it looks alive, it will start rotting and die.”

Jay Chapin, South Carolina Extension Specialist: (WHEAT) “Injury in the coastal plain ranged from 20% up to 100%. Everything was pretty much headed, and that wheat was hurt the most. If it was in the boot, it came out better, but we also had 100% damage on some booted wheat where temperatures got so low. Most areas dropped to 26, which is enough to damage booted wheat, but there also were readings at 25. We suffered a lot of stem damage. We have some wheat that was in the booted stage that still is in the ballgame, but it tended to be where temperatures weren’t quite as low. Overall, it’s hard for me to believe that we haven’t lost 50% of our small grain crop.”

Erick Larson, Mississippi Extension Grain Specialist: (WHEAT) “It still appears that the significant cold weather over the Easter weekend was north of a line from Clarksdale to Columbus. Below that line, there will be some yield loss, but the determining factor is how low temperatures dropped. If the low remained above 30, losses would likely be light to moderate. About a quarter of our 350,000 acres will probably suffer severe yield loss or be abandoned.

(CORN) “Less than 20% of our corn acreage is probably in that affected area. We’re trying to assess whether corn will come back. Regrowth started in some fields in the middle of this week. Growers and consultants will continue examining corn this weekend to see if it’s coming back. There are cases where corn remained dormant all of last week after the injury, and in the first part of this week we saw the effects of pathogens or starvation. Larger plants probably used up all their energy supplies in the seed and had nothing left to sustain them. Areas where corn suffered only partial defoliation should require very little replanting. But we’re concerned about areas with complete defoliation where corn had to sit in the cold for 10 to 12 days. It’s now trying to regenerate tissue through that damaged area and push new leaves into the open.”

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