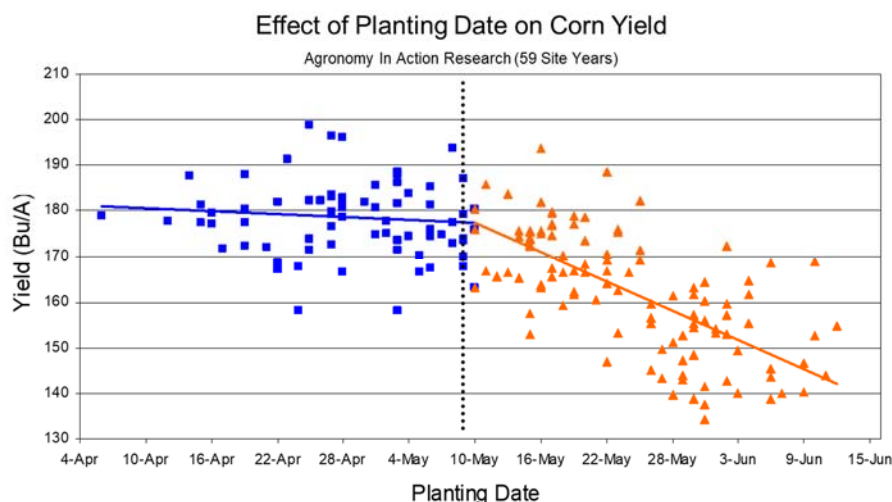


SHOULD I SWITCH TO AN EARLIER MATURITY CORN HYBRID?

Some areas of Kansas are experiencing planting delays due to both too wet and too dry conditions. As planting is delayed further into the season, the question of whether to switch to early maturing hybrids often arises. Below is some information to help guide decision making if you are considering switching hybrids. The primary aspect to understand with delayed planting is that corn RM (relative maturity) is exactly that....relative. Relative meaning a connection to or dependence upon another thing. The RM for a hybrid is largely established by evaluating the time it takes for a hybrid to reach harvest moisture **relative** to other products with established RM's. RM is also **relative** to planting date and growing conditions, in that corn planted later will mature in a shorter amount of time than corn planted early.

- On average, hybrids will only lose 1 bushel for every 10 days of planting delay prior to May 10.
- Planting dates after May 10 can experience up to 1 bushel of yield loss each day delayed.
- Yield benefits of full-season hybrids offset potential grain drying cost enough to discourage switching Relative Maturity (RM) prior to the last week of May.
- Corn hybrids mature with fewer accumulated heat units when planting is delayed, minimizing the risk of fall frost injury.

