

SUNFLOWERS HAVE WIDE PLANTING DATE RANGE

SITUATION

Sunflowers are grown in many parts of the country and [planting dates](#) vary considerably from region to region. Both early and late planting dates have associated benefits and risks.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

- Disease and pest pressures
- Harvest equipment
- Marketing options
- Seasonal workloads
- Weather impacts

ACTION PLAN

1. Understand disease and pest pressures. Most sunflower pests are more prevalent in early planted fields. Insects such as seed weevil, cutworms, wireworms, head moth, banded sunflower moth and sunflower beetle tend to emerge early and affect early seeded fields more than later planted fields. Diseases such as phoma and phomopsis also tend to be more common in early planted fields. To help control these diseases, it may be helpful to delay planting; however, rust may be more serious in later planted sunflower fields. With these disease pressures, growers must understand which pose the greatest potential risk to the crop. Birds also can be damaging to sunflower fields. Local birds are more problematic in early maturing fields, whereas migrating blackbirds may cause more pressure later.

2. Evaluate your workload. Because the sunflower planting date window is rather large, it easily can be adjusted to fit your workload. Planting date windows often can span four weeks or more, so adjust planting to fit your schedule and balance your planting activities against other seasonal crop needs.

3. Consider harvest equipment. If you have a good drying system available, crop quality can be maintained even with a later planting date. If that equipment is not available, earlier planting dates can help ensure a crop with lower moisture content at harvest.

4. Don't ignore the weather. Sunflowers prefer soil temperatures of 50 F and warmer combined with adequate soil moisture for germination, uniform emergence and stand establishment. Early planting can increase the risk of early season frost damage and erratic emergence. Later planting dates can allow time for soil conditions to deteriorate from the loss of soil moisture, and in some rare instances can allow for soil surface temperatures to become too hot, increasing the potential for seedling injury during emergence.

5. Know your marketing options. Early harvested sunflowers have the potential to command a market premium in those seasons when increased demand outpaces the supply and a shortage exists in the market. For your best marketing options, always keep current on market conditions in your local area.

SUMMARY

Sunflowers can adapt easily to a wide range of planting dates, but it is critical to understand the risks and benefits of both early and late planting dates. For more specific information on planting dates for sunflowers in your area, consult your Mycogen Seeds representative or trusted agronomic adviser.



Sunflowers prefer soil temperatures of 50 F or warmer for fast emergence and adequate moisture for stand establishment.

AgronomyServices
Precision. Product. Placement.

www.mycogen.com ©The Mycogen Logo is a trademark of Mycogen Corporation. "Science. Yield. Success." is a trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC. ©2011 Mycogen Seeds. Mycogen Seeds is an affiliate of Dow AgroSciences LLC. S47-137-037 010-12809 BR (06/11) MYCOGENL0076 SD

Science. Yield. Success.™

 **Dow AgroSciences**

