

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Updates April 2020

Here are updates from the MSU Extension Field Crops team in Southwest Michigan. If you have any items you would like me to include in future email updates - whether events you want others to know about or topics you would like to have addressed - please send me an email (eander32@msu.edu) or call the office (269-467-5511).

Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series Begins

Every Thursday at 7 a.m. from April 16 through September 10, 2020, you can get the latest information from our MSU field crop specialists and educators. The scheduled topics will be fluid, flexible and focused on the most current topics. All field crop producers, agribusiness professionals, government agency personnel and others interested in field crops production and management are encouraged to participate in our annual virtual meeting series.

Participating is easy! You can join the live meeting via Zoom using a computer, tablet, mobile device or regular phone line. If you are new to Zoom, simply [download the Zoom app](#) and you will be ready to join online every week to see visuals shared by presenters. A call-in by phone option is also available but note that you will only hear the audio portion.

Participants must sign up to receive an email notification with instructions for joining the Virtual Breakfast. You only need to do this once and you will receive the Zoom link and call-in phone number, as well as weekly reminders every Wednesday.

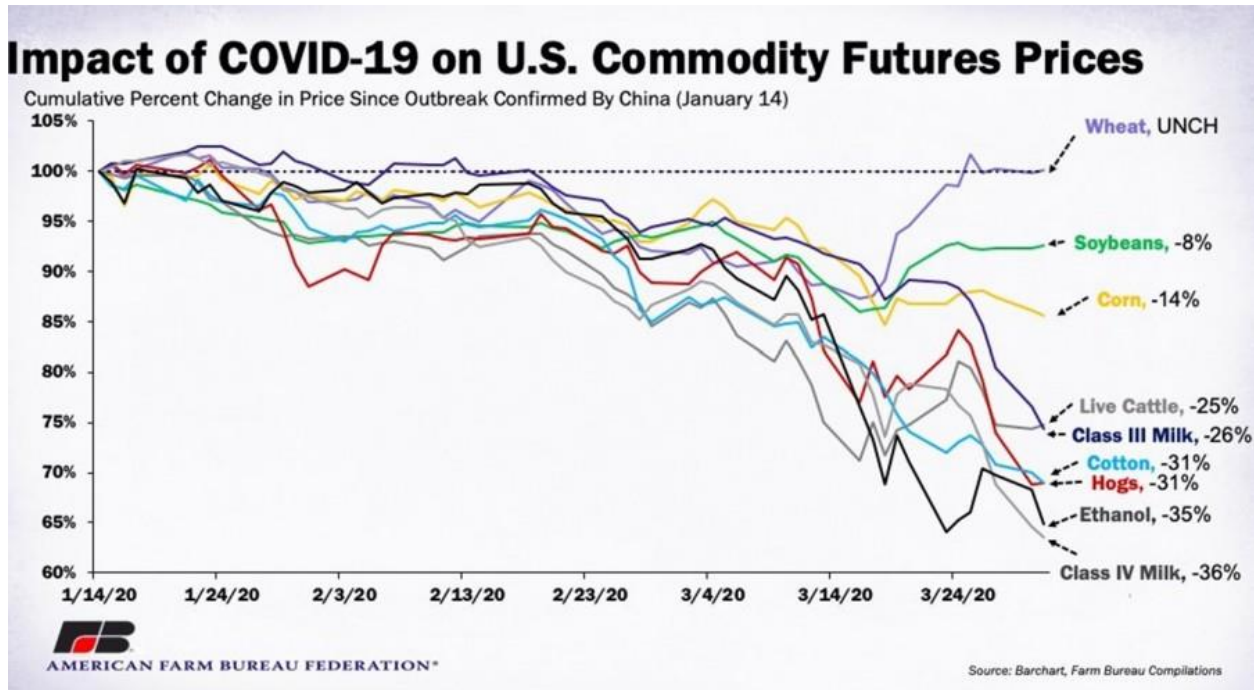
Private Applicator Testing and Online Pesticide Core Manual Review

No in-person pesticide applicator testing or training will be offered in April. If you read my newsletter brief over the weekend, you saw that MDARD has opened an opportunity for **private applicators** to re/certify for the pesticide applicator exam. This will be accomplished “via an oral fact-finding interview administered by an authorized representative of the department. The interview will consist of multiple choice and/or true and false questions based on content from the National Pesticide Applicator Certification Core Manual. Questions will be read by an MDARD representative, applicants must respond orally and obtain at least a 70 percent score to pass. This opportunity can only be offered for the private applicator Core exam. To schedule an oral interview, contact Lisa Graves by phone at 517-284-5653, or by email at GravesL@Michigan.gov.”

