



**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION**

Colorado State University Extension Golden Plains Area Extension

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Agronomy Agent's Corner #19

Todd Ballard

Above Average May Rain and How it Affects Us

Our area received above average rainfall in May which changed a once parched wheat crop into one with great potential. According to the Colorado Mesonet (www.coagmet.com), May rainfall in our area ranged from 2.2 inches at the Burlington south weather station to 4.4 at the Akron weather station. Every producer I have spoke with over the last couple of weeks is planning to apply or has already applied a fungicide to prevent an outbreak of wheat stripe rust given the conditions that it thrives. An extension top dress nitrogen experiment is showing a large difference in yield potential between high application rates and the lower ones. Applying top dress nitrogen is a decision I questioned as recently as early April given the drought stressed situation at the time.

Summer crops have good moisture to start their season, but planting has been challenging. Much of the area's corn crop planting date has been pushed from the standard crop insurance planting date into the late planting date. The late planting window for Sedgwick county ends of June 15 ([Crop Report Display \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/crop-reports/crop-report-display)). Recently, a producer has told me he would like to see that date extended on future policies. I know of recent hybrid by planting date corn trials in Colby, KS. Copying this trial idea in northeast Colorado would provide data to support USDA-RMA planting date decisions. Delays in corn planting create a domino affect for the next crops in the planting sequence. Growers who plant corn and sorghum, dry beans, or millet have seen the delays in corn planting create a domino affect in planting their other crops.

The long-term forecast for this summer is looking better than it has for many months. The previous prediction of a dry summer as an effect from La Niña is gone. NOAA's climate prediction center has declared La Niña to be over ([El Niño & La Niña \(El Niño-Southern Oscillation\) | NOAA Climate.gov](https://www.noaa.gov/education/outreach-and-communication/education/elementary-school/lesson-plans/el-niño-southern-oscillation/)). A discussion of why this decision was made and links to data supporting the decision can be found here: [Climate Prediction Center: ENSO Diagnostic Discussion \(noaa.gov\)](https://www.noaa.gov/education/outreach-and-communication/education/elementary-school/lesson-plans/el-niño-southern-oscillation/). The combination of good starting moisture and near average summer moisture gives dryland producers of summer crops reason for optimism this year.