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National Agricultural Statistics Service



News Release

Cooperating with the Montana Department of Agriculture
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May 1, 2008 Crop Production Forecast

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Based on May 1 conditions, Montana winter wheat producers expect a yield of 34 bushels per acre, down 4 bushels from last year's final yield, according to the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Montana Field Office. Total production is expected to be 88.4 million bushels, up 6 percent from last year's 83.2 million bushels. In the fall of 2007, Montana producers seeded 2.7 million acres of winter wheat, up 460,000 acres from the previous year. Producers expect to harvest 2.6 million acres, 410,000 acres above 2007.

As of May 4, Montana's winter wheat crop was rated below a year ago with 10 percent very poor, 16 percent poor, 37 percent fair, 33 percent good, and 4 percent excellent compared with 1 percent very poor, 4 percent poor, 23 percent fair, 51 percent good, and 21 percent excellent a year ago. More moisture and warmer weather is needed this spring for crop development as 2 percent of the acreage has reached the boot stage compared with 4 percent last year and 2 percent for the five-year average.

On May 1, Montana hay producers held an estimated 1.03 million tons of hay on hand, 35 percent above stocks on hand a year ago. Hay production for 2007 was 5.15 million tons, 19 percent higher than 2006 production. Disappearance from December 1, 2007 to May 1, 2008 totaled 3.48 million tons, up 4 percent from the same period a year earlier.

U.S. winter wheat production is forecast at 1.78 billion bushels, up 17 percent from 2007. Expected area for harvest as grain or seed totals 40.2 million acres, up 12 percent from last year. Based on May 1 conditions, the U.S. yield is forecast at 44.3 bushels per acre, up 2.1 bushels from the previous year.

Hard Red production is up 5 percent from a year ago to 1.01 billion bushels. Soft Red production is up 54 percent and totals 551 million bushels. White production totals 215 million bushels, up 10 percent from a year ago. Of the White production total, 23.2 million bushels are Hard White and 192 million bushels are Soft White.

All hay stored on farms May 1, 2008 totaled 21.6 million tons, up 44 percent from the previous year. Disappearance of hay from December 1, 2007- May 1, 2008 totaled 82.4 million tons, 1 percent more than the disappearance of 81.5 million tons for the same period a year earlier.

Hay stocks increased from last year throughout the entire Great Plains, the Delta, most of the Southeast, and the Rocky Mountain States. Hay stocks increased significantly in Texas and Oklahoma where weather conditions during the 2007 growing season nearly doubled hay production and improved pasture conditions throughout the year.

Lower 2007 hay production in most States east of the Mississippi River, except in the Southeast, held May 1, 2008 hay stocks below a year ago. The largest declines occurred in Kentucky, Minnesota, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. In Kentucky and Tennessee where stocks are less than half of the previous year, production was down due to the April 2007 freeze and dry summer weather, so some producers resorted to hauling hay in from other States. Wisconsin's May 1 hay stocks are at a record low level while Tennessee recorded the lowest May 1 hay stock level since 1962.

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