The [MSU Extension Field Crops](#) team met this morning and plans were put in motion to record the review session we typically lead in nearly every county throughout the state. Several team members will record individual chapter presentations and the video will be posted on the [team's website](#). It should be done within a week, so check that site later this week if you know of someone planning to take the oral test and would like a bit of a review.

Coronavirus Pandemic Affecting Ag Markets

Farm Bureau president Zippy Duvall [wrote recently](#) about the impact of the novel coronavirus on agriculture. The graph below is just a snapshot of what has happened to key markets in the past few months.



As you can see, the ethanol market has been among the hardest hit. The Renewable Fuels Association stated that about 4.4 billion gallons of capacity has come offline since March 1. Including what was already idle, the total is about 5.2 billion gallons idle, or approximately 30% of the industry's total. Growth Energy, a biofuels trade association, says nearly half could come offline in the coming weeks. This would obviously drive corn prices even lower in an era of already depressed markets.

The 'Rona Cyclona



As 30% of US ethanol capacity goes offline, how bad will it get, when will it end?



Spring OK for SCN Sampling

Although many farmers pull soil samples for nutrient and soybean cyst nematode (SCN) testing in the fall, wet conditions in 2019 may have prevented some from getting that done. Greg Tylka, nematologist at Iowa State University (ISU) and leader of The SCN Coalition, says spring is still a good time to sample for SCN. Tylka recommends waiting until the soil warms up and fields aren't muddy before gathering soil cores. "Ideally, we'd like 20 cores from every 20 acres or so collected from the upper 8 inches of soil. You can zigzag your way through each 20-acre parcel. Or, you can collect soil cores from high-risk areas, such as high-pH spots, low spots,

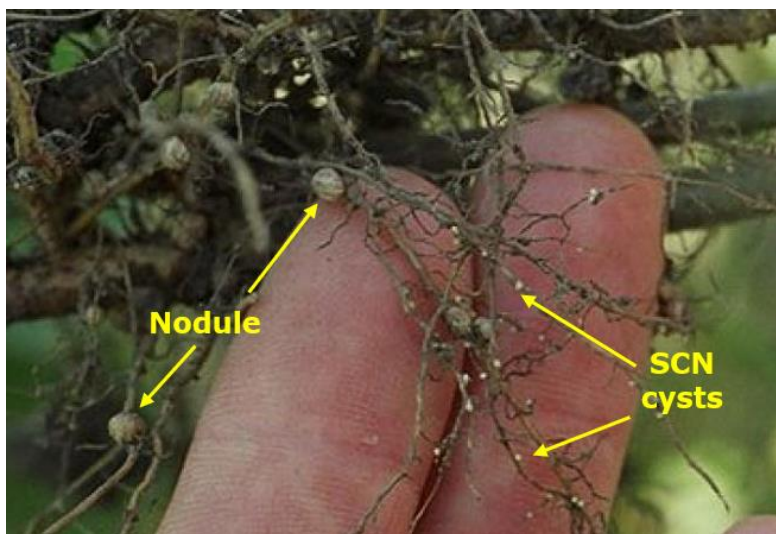
near fence lines and other areas where soil from other fields may have been introduced. Or you can pull samples from logical areas or management zones in the field.”

“You can be losing anywhere from 10% to 30% of yield without seeing any aboveground symptoms from SCN,” Tylka adds. “If you don’t know what your SCN numbers are in your fields - or know whether you have SCN-infested fields - soil testing is the first step.”

