

Planting Progress Update

(based on USDA Crop Progress data for the week ending May 17, 2026)

A cooler spring has shaped the 2026 season, but it has not stopped progress across the Renk sales area. USDA Crop Progress data for the week ending May 17, 2026, show that corn and soybean planting is mostly at or ahead of the 5-year average across both the northern region (MI, WI, MN, ND, SD) and the southern region (IN, IL, IA, NE). However, emergence is still catching up in some of the cooler areas.

This is an encouraging place to be as May turns toward June. The crop is largely in the ground, many acres are emerging on schedule, and the focus is now shifting from simply getting across fields to evaluating stands, watching early growth, and managing the first stresses of the growing season.

Cooler spring, strong finish

This spring has asked for patience. Across much of the Upper Midwest and Corn Belt, cooler temperatures slowed soil warmup and made emergence less uniform in some fields. Overall, the emergence has been surprisingly strong—just slow.

Even with this challenge, planting progress has been impressive. In the northern region, corn planting is ahead of the 5-year average in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin, while Michigan is only modestly behind average. Soybean planting follows a similar pattern, with strong progress across most of the region and Michigan still working through a slightly slower pace.

The southern region has been especially efficient whenever conditions opened up. Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska are all ahead of their 5-year averages for both corn and soybean planting, which says a great deal about how quickly growers moved when the weather gave them a window.

The larger story is simple: despite a cool start, Renk growers did a great job getting the crop in the ground. That kind of planting progress helps preserve yield potential and gives fields the best possible chance to benefit from better growing conditions ahead.

Northern region update

The northern region includes some of the areas most affected by cool soils, but the planting pace still stands out. Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota are all well ahead of their 5-year averages for both corn and soybean planting, while Wisconsin is also slightly ahead on both crops.

Michigan has been the main exception, running a bit behind average on both corn and soybean planting. Even so, the state is not dramatically off pace, and the gap is small enough that a few favorable days can quickly improve the overall picture.

Emergence in the North reflects that same weather story. Corn and soybean emergence is at or ahead of average in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota, while Michigan and Wisconsin are still a bit slower as cooler soils delay early growth.

For growers in the northern region, this is a good reminder that planting pace and emergence pace are not always the same thing. Fields that were planted on time may still need a careful look for uniformity, depth consistency, crusting issues, or seedling stress before they fully settle into the season.

Southern region update

The southern portion of the Renk sales area has made strong use of planting windows. Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska are all ahead of the 5-year average for corn planting, and all four states are also ahead of average for soybean planting.

That level of progress matters because it gives the crop a timely start. When planting is completed near or ahead of normal, management attention can shift sooner toward emergence checks, stand quality, herbicide performance, and early-season crop development rather than simply racing against the calendar.

Emergence numbers in the southern states are also encouraging. Corn emergence is at or above average across most of the region, and soybean emergence is also generally ahead of the 5-year average, suggesting that many acres are moving from planted to established in a favorable way.

This does not mean every field is perfect. A fast planting season can create sidewall issues, uneven depth, or localized ponding damage, so the next pass through the field remains important. Still, the regional data suggests the crop is entering the growing season from a strong position.

State-by-state snapshot (based on USDA Crop Progress data for the week ending May 17, 2026)

State	Corn planted	5-year average	Corn emerged	5-year average	Soybeans planted	5-year average	Soybeans emerged	5-year average
Michigan	47%	52%	3%	15%	37%	46%	2%	13%
Wisconsin	62%	59%	13%	18%	54%	50%	9%	13%
Minnesota	86%	74%	36%	33%	74%	53%	22%	14%
North Dakota	58%	40%	13%	9%	41%	28%	5%	2%.
South Dakota	81%	65%	22%	21%	59%	46%	10%	8%
Indiana	67%	57%	42%	29%	67%	50%	42%	23%
Illinois	75%	73%	46%	46%	74%	63%	44%	35%
Iowa	88%	82%	46%	43%	80%	68%	28%	25%
Nebraska	82%	79%	42%	39%	81%	65%	33%	24%

What to watch now

With most of the crop planted, the next two weeks become highly valuable. This is the time to check whether emergence is even, evaluate stand counts against expectations, and identify any fields where cool conditions, wet spots, crusting, or seedling stress may require closer management.

A few agronomic priorities stand out right now:

- Evaluate stand uniformity, not just population, because uneven emergence can reduce yield even when final stand counts look acceptable.
- Watch fields planted in marginal conditions for sidewall compaction, restricted roots, or inconsistent early vigor.
- Revisit low spots and variable soils first, since those are often the areas where cool spring conditions show up most clearly.
- Keep weed control timing tight, especially as fields move from planting season into rapid early vegetative growth.

Even with a cooler-than-normal start to spring, Renk growers across both the northern and southern regions made excellent planting progress and were timely getting the 2026 crop in the ground.

Now the season enters its next phase. Emergence, stand establishment, and early-season scouting will shape how well this fast planting pace turns into strong crop performance through the rest of the growing season.

References

- USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Crop Progress, week ending May 17, 2026. Accessed May 21, 2026. Available at: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/National_Crop_Progress/