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Progress Being Made on Michigan's Number One Crop - Corn

LANSING, MICH. – An extremely wet spring in parts of the state led to a late start in planting and delayed crop development for Michigan's nearly 12,000 corn farmers. As we head from a difficult spring into the early summer, growers are hoping for good weather to jump start their crop.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 96 percent of Michigan's corn crop is planted, up from only 82 percent just one week ago. Even with the 14 percent improvement during the past week, farmers are still behind the five-year average of having 100 percent of the crop planted at this time. Greater than average rainfall during the months of April and May have led to the delays. According to data collected from the Michigan State University Cooperative Agricultural Weather Service, average rainfall since April 1 is more than three inches above normal for the state. Due to the delayed planting season, the crop is late in emerging as well, with only 78 percent of the crop out of the ground as compared to the five year average of 96 percent. Despite the difficult spring and late start, 91 percent of the crop is in fair to excellent condition, which is similar to last year when 94 percent of the crop was in the same condition at this time.

Michigan was not the only state affected by difficult weather. The extremely wet spring had farmers nationwide working tirelessly to beat the rain and get fieldwork done when possible. Due to planting delays and flooding around the Mississippi River areas, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) lowered their estimate last week of the number of acres planted to corn by 1.5 million acres from their original March projections. The USDA is now estimating 90.7 million acres will be planted to corn across the United States. Total production is also expected to decline with new projections at 13.2 billion bushels, down 305 million bushels from last month's projections. Despite the lowered projections, the 13.2 billion bushels U.S. corn farmers are expected to harvest will still be the largest crop on record and 753 million bushels more than was grown in 2010.

"Today's farming techniques and improved technology helped farmers get their crop planted despite the challenging spring, but good weather this summer is still needed," said Clark Gerstacker, Corn Marketing Program of Michigan (CMPM) president, National Corn Growers Association Corn Board member and a corn grower from Midland. "The weather during pollination, which occurs in the month of August, plays a vital role during seed development and plant maturity. With optimum heat and precipitation during that time, we have no doubt we can produce another record-breaking crop."

Headquartered in Lansing, the CMPM is a legislatively-established statewide program that utilizes one-cent per bushel of Michigan corn sold. Investments are made in the areas of research, education, market development, and new uses in an effort to enhance the economic position of Michigan corn farmers. The CMPM works cooperatively with the Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA), a grassroots-membership association representing the state's corn grower's political interests since the 1970's. Michigan's corn industry adds more than one billion dollars to the state's economy annually and in 2010, Michigan's corn farmers harvested a record setting crop of more than 315 million bushels. For more information, visit the website of the MCGA and the CMPM at www.micorn.org.