

# Crops - 2006

A mild winter, with below normal rainfall, was followed by favorable weather in the early spring of 2006. During April, some New Jersey fields were so wet that planting and harvesting was delayed or prevented. The wet weather conditions during the month of April delayed hay cutting in most fields. Variable temperatures, along with a lack of surface moisture, during May hindered crop and pasture development. Harvest of small grains was delayed by weather conditions during May. The first half of June saw below normal temperatures. However, warmer temperatures during the second half of the month, and increased rainfall, spurred crop development. Barley and wheat harvest began towards the end of the month. High soil moisture the first week of July interrupted field activity. The high soil moisture resulted in some sprouting in wheat fields, and some areas of corn and soybean fields were wash-outs. By mid-July, precipitation decreased, allowing the harvest to resume. The end of July saw temperatures averaging above normal, with localized thunder storms. Temperatures were above normal for August, and growers used irrigation in many localities. The first week of September had below normal temperatures, and significant rainfall. Temperatures rose by mid-September and the second half of the month had drier conditions. Temperatures varied during October, and precipitation was above normal for the month.

**Corn:** Corn planted for all purposes in 2006 totaled 80,000 acres, 64,000 of which were harvested for grain. Yield increased 7 bushels to 129 bushels per acre from the previous year's yield of 122 bushels per acre. The increase in yield raised production by 692,000 bushels to a level of 8.3 million bushels. Growers received \$3.30 per bushel for their grain, an increase of \$1.18 per bushel from 2005's price of \$2.12 per bushel. Total crop value for corn for grain increased by 70 percent, from \$16.0 million in 2005 to \$27 million in 2006.

**Soybeans:** Soybean planted acreage decreased by 7,000 acres to 88,000 acres in 2006, while harvested acreage decreased by 5,000 to 86,000 acres in 2005. Soybean yield was up 7 bushels per acre from 2005's yield of 28 bushels per acre to 35 bushels per acre in 2006. Production increased to 3 million bushels in 2006 from 2.55 million bushels in 2005. The prices received by growers increased by 25 cents from \$5.65 per bushel in 2005 to \$5.90 per bushel in 2006. Total crop value increased by 23 percent to \$17.8 million.

**Winter wheat:** The 25,000 acres planted to winter wheat in 2006 was 3,000 acres less than in 2005. Harvested acreage was set at 22,000, a decrease of 1,000 acres below 2005's harvested acres. Yield at 60 bushels per acre was 7 bushels per acre more than the previous year's. Production at 1.32 million bushels was up 8 percent from 2005. The season average price of \$3.80 per bushel was 45 cents more than the price in 2005. Total crop value increased by 23 percent to \$4.88 million.

**Barley:** Barley planted and harvested acreage remained unchanged from 2005, at 3,000 and 2,000, respectively. Yield was 57 bushels per acre, a decrease of 14 bushels per acre under last year's. Production decreased by 20 percent, in 2006, to 114,000 bushels. The price received by growers was unchanged, in 2006, at \$2.00 per bushel. The value of barley produced decreased by 20 percent from \$284,000 in 2005 to \$228,000 in 2006.

**Hay:** All hay harvested acreage was unchanged in 2006 at 115,000 acres. Alfalfa hay acres remained at 25,000 acres in 2006. Acreage in other hay remained unchanged from last year at 90,000 acres. Yield per acre of alfalfa hay decreased by 7 percent to 2.5 tons per acre while yield per acre of other hay increased by 19 percent to 1.9 tons per acre. The overall hay yield was 2.03 tons per acre. Alfalfa production was 63,000 tons and other hay production was 171,000 tons; the resulting total hay production was 234,000 tons. The season average price for all hay increased \$4.00 per ton from \$126 in 2005 to \$130 per ton in 2006. Total hay crop value increased by 14 percent in 2006 to \$30.5 million.

**Potatoes:** Potatoes planted acreage increased by 400 acres to 2,500 acres in 2006. Harvested acreage also increased 400 acres from 2,100 acres to 2,500 acres in 2006. Yield was 240 hundredweight per acre, a decrease of 15 hundredweight from 2005. Production was 600,000 hundredweight in 2006 compared with 536,000 hundredweight in 2005. Crop value rose by 18 percent, from \$4.3 million in 2005 to \$5.1 million in 2006.

**Sweet Potatoes:** Sweet potato planted and harvested acreage was unchanged, at 1,200 acres, from the previous year. Yield was 135 hundredweight per acre, an increase of 5 hundredweight per acre over last year's. In 2006 production increased by 4 percent, to 162,000 hundredweight. The price per hundredweight was unchanged, at \$26.80, from 2005.