In Michigan, testing for soybean farmers is free thanks to funding by the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee. A [fillable form is available to download](#) from MSU’s Plant and Pest Diagnostics. For more information, see Mike Staton’s article, “[Free Soybean Cyst Nematode Type Testing Program Available in Michigan](#)”.



Funded by Soybean Checkoff Dollars



SBA launches Paycheck Protection Program

The Paycheck Protection Program - made available by the recently-passed Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) - provides forgivable loans up to \$10 million to small businesses left financially distressed by the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. [Here is the link to Morning Ag Clip’s summary](#) of this topic for more information.

In talking with other MSU Extension field crops educators who have had several conversations within their own networks, the overall consensus was that farmers who are interested in pursuing this option should start that process **right now**. The \$349 billion available in this program will lull some into thinking that there is plenty of money and they can wait to apply, but lawyers, lenders, and others referenced by my colleagues have said that there are already several thousand applications and that the money will go fast. You can work with your local lending institutions to facilitate this.

Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early

The Farm Loan team in Michigan county offices are already working on operating loans for spring 2020 so it is important that potential borrowers submit their requests early so they can be timely processed. The farm loan team can help determine which loan programs are best for applicants. FSA offers a wide range of low-interest loans that can meet the financial needs of any farm operation for just about any purpose. The traditional **farm**

operating and farm ownership loans can help large and small farm operations take advantage of early purchasing discounts for spring inputs as well expenses throughout the year.

Microloans are a simplified loan program that will provide up to \$50,000 for both Farm Ownership and Operating Microloans to eligible applicants. These loans, targeted for smaller operations and non-traditional operations, can be used for operating expenses, starting a new agricultural enterprise, purchasing equipment, and other needs associated with a farming operation. The staff in Michigan county FSA offices can provide more details on farm operating and microloans and provide loan applications. Loans to beginning farmers and members of underserved groups are a priority.

Other types of loans available include:

- **Marketing Assistance Loans** allow producers to use eligible commodities as loan collateral and obtain a 9-month loan while the crop is in storage. These loans provide cash flow to the producer and allow them to market the crop when prices may be more advantageous.
- **Farm Storage Facility Loans** can be used to build permanent structures used to store eligible commodities, or for storage and handling trucks, or portable or permanent handling equipment. A variety of structures are eligible under this loan, including bunker silos, grain bins, hay storage structures and refrigerated structures for vegetables and fruit. A producer may borrow up to \$500,000 per loan.

Pest Management Webinars

Purdue's field crops pathologist Darcy Telenko produced [a video and article](#) with an update on tar spot in corn for 2020.

The Take Action group is in the midst of a [series of weekly webinars](#) with faculty from various Midwest land grant universities - including our own Christy Sprague - and others. If rain keeps you sidelined for a time this week, check out these videos to better prepare you for pest management this season.



Take Action Webinar Series - Week 1

Take ACTION
Herbicide-Resistance Management

Christy Sprague, Ph.D., Michigan State University
Rodrigo Werle, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison

