

# Scene

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April 30-May 4, 2018

## Spring planting finally underway after a late start



Travis K. Fischer  
Mid-America  
Publishing

After an unusually snowy April it looks like spring is finally arriving in earnest.

This is good news for anxious farmers, eager for the snow to melt away so they can get into the field.

"It certainly has been a slow start to spring planning, no doubt about that," said Mike Naig, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture.

Typically, looking at the five year average, Iowa farmers are usually 11 percent done with their planting by April 22. However, thanks to the unseasonable snowfall that this month has seen, the planting season has barely gotten started. Officially, as of April 24, Naig said that the USDA did not record any significant spring planning in the state and that Naig himself was only anecdotally aware of some southern Iowa farmers getting out in the field.

"Starting late last week more seasonal weather started to allow some farmers in southern Iowa to begin spring field work and do some planting," said Naig in a press release. "Hopefully we will continue to see warmer temperatures and



dryer weather so farmers across the state can get in the fields and start spring planting."

According to the USDA Iowa Crop Progress and Condition reports, Iowa has only had 2.6 days suitable for fieldwork between April 2 and April 22. Northern Iowa in particular has fallen behind schedule as farmers wait for temperatures to rise and the moisture to level out.

As temperatures rise, planting should be picking up soon. Some farmers may be looking at changing their seeds to a faster maturing crop to make up for the late start while others are just focused on getting out in the field. Regardless, Naig feels it won't be long before the season is back on track.

"Our farmers are very efficient,"

said Naig. "They can plant a significant amount of acres each day."

With the late start to the season, Naig is hopeful that the summer weather will be more amicable to the agriculture industry, with plenty of warm days and just enough moisture. But it's impossible to say if the weather will be any less troublesome in summer as it has been during the spring.

"That's part of the risk every year that farmers have to manage," said Naig.

In the meantime, Naig wants to remind everybody that planting season means a lot of heavy equipment on the roads. Anhydrous tanks and large planters will be transitioning from field to field over the next few weeks, meaning extra caution should be taken while driving.

"As things break loose here, folks will be working long hours," said Naig. "We encourage people to slow down and take care."

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