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Dry bean management will be critical for the balance of the growing season

Dry bean organizations release considerations for growers

LANSING – The **Michigan Bean Commission** and **Michigan Bean Shippers** today encouraged dry bean farmers throughout the region to carefully consider management decisions for their crop for the balance of the growing season. The next two weeks will be especially critical for many dry bean fields that were damaged, but not destroyed by recent rainfall.

“As water recedes from record rain events across mid-Michigan, the Saginaw Valley and Thumb, growers are now faced with the challenge of making decisions to aid stressed dry bean plants, and there are many factors they should consider,” said **Joe Cramer**, executive director of the **Michigan Bean Commission**.

Many of the issues at this point are related to saturated soil conditions than can restrict plant growth, limit nutrient uptake and promote disease. In places where crops were underwater, some plants are covered in mud that will limit efficacy of foliar fertilizer and herbicide applications.

Still other fields are exhibiting significant soil crusting issues, particularly in fields that had heavy overland water flow and fields that were rolled after planting. Eliminating the soil crust will be important to alleviate saturated soil conditions deeper in the root zone.

Farmers are encouraged to consider the following issues when evaluating crops and making management decisions:

- If soils are heavily crusted, consider using a rotary hoe or cultivator to increase soil aeration and promote water evaporation. Alleviating crusting and saturated soil conditions will be important to encourage plant growth moving forward.
- Closely monitor crop nutrient status and be ready to apply foliar fertilizers if nutrient deficiencies are evident. Poor nutrient uptake can be expected from small, limited root

systems, while the lack of oxygen in saturated soils can lead to nutrient unavailability and losses.

- Weed control is already an issue in some fields, and wet conditions will further hamper timely herbicide options. As soon as is practical, apply appropriate herbicide products. Hand removal of large weed escapes, possibly due to herbicide resistance, should strongly be considered to avoid greater weed challenges in the future. As the season develops, make sure weeds are controlled in drowned-out spots and don't go to seed.
- Stressed plants have increased susceptibility to diseases, which will vary from class to class and variety to variety. Consult your crop adviser to develop a disease management plan that may include a combination of preventative and curative options.
- Finally, exercise restraint in making replanting decisions. While the urge to improve the situation by action in the field can often be strong, sometimes the best management option is to wait and see how plants respond. The potential yield from a crop planted at this late date will be limited. Even thin dry bean stands can still provide respectable yields if managed properly and the weather is favorable for the rest of the season. At this point in time, the best financial returns will likely be seen from properly managing the remaining crop.

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