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News Release

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Good Growing Season for Small Grains

Maryland: Final figures are now in for Maryland small grain production, and the final yield estimate reflects a good growing season. Wheat yield at 68 bushels per acre increased 3 percent from a year ago and barley yield at 87 bushels tops last year's yield by 1 bushel. Of the 210,000 acres planted for wheat, 125,000 were harvested for grain. Participation in the Maryland Cover Crop Program resulted in a large number of acres planted but not harvested for grain. Grain production dropped to 8.50 million bushels in 2006, down 8 percent from the 9.24 million bushels produced last year. Of the 50,000 acres planted to barley last fall, 32,000 were harvested for grain. The remaining 18,000 acres planted were enrolled in the Maryland Cover Crop Program, or were used for other purposes. Farmers reported an average yield for barley at a record-setting 87 bushels per acre, 1 bushel above the 86 bushels per acre harvested in 2005. Total production is estimated at 2.78 million bushels, down 21 percent from last year's 3.53 million bushels.

Delaware: Delaware wheat yielded an average 67 bushels per acre this season, 3 bushels below last year's yield of 70 bushels per acre. Of the 48,000 acres planted, 45,000 were harvested for grain, resulting in total production of 3.02 million bushels. This is 16 percent below last year's production of 3.57 million bushels. Yield for barley is estimated at 80 bushels per acre, down 1 bushel per acre from 2005. Of the 27,000 acres planted, 24,000 acres were harvested for grain, resulting in a total production of 1.92 million bushels.

United States: All wheat production totals 1.81 billion bushels in 2006, up 1 percent from the last forecast but 14 percent below 2005. Grain area is 46.8 million acres, down 7 percent from last year. The U.S. yield is 38.7 bushels per acre, up 0.4 bushel from August but down 3.3 bushels from last year. The level of production and change from last year by type are: winter wheat, 1.30 billion bushels, down 13 percent; other spring wheat, 460 million bushels, down 9 percent; Durum wheat, 53.5 million bushels, down 47 percent.

Barley production is estimated at 180 million bushels, down 2 percent from the August 1 forecast and down 15 percent from last year. Average yield per acre, at 61.0 bushels, is down 0.2 bushel from the previous forecast and 3.8 bushels below 2005. The area harvested for grain is estimated at 2.95 million acres, down 1 percent from August and 10 percent below a year ago. Area harvested for grain is the lowest since 1885, while production is the lowest since 1936. Harvested area is down in most States, including the four States with the largest acreage. Acreage harvested is down 90,000 in Idaho, 80,000 in Montana, 65,000 in North Dakota, and 15,000 in Washington. Production is down throughout the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains, partly due to the decreased acreage, but also because yields are down in these areas due to dry conditions during most of the growing season. However, yields are higher than last year in the Pacific Northwest, Corn Belt, Ohio River Valley, and most Atlantic Coast States.