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Peanut Newsletter – July 19, 2016

Occasionally growers ask about late planting of shorter maturity Spanish peanuts or even shortest maturity Valencia peanuts in the northwest South Plains. This interest has expanded to our southern counties and companies have sometimes actively sought late-season contracts for Spanish peanuts. Even modest yields can still gross over $500/acre though peanut market prices are much lower than a few years ago), but keep in mind that input costs (irrigation, seed, fungicide, etc.) are similar to full-season production thus significantly higher than other replant/late plant crops, and these higher input costs are in contrast to the goal of having low cost catch crops.

Although a few individuals have spoken to the contrary, I am averse to Spanish peanuts in a replant production system past May 28 in the northwest South Plains to about June 7 in Dawson and Gaines Cos. A significant acreage of Spanish peanuts was planted as late as June 20th in 2003 in Lamb Co., but for the most part yields most often did not reach one ton. One producer in Lamb Co. reported in 2003 that among 12 different fields his yields declined from near 4,000 lbs./A planted about May 12, to about 1,500 lbs./A ending with planting on June 3. Yes, a few individual growers have made 2,500 lbs./A or so with plantings as late as mid-June, but this is rare, represents risk, and has a strong potential for disappointment.

Let's put Spanish peanut production with late planting dates in perspective by looking at the issue of days to maturity for the recent

common Texas A&M Spanish peanut line Tamnut OL06. Most Spanish peanut varieties require about 140-145 days for proper maturity in a normal year (maturation is dependent on heat unit accumulation, which slows considerably for later planted peanuts). For this crop planted on June 1 above Littlefield, the average killing frost is October 22nd. From June 1 then a 'typical' estimated maturity date is October 18th, within 5 days of a killing frost (Table 1 dates represent potentially ~1/2 to 3/4 of full-season yields). This is unnecessarily risky. And cool weather can be expected after September 20th to achieve much lower heat unit accumulation that far north in a typical year, thus making 140-145 days 150 days and longer. Grade will be lower. Each missed day of planting in late May and early June is equivalent to 2-3 days of delayed maturity in terms of heat unit accumulation in late September to mid October.

In more recent years Spanish has become a replant crop of interest to existing peanut producers in southern counties. There is more time to work with in this situation so at least the maturity concerns are alleviated if not the remaining underlying question of growing an expensive catch crop.

I do not recommend the small-seeded Spanish peanut AgraTech 9899-14 for late planting, which has a runner growth habit (used in the Spanish market as a high oleic peanut). It has a maturity at least 10-14 days longer than Tamrun OL06, and probably should not be planted after mid-May in Lamb Co. or late May in Dawson-Gaines.

This document is posted on the Web at http://lubbock.tamu.edu/ (prices week of June 6)

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