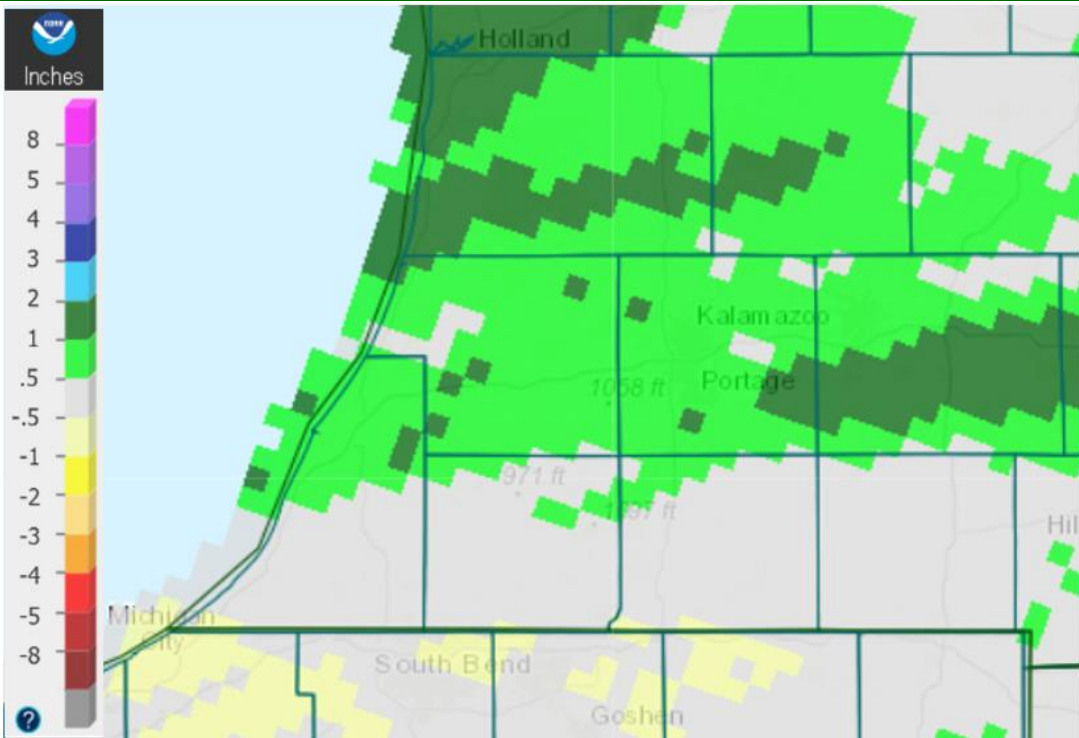
Hosted by: Mark Loux, Ph.D., The Ohio State University

Wildlife Management Webinar Recordings Now Available

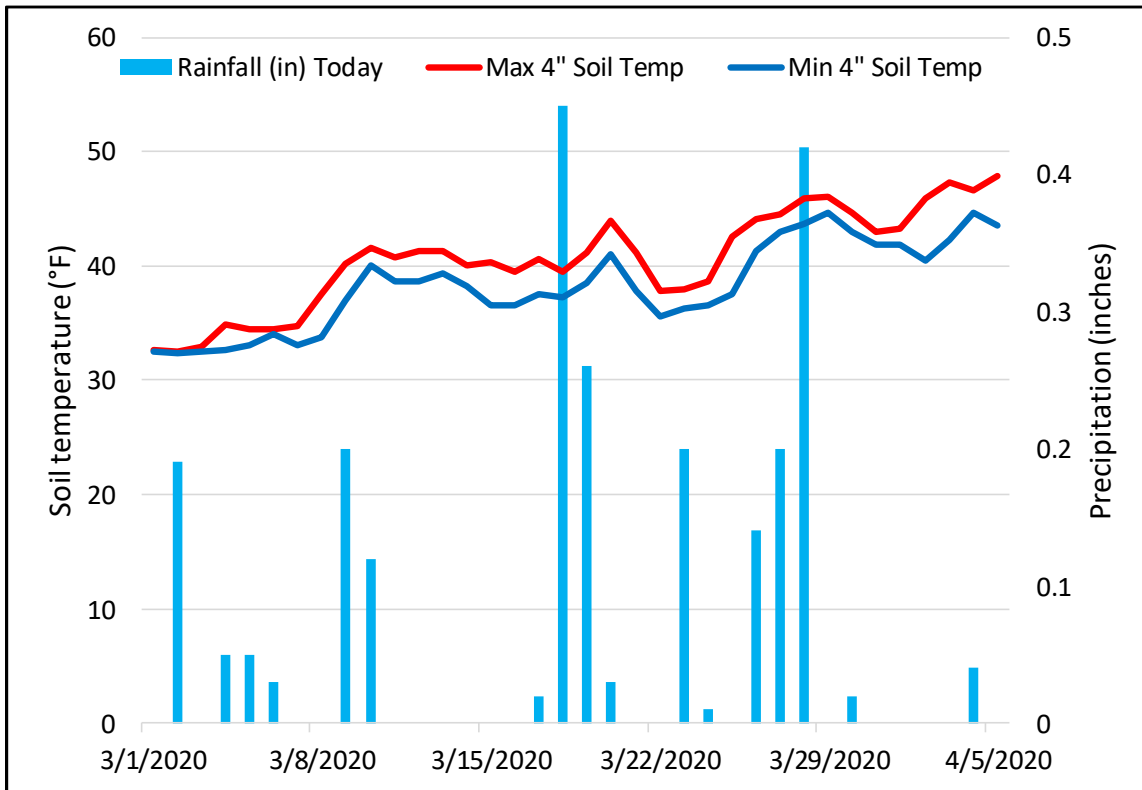
Last week MSU Extension hosted a webinar to inform crop producers about wildlife species that can impact field crop production and options for control. Tim Wilson, a district supervisor/wildlife biologist with Michigan's USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services discussed [sandhill crane behavior and methods of management](#). Ashley Autenrieth, a deer program biologist with Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), discussed [management tactics for deer](#) and other game species under state jurisdiction. These will be posted on the MSU Extension [Field Crops](#) webpage and Wildlife Management page soon, but I wanted to get these links out to you, especially those who are thinking about applying for depredation permits this spring.