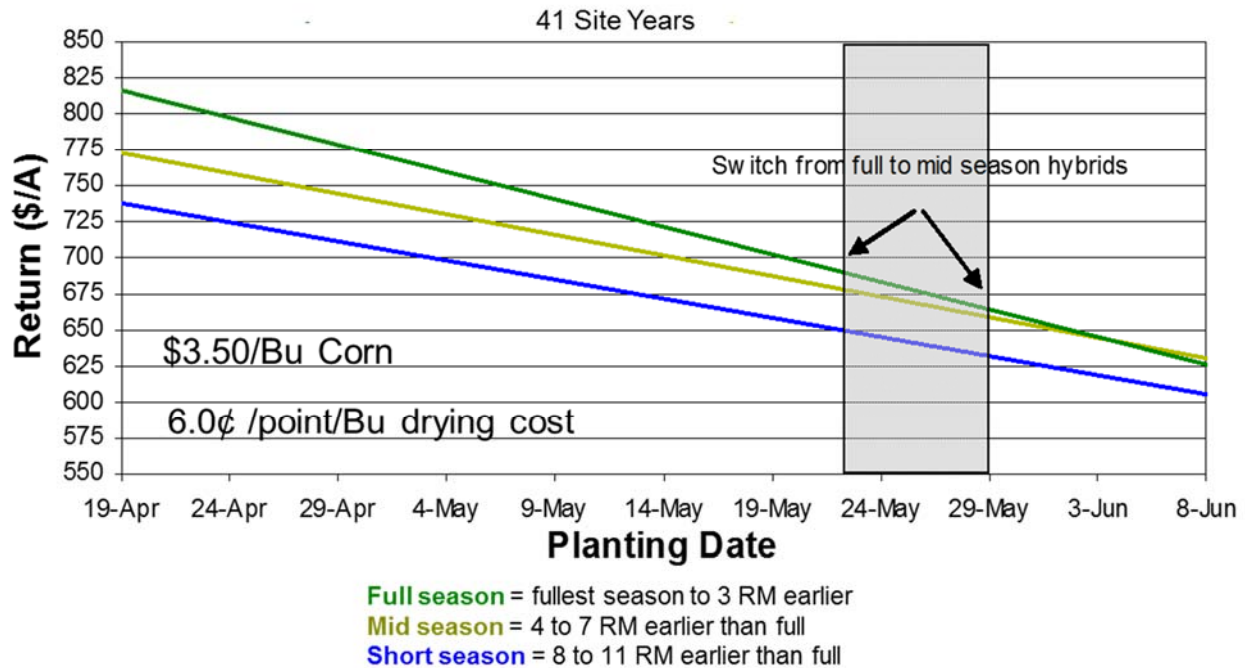


Golden Harvest Agronomy in Action research and numerous university trials have shown minimal yield loss (0.11 bu/day) from delayed planting up until May 10. After May 10, the penalty increases to as much as 1 bu/day for delayed planting. The thought of switching to an earlier maturity hybrid when facing a planting delay happens more frequently than most farmers would like. Thoughts of an early fall frost make the decision even more emotional. Before making big shifts to an earlier maturity hybrid, it's

important to understand what we've learned from previous research to make the most profitable decision. Following are a few key considerations regarding delayed planting.

A slight planting delay doesn't necessarily require a switch to a shorter RM hybrid. **Corn hybrids mature with fewer accumulated heat units when planting is delayed.** This allows the same RM hybrid to reach physiological maturity in fewer days than earlier planting dates, reducing the risk of delayed maturity and potential frost injury. There may be a need to switch to an earlier RM hybrid at some point in time, but it's important to remember that a day delay in planting doesn't always mean a day delay in harvest.

Effect of Planting Date on Gross Return in Dollars/Acre by Corn Relative Maturity Group



Golden Harvest Agronomy in Action research has conducted multi-year studies to better understand the financial impact associated with switching to an earlier RM hybrid too quickly. Assumptions of \$3.50 per bushel and \$0.06 per point drying costs along with yield data from planting date trials were used to calculate \$/ac return for full- (green line), mid- (yellow line) and short- (blue line) season hybrids. Full-season hybrids were defined as a RM ranging from the fullest acceptable for an area to minus 3 RM (for instance, if a 115 RM is considered the fullest acceptable maturity for an area, full season refers to 112-115 RM products for that area). Mid-season hybrids were 4-7 RM earlier than the full-season hybrids. Short-season hybrids were 8-11 RM earlier than full-season hybrids.

In over 41 trials, the yield benefits of planting a full-season hybrid outweighed the drying costs for higher moisture grain at harvest for planting dates up to the end of May. Considering moving 4-7 RM earlier at June 1 could be warranted, but adjusting hybrid maturity prior to June 1 is likely not necessary. Aggressive RM changes of 8 or more RM may result in drier grain. However, yield potential of earlier RM hybrids could result in lower profit than drying the preferred hybrid that was originally selected for the field.

Foremost, the hybrid selected for your field was based on several considerations in order to maximize production in that field, and the hybrid selected may already be a mid to early season hybrid for the area. Performance and agronomic fit may have outweighed the benefits of fuller maturity in that selection, and being a mid or early maturity would minimize the need to switch products even more. Therefore, staying with the original hybrid selection is preferable unless planting is delayed considerably. Additionally, the performance on marginal, dryland acres (<125 bu/ac) can be unpredictable as it will be mostly dictated by rainfall amount and timing. On these dryland acres, the yield penalty for delayed planting can be negated if rainfall is more plentiful later in the growing season. In fact, we have seen several years where later planting and/or fuller maturities on dryland have resulted in higher yields due to more favorable conditions late in the growing season.

There are, however, reasons for switching to an earlier RM hybrid other than just for yield. Lack of access to grain drying capabilities (bu/hr), grain contract delivery dates, and harvest capacity (ac/day) are just a few considerations that could impact the decision. If these factors aren't a concern, you will likely maximize your profit potential by sticking to your original hybrid selection.

For more agronomic insights or for assistance on making this decision, contact your local Golden Harvest Seed Advisor.

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