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Heavy rainfall has delayed spring planting and field work, reducing the potential for nutrient loss

LANSING, Mich. – **Dr. Tim Boring**, vice president of the **Michigan Agri-Business Association (MABA)**, today provided an update on spring planting in Michigan, noting that planting has lagged behind normal due to wet weather, with nutrient applications and other field work limited. As a result, in areas like the Western Lake Erie Basin, the heavy rainfall events that put Michigan well above average in terms of year-to-date precipitation also reduced the potential for nutrient losses because fertilizer has not yet been applied.

“With several heavy rainfall events, the Lake Erie basin is well above normal in terms of rainfall over the past 30 days, which has prevented field work and significantly delayed planting,” said **Dr. Boring**. “At the same time, fertilizer application has been limited, reducing the potential for nutrient losses with those heavy rains. As field work begins, these heavy rains should remind everyone in agriculture that they should consult the weather before applying nutrients.”

Rain in the Lake Erie basin [has been 1-3 inches above normal](#) over the last 30 days, according to the National Weather Service. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says that [as of May 14](#), 30% of the corn crop has been planted compared to the five-year average of 47%. On May 7, only 10% of Michigan’s corn crop was planted, again around 17% behind average. Soybean planting is only 11% completed, compared to the average of 25%.

“Because field work has been delayed, nutrients simply aren’t being applied in fields, limiting the potential nutrient loading from the rainfall we’ve seen during the past few weeks,” said **Dr. Boring**. “At the same time, this is an important reminder that farmers must do field work with the weather in mind – making sure that when they apply nutrients, they check that heavy rain isn’t in the forecast.”

Earlier this spring, **MABA** launched its “5 Steps to Protect Water Quality” educational campaign, designed to provide information on the basic steps to help protect water quality – steps that everyone in agriculture should know and follow. More information is available at www.miagbiz.org.