Weather Update

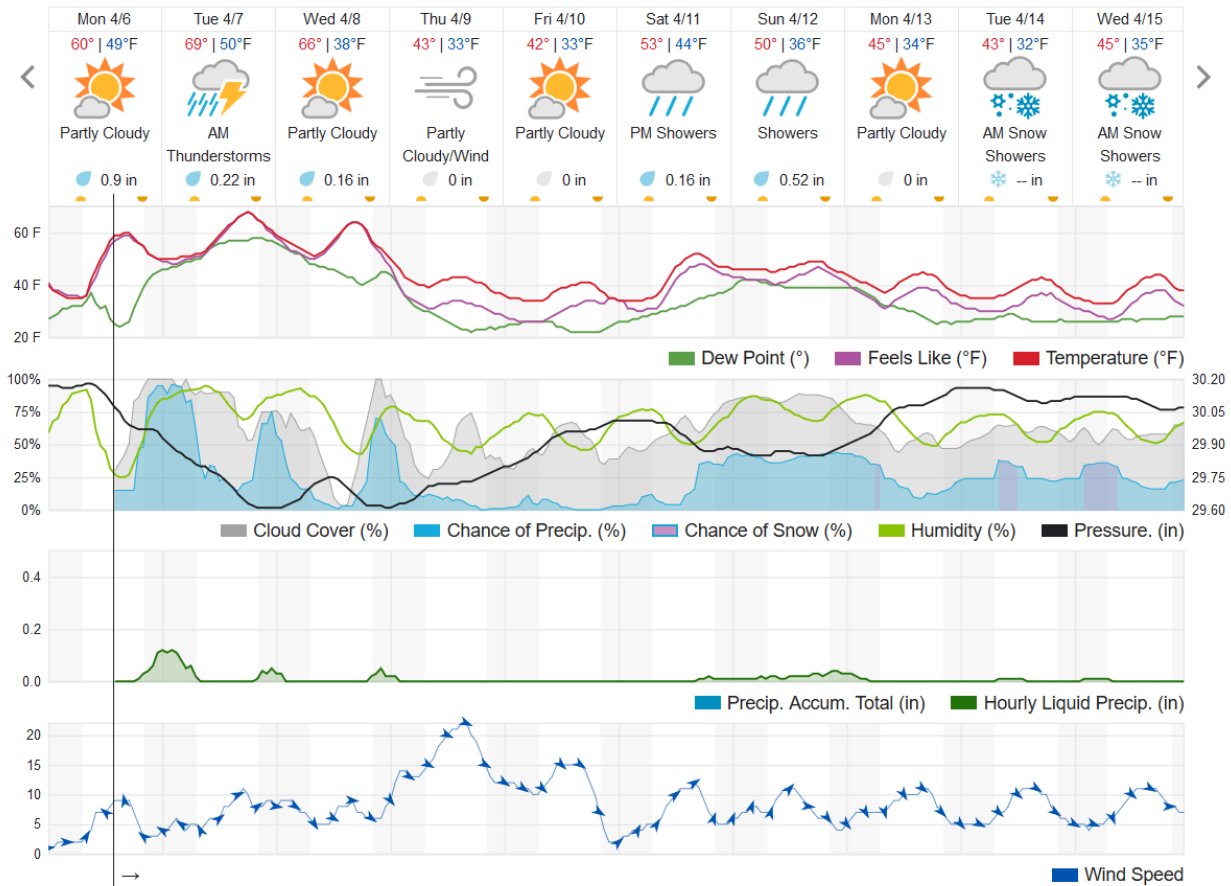
(in graphic form)



