

NEWS RELEASE



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Golden Plains Area

Kit Carson County

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REPLANTING OPTIONS AFTER HAIL

Summer hail storms can cause considerable damage to area crops. Management decisions for severely hail-damaged fields will include the following; abandon cropping for this summer and fallow, or, replant with a crop that will mature before the first fall frost. Available soil moisture, previous herbicides applied, and government farm programs and crop insurance can all influence replanting decisions.

For dryland crop production, soil moisture is a critical factor when deciding to replant. A general rule of thumb (not scientific) is: 2 feet of available soil moisture is the minimum needed to begin a crop, with 4 feet being ideal. But, even with a 2 foot soil profile near saturation, adequate rainfall is essential for the remainder of the growing season to provide average yields. Soil samples from 4-foot profiles throughout fields in question will determine whether adequate soil moisture exists for replanting success.

Previously applied herbicides also are important to consider. Fields with some sulfonylurea herbicides such as Ally have strict crop rotation restrictions. These restrictions are printed on the label and must be followed.

In addition, federal farm program benefits and requirements can be affected by hail storms. A weather variance can be obtained for weather-damaged fields, which releases a damaged field from compliance requirements. Documentation is the Key! District Soil Conservationists will need anything including pictures, videos, testimonials from neighbors, a farm diary, or even a newspaper clipping to apply for a weather variance for a particular event on your farm. The greater the detail the better; (4 inches of rain fell in ½ hour accompanied with hail). And report the weather incident to your local NRCS office and crop insurance agent as soon as possible.

When hail damage occurs after June 1, re-crop options become somewhat limited due to a limited growing season, however, there are a few acceptable crops that will mature. Irrigated fields can be replanted with dry-beans, sunflower, millet, corn or a feed crop. If corn is the crop desired for replanting before June 15, consider varieties of 85 days or less in maturity. Corn is not an option later than mid-June. For dryland fields replanted after mid-June, millet, sunflower, or a feed crop, become the best options. Millet has been grown in the High Plains for quite some time and its short maturity makes it a viable option using existing wheat equipment. Sunflower has also shown promise in University testing. Current Colorado State University Extension studies suggest sunflower planted as late as July 6 has matured

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<http://goldenplains.colostate.edu>

satisfactory (Meyer, Pilcher, and Peairs). Although somewhat lower in yield and quality, late planted sunflowers can still produce quite well, offering a salvage crop to a farm with weather-destroyed crops. If a feed crop is the choice, have markets in place or be able to use the production in your own operation.

For more information regarding replant crop options, contact Ron Meyer (719-346-5571) or (719-349-1101) at the Golden Plains Area Extension office in Burlington.