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Park City

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Nathan Morgan/Daily News

Quentin Filppin, 8, of Bowling Green, jumps over a puddle Friday along College Street as he runs to his grandmother's office at EnSafe after mailing a letter at a nearby mailbox. Quentin's grandmother, Cathy Woodard, an administrative assistant at EnSafe, sent him on the errand with his 4-year-old sister Jazmyne's umbrella.

Weather Watching

Region's cool, wet conditions could be the norm for another two weeks

By ROBYN L. MINOR

The Daily News
rminor@bgdailynews.com/783-3249

Southcentral Kentucky's pattern of cool, wet weather has continued since March, which was one of the coolest on record, and could continue for another two weeks.

The period is in the top 25 coolest and wettest periods over the last 120 years, according to Gregory Goodrich, an associate professor of meteorology at Western Kentucky University.

The cool, wet weather is making farmers antsy, said Joanna Coles, Warren County's agriculture extension agent.

"It is starting to get crunch time," Coles said. "Once we get past mid-May, if we don't get corn planted, every day we delay the yields will start decreasing. We've had all the moisture, which is good to get (hay) growing, but



Miranda Pederson/Daily News

See STRAWBERRY, 6A Autumn Ward, a junlor from Cincinnati, walks home after work at Western Kentucky University.

Strawberry growers seeing some disease and yield issues

now they can't get into the fields to cut it."

The first cutting of hay is always the best, but the longer it stays uncut, the more the quality degrades, Coles said.

The Kentucky Agricultural Statistics Service estimated that by the end of last week, about 32 percent of corn had been planted, compared to 92 percent a year ago. Coles expects the percentage is closer to 70 percent in Warren County.

"Still, for that 30 percent, it's critical that they be able to get in the fields and plant," Coles said. "It's not yet critical for soybeans."

Just 1 percent of the state's soybean crop had been planted, compared to 31 percent a year ago.

Warren County, prior to Friday's rain, had 21.84 inches of rain since January. That's about 4 inches ahead of normal, Goodrich said.

From midnight to 6 p.m. Friday, Kentucky's Mesonet station in Warren County recorded 1.03 inches of rain. The official weather station at the Bowling Green-Warren County Regional Airport recorded 1 inch.

Goodrich said the blocking pattern of cool, moist air from Canada is likely to continue for another two weeks.

That doesn't bode well for farmers or home gardeners.

"They also are worried about the wheat," Coles said. "While the wheat looks good now ... the seed heads need to start drying out. And some of the other crops that actually were planted, we might start seeing some crown rot."

Strawberries typically are plentiful this time of year, but growers are seeing some disease and yield issues because of the cool, damp weather, she said.

And while April and May so far might seem particularly cool, Goodrich said the temperature is really not much different than normal.

"We just had such a cool March ... that it is making the average for the spring lower," he said. "I think it's because people remember what we had last year when it was so warm, so early. And when we have had rain, it's been really cool. We've just had a few warm days of sunshine in there."

The big question is how much longer this weather pattern will last. "It can last from a couple of months to several months," Goodrich said, referring to historical data. "Very rarely does it continue into the summer."

Of the four coolest and wettest springs, none of them continued that pattern into summer. "Hopefully by Memorial Day, we

will see it change into some more summer-like weather," he said.

The outlook through July for the region is slightly above normal temperatures and normal precipitation. "That's because there is no El Nino or La Nina weather pattern influencing anything right now," Goodrich said.

Coles said farmers and gardeners are "really glued to the forecast to try to figure out if there is an opportunity to get out in the fields."

At least there is some positive right now - homeowners might be able to sow grass seed and get it to start growing before the weather warms up and dries out, she said.

— *Robyn L. Minor covers business, environment, transportation and other issues for the Daily News. Follow her at twitter.com/bowserminor or visit bgdailynews.com.*

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