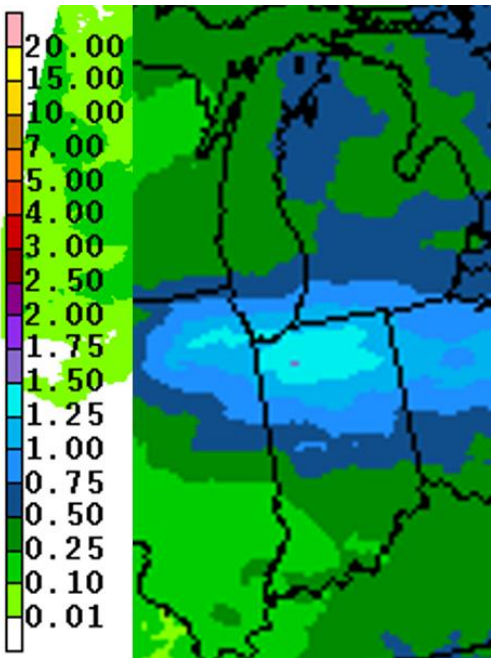
Precipitation totals in the last 30 days—pretty much normal for March for SW MI.



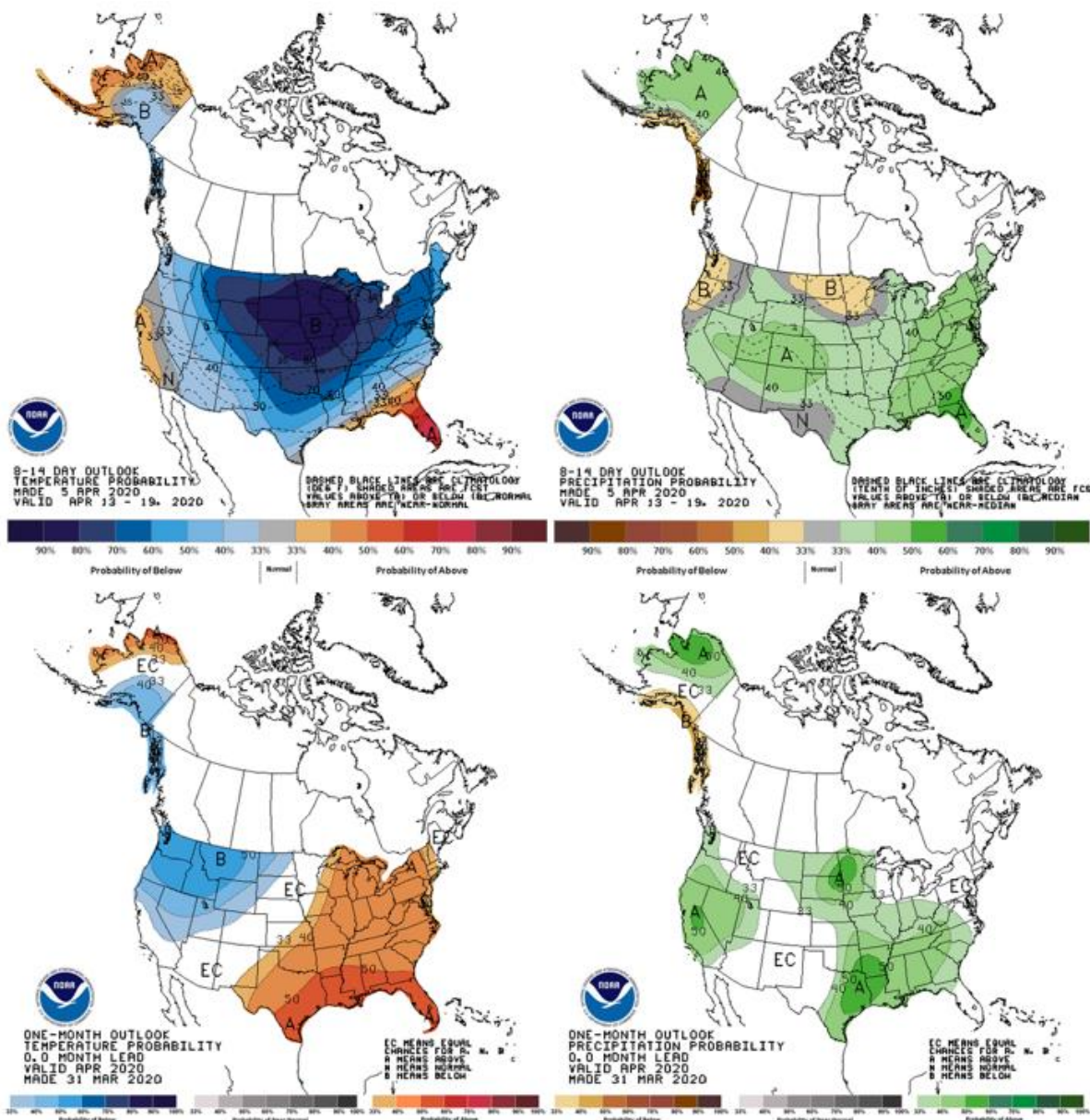
Soil temperatures and rainfall for the past month at the Mendon Enviroweather station. Soil temps are approaching 50 °F, but cooler temperatures and higher-than-normal precipitation may cool them back down.



