

Late corn planting in some areas because of wet field conditions last spring could lead to reduced yields if an early frost hits this fall, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension experts say.

Overall, Nebraska's corn crop is looking strong, and for farmers who planted around the average time, in mid-May, yields in irrigated fields are projected to be up 5 to 10 percent over the 30-year average, said Jenny Rees, UNL Extension educator.

But some farmers didn't get into the fields until after Memorial Day because of wet conditions. Expected yields in those fields could be down as much as 13 percent from the 30-year averages, thanks to late-season lower temperatures and a dramatic increase in the probability of frost damage before the crop matures.

The projections were made using UNL's Hybrid-Maize model, a computer program that simulates the growth of a corn crop, and weather data from the High Plains Regional.

Yields for rainfed fields are harder to project, but the model simulated yields where corn was planted on the average planting date to be lower than an average year for most areas, but close to or higher than a normal yield in the northeast, thanks to above-average growing season rains. For fields planted around June 1, simulated yields are also lower than an average year for most locations.

More information is available at cropwatch.unl.edu or on marketjournal.unl.edu.