

When Should We Plant Cotton?

When to begin planting cotton in the high plains would seem to be a fundamental question that has been answered, but it is complicated by size of a grower's farming operation, planting capacity, and ultimately, when the region receives a planting rain.

What Does The Data Say?

North of Lubbock. Data from trials across the northern high plains suggest that planting prior to May 7 risks yield potential. Planting after May 8 through near the end of May generally maintains yield potential. Planting after May 29 and into June can potentially cost a grower yield (Figure 1). For plantings after May 21, it is recommended that growers choose earlier maturing varieties that have a higher probability of fully maturing prior to the first frost and/or freeze in the fall.

Figure 1

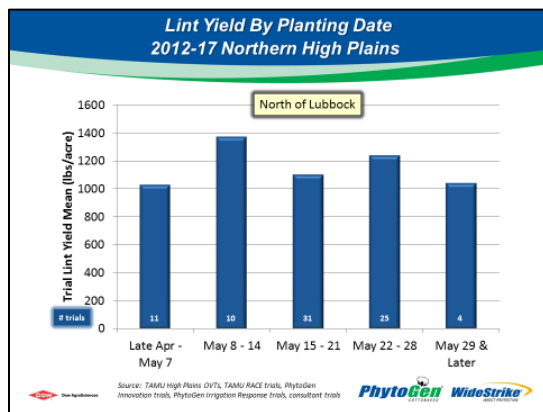
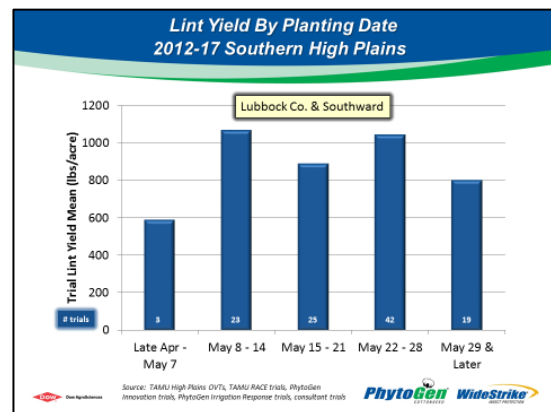


Figure 2



South of Lubbock. Planting prior to May 7 in the southern high plains presents significant risk for loss of yield potential. For Lubbock county and southward, the data indicate yield potential is maintained when cotton is planted from May 8 through the last week of May, then drops slightly for plantings later than May 29 (Figure 2).

Final Planting Dates. Final planting dates for insurance coverage for cotton is May 31 for Bailey, portions of Briscoe, Lamb, and Swisher counties and northward; the final date for Cochran, Crosby, most of Floyd, Gaines, Hale, Hockley, Lubbock, Terry and Yoakum counties is June 5. Counties southward and/or off the caprock have a final planting date of either June 10 or June 20. See <https://www.rma.usda.gov/RMALocal/Field-Offices/Regional-Offices/Oklahoma-City-Oklahoma-Regional-Office-Page> for the specific final planting date for your county.

Determining when to begin planting cotton should be based on weather forecasts, soil temperatures, soil moisture conditions, combined with considerations regarding your planting capacity and acreage. For more details, contact your local PhytoGen representative or your local Extension personnel.

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