The 10-day forecast for Centreville, MI according to www.wunderground.com.



The 7-day forecast calls for approximately 1" of rain, with most of that falling overnight Monday through Wednesday with a small chance on Sunday.



National Weather Service 8-14 day outlook (Apr 13-19, above) and one-month outlook for April (below) for temperature (left) and precipitation (right). This looks pretty definite that we'll be warmer than normal this month which should help to dry out fields.

Calendar

Titles are clickable links to online content when highlighted and underlined

- April 8** [On-farm Produce Safety for Small Growers in the Age of Novel COVID-19](#). 12-1 PM EDT. Small growers of fresh produce, farm marketers, and U-Pick operations will learn what we can and should do within our normal production activities to support public health in these uncertain times. No registration necessary, [join by following this Zoom link to attend](#).
- April 16** [MSU Extension Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Begins](#). 7:00-7:30 AM. "Dealing with rough soil conditions" with Tim Harrigan. [Participants must sign up](#) to receive an email notification with instructions for joining the Virtual Breakfast. You only need to do this once and you will receive the Zoom link and call-in phone number, as well as weekly reminders every Wednesday.

April 23 MSU Extension Field Crops Virtual Breakfast. 7:00-7:30 AM. “Early season weed control” with Christy Sprague. [Participants must sign up](#) to receive an email notification with instructions for joining the Virtual Breakfast. You only need to do this once and you will receive the Zoom link and call-in phone number, as well as weekly reminders every Wednesday.

April 30 MSU Extension Field Crops Virtual Breakfast. 7:00-7:30 AM. “Corn and soybean planting considerations” with Manni Singh. [Participants must sign up](#) to receive an email notification with instructions for joining the Virtual Breakfast. You only need to do this once and you will receive the Zoom link and call-in phone number, as well as weekly reminders every Wednesday.

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

Upper Peninsula winter 2020 forage program offered as online recordings

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 6, 2020

The Recipes for Forage Success meeting cancelled at Escanaba and Mass City is now available in recorded segments online.

2020 Field Crops Virtual Breakfast starting April 16

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 2, 2020

Helping growers and agribusiness make informed decisions during the growing season.

Updated cover crop termination publication available for 2020

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 2, 2020

Evaluate your cover crop termination strategy with this updated for 2020 publication.

