

Farmers Frustrated by Wet Weather

Wet weather has kept farmers out of the fields and, as a result, just a little progress has been made on Iowa's corn and soybean harvest. Iowa's Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey said this is the slowest harvest since at least the 1960's. Drier weather forecasted this week will hopefully see farmers getting into their fields and significant progress can be made.

The USDA crop report said the last week of October brought Iowa yet another weather system dumping more rain on already saturated fields. Although the week ended with dry weather, moisture levels remained too high for producers to harvest.

With grain driers running nonstop across the state, some elevators are rejecting wet soybeans and poor quality corn. Post-harvest field work may be pushed back into the spring. With few fields available to cattle for post-harvest gleaning and very little hay stubble produced, delays are now spreading across the entire agriculture community.

Manure Application

This slow harvest is also affecting livestock producers. Pork producers, agribusiness interests, commercial manure applicators, and individual farmers have contacted the Department of Natural Resources concerned about the inability to get field work done and manure applied. They are particularly concerned because of the new law that restricts the application of manure on frozen and snow covered ground.

The law prohibits the surface application of manure on snow covered ground after December 21. It prohibits the surface application of manure on frozen ground after February 1. Both these restrictions apply until April 1. Incorporation of manure is allowed at any time during that period.

The prohibitions apply to liquid manure from swine and dairy confinement operations. Small animal feeding operations (those with less than 1,250 head of finishing hogs or 750 head of dairy cattle) are exempt from these requirements. Solid manure (deep bedded manure and poultry litter) is exempt from these requirements. Emergency application of manure can be allowed during the time periods of the prohibitions.

DNR stressed that early contact with DNR field offices will make the process go easier for all concerned parties. In no event can manure from an operation enter a water of the state.