The peanut crop in the Virginia-Carolina region is approximately 98% planted. The remaining 2% most likely will be abandoned. May and early June were marked by major contrasts in weather patterns. Cool and dry conditions shifted to hot and dry weather followed by unseasonably cool temperatures and then much-needed rain that was excessive in many places. Growers are now trying to catch up on field operations after rainfall during the first week of June across the Virginia-Carolina region. Plant stands are now filling in due to erratic emergence, especially in fields that were dry in early and mid-May.

Growers are now addressing issues associated with thrips as systemic, in-furrow insecticides lose efficacy. They are also controlling weeds that escaped residual herbicides applied at planting. Afternoon showers and wet sections of fields continue to make management of these pests challenging. However, once weeds and thrips are managed, growers in the region will begin applying gypsum to Virginia market type varieties and in many cases runner market type varieties. These applications are generally made from mid-June into early July. Some growers that applied gypsum in early June may need to re-apply because of excessive rains after the initial application. Growers will also begin deciding if application of chlorpyrifos to control of southern corn rootworm is warranted. Two weeks ago it appeared that much of the region was locked into a dry pattern, a weather pattern that would minimize the potential negative impact of southern corn rootworm on peanuts. Chlorpyrifos is generally not needed during dry seasons and this insecticide can induce spider mite outbreaks. In fact, spider mites populations were building throughout much of May. However, spider mite populations have diminished due to the current rainfall pattern.

In the lower southeastern section of the Virginia-Carolina region, peanuts planted in late April most likely will be treated with fungicides to suppress leaf spot disease in the next two weeks. In the mid and upper-sections of the region, fungicide sprays are generally initiated in early July depending on planting date.

Rainfall in early June was critical in helping the peanut crop maintain the estimated yield potential of 4,480 kg/ha (4,000 lbs/acre.) Estimates of market type varieties grown in the region remains the same. Estimated land area planted to peanuts in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia is 42,500 ha (105,000 acres), 34,400 ha (85,000 acres), and 8,000 ha (20,000 acres), respectively.

Field near Oak City, NC on June 10 with thunder showers in the background.

Fields near Lewiston-Woodville, NC on June 9 after significant rain the previous week.

Differing degrees of thrips injury in peanuts in fields near Lewiston-Woodville, NC on June 9.