Options for controlling volunteer potatoes

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 2, 2020

Volunteer potatoes can be hard to manage. Here are a few options for control and daughter tuber suppression.

Agriculture support labs still open for business, with modifications

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 1, 2020

As the pandemic of COVID-19, the infectious disease caused by novel coronavirus, impacts farmers' ability to get ready for planting season, labs and other support aids remain open with limitations.

Plant and soil service labs open during COVID-19 shutdowns

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 30, 2020

MSU's Plant & Pest Diagnostics and Soil and Plant Nutrient Laboratory remain open during “Stay Home, Stay Safe” executive order.

Protecting yourself and your farm employees from COVID-19

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 27, 2020

Considerations to help producers protect themselves, their families and employees from novel coronavirus, the virus that causes the infectious disease COVID-19.

Calling all farmers! Please complete new national cover crop survey

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 27, 2020

USDA SARE is distributing a new national survey to farmers asking about their experiences with cover crops, due April 12.

Reducing soybean production costs in 2020

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 26, 2020

Recommendations for soybean producers on reacting to low commodity prices by reducing production costs without affecting yields.

Farm biosecurity basics: Keeping employees healthy

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 26, 2020

On a field crop farm, the goal of biosecurity is to keep the owners, operators and staff safe and healthy.

Is a single species or multi-species cover crop better?

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 25, 2020

Videos highlight the cost and benefit to utilizing a single or multi-species mixtures of cover crops.

Cover crops in Michigan - Interseeding cover crops

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 23, 2020

A new video highlights research at MSU on interseeding rates of cover crops into standing corn.

Reducing soybean planting rates can increase income

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 20, 2020

Results from 49 on-farm replicated trials conducted in Michigan from 2015 to 2019 build a compelling case for reducing soybean planting rates.

Considerations for making carry-over soybean seed decisions

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 19, 2020

Producers want to salvage the soybean seed they carried over from 2019 but need to make this decision carefully.

COVID-19: Where can agricultural employers go to stay current on the infectious disease caused by novel coronavirus?

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 19, 2020

The COVID-19 situation continues to change daily and staying current on the latest changes for agricultural workers can be difficult.

Cultivating resilience: On the farm and in the community

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 18, 2020

Michigan Field Crops "In the Weeds" podcast provides convenient education to critical issues facing farmers. This second series will explore conservation practices that build soil and our relationships with our communities.

Managing weeds when seeding cover crops

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 17, 2020

A new video highlights research at MSU looking at the compatibility of different cover crop species with herbicides used in corn, soybean and wheat.

Using bin aeration to dry corn and soybeans with natural air

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 16, 2020

Air-drying grain in bins benefits from large capacity aeration fans and extended periods of low relative humidity weather.

Are soybean seed treatments profitable?

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 12, 2020

The results from 55 on-farm soybean seed treatment trials are summarized.

Overview of 2020 soybean on-farm research projects

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 11, 2020

On-farm soybean research trials will continue to be conducted by Michigan soybean producers in 2020. The 2020 projects are listed in this article and producers are encouraged to participate.

Getting “In the Weeds” on hemp production in Michigan

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 11, 2020

Michigan Field Crops “In the Weeds” podcast third series will explore hemp production including insurance options. Deadline for insuring is March 16, 2020.

New videos highlight the benefits of oats, cereal rye and annual ryegrass as cover crops

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 11, 2020

When selecting a cover crop grass species, which one should you choose?

Reducing weather risk in soybean production

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 5, 2020

Recent climatic trends and practical management practices for reducing weather risk when growing soybeans.

New products in the news: Are you reading a sales pitch?

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 2, 2020

Knowing when an article is really an advertisement can help you make smart decisions.

Benefits of Brassicas as cover crops

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 2, 2020

Brassicas are a great cover crop option and good for weed suppression and breaking up soil compaction.

Eric Anderson

Michigan State University Extension

Field Crops Educator - St. Joseph County

612 E. Main St., Centreville, MI 49032

eander32@msu.edu

(269) 467-5510 (Office)

(269) 467-5641 (Fax)

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer, committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Jeffrey W. Dwyer, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned.