



Tennessee News Release

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In Cooperation with Tennessee Department of Agriculture

ACREAGE SHIFTS AND WEATHER EXTREMES DOMINATE 2007

NASHVILLE, January 11, 2008 – A major shift in acreage for the state's major crops, along with several significant weather events, highlighted the story for Tennessee agriculture during 2007. Corn growers took advantage of higher prices driven by growing demand and planted the most acres in 20 years. This was done primarily at the expense of cotton and soybean acreage. A devastating Easter freeze followed by extreme to exceptional drought conditions across the State resulted in orchards being completely wiped-out and significant yield reductions in row crops. According to a recent survey conducted by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Tennessee Field Office, all crops showed significant declines in yields from the previous year. Corn yields were down 19 bushels from last year and 21 bushels below the 5-year average. Soybean yields averaged less than half of the 2006 crop and were the lowest since 1983. Burley tobacco acreage continued to decline to near record low levels.

COTTON PRODUCTION LESS THAN HALF OF 2006 RECORD

Tennessee's cotton production is estimated at 615,000 bales, down a whopping 55 percent from the record set in 2006 and the lowest since 1999. The State's final yield averaged 579 pounds of lint per acre, down 366 pounds from the previous year's record high. Producers planted 515,000 and harvested 510,000 acres, both down 185,000 from 2006. This decrease was mainly due to declines in our major producing counties, such as Haywood and Gibson, where a number of producers switched acreage to corn. As of January 1, 2008, virtually all of the State's production had been ginned.

CORN PRODUCTION UP A THIRD, SORGHUM ALSO UP

Corn for grain production is estimated at 83.2 million bushels, up 33 percent from 2006. The final yield, at 106 bushels per acre, was down 19 bushels from the year earlier and the lowest in 9 years. Tennessee corn producers planted 870,000 acres during 2007, up 320,000 from a year earlier. Harvested area for grain was 785,000 acres with 68,000 acres for silage. Silage yield, at 9.0 tons per acre, was down 7.0 tons from 2006 and the lowest since 1957. Silage production totaled 612,000 tons. Despite a devastating Easter freeze, planting was virtually completed by mid-May. Drought conditions and record high temperatures during the growing season affected development and caused rapid maturation. Excellent harvest weather allowed farmers to reach completion by early-to-mid October. Grain sorghum production in 2007 is estimated at 1.33 million bushels, up 27 percent from 2006. Area harvested for grain, at 19,000 acres, was up 8,000 acres from 2006, while average yield, at 70 bushels per acre, was down 25 bushels from the year earlier.

SOYBEAN PRODUCTION LOWEST IN 42 YEARS

Soybean production is estimated at 17.5 million bushels, down 60 percent from a year earlier and the lowest since 1965. This change marks the largest one year drop in production since records began in 1924. The State's final soybean yield is estimated at 18 bushels per acre, down 21 bushels from the previous year and the lowest since 1983. Producers planted 1,040,000 acres and harvested 970,000 acres for beans, both down from the previous year. Soybean planting began on schedule in late April and continued at a rapid pace through the end of June. Hot, dry weather set in soon after and continued through the remainder of the growing season. Drought conditions and record temperatures during the crucial period of pod development in August proved insurmountable for the crop.

LOWEST BURLEY PRODUCTION SINCE 1922

Burley tobacco growers produced 20.8 million pounds, down nearly a third from 2006 and the lowest production since 1922. The State's final burley yields averaged 1,600 pounds per acre, down 600 pounds from a year earlier and the lowest since 1986. Growers harvested 13,000 acres, down 1,000 acres from the previous year and the lowest since 1921. Harvest of the crop was nearly wrapped-up by October 1, on pace with normal. Tennessee's dark fire-cured tobacco yields are estimated at 2,600 pounds, down 600 pounds from 2006. Dark air-cured yields are estimated at 2,200 pounds per acre, down 550 pounds from a year earlier.

2008 WINTER WHEAT ACREAGE UP 48 PERCENT

Total wheat acreage for 2008 is forecast at 620,000 acres, up 200,000 acres or 48 percent from 2007. Winter wheat planting was underway by the last week of September with 6 percent of the crop seeded by October 1. By October 15, a fifth of the expected crop was sown, with farmers waiting on rain to help germination. Through November 19, over 90 percent of the winter wheat was sown and almost three-fourths had emerged, with 81 percent of the crop rated in good-to-excellent condition. Most farmers got their wheat in before rain made their fields too wet to plant, yet they got enough rain at the right time for seed germination. Favorable weather coupled with high wheat futures prices spurred farmers to continue planting through the first week of December.

(OVER)

HAY PRODUCTION DOWN SHARPLY

Hay production, at 2.44 million tons, was down 43 percent from the 2006 crop. Hay acreage, at 1,725,000 acres, was down 6 percent from a year earlier. Alfalfa production, at 63,000 tons, was down 43 percent from 2006. Alfalfa producers harvested 25,000 acres with a yield of 2.50 tons per acre, down 1.20 tons from the previous year. Growers seeded 7,000 acres of alfalfa and alfalfa mixtures during 2007, up 3,000 from the year earlier. First, a dry end to 2006 and start to 2007 nearly wiped out hay stocks. Next, first cuttings in the spring were about 50 percent or less of normal due to the Easter freeze. Then, a summer-long drought led to only limited additional cuttings. Stocks of hay stored on Tennessee farms totaled 1.93 million tons on December 1, 2007, down 38 percent from 2006 and the lowest since 1984. Stocks represented 79 percent of this year's production, compared with 73 percent on December 1, 2006.

CROP ESTIMATES: TENNESSEE AND UNITED STATES, FINAL 2007, WITH COMPARISONS

Crop	Units	Harvested Acres		Yield Per Acre		Production	
		2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
		Thousands		Number of Units		Thousands	
TENNESSEE							
Apples ¹	lb.	---	---	---	---	10,000	100
Corn for grain	bu.	500	785	125	106	62,500	83,210
Corn for silage	Ton	47	68	16	9	752	612
Cotton ²	lb.	695	510	945	579	1,368	615
Cottonseed	Ton	---	---	---	---	441	206
Hay, All	ton	1,830	1,725	2.32	1.42	4,251	2,443
Other	ton	1,800	1,700	2.30	1.40	4,140	2,380
Alfalfa	ton	30	25	3.70	2.50	111	63 ³
Peaches ¹	ton	---	---	---	---	1.9	
Sorghum for grain	bu.	11	19	95	70	1,045	1,330
Sorghum for silage	ton	2	2	19	9	38	18
Soybeans	bu.	1,130	970	39	18	44,070	17,460
Tobacco, All	lb.	19.80	19.98	2,482	1,934	49,135	38,636
Dark fire-cured	lb.	5.30	6.20	3,200	2,600	16,960	16,120
Burley	lb.	14.00	13.00	2,200	1,600	30,800	20,800
Dark air-cured	lb.	0.50	0.78	2,750	2,200	1,375	1,716
Winter Wheat	bu.	190	260	64	41	12,160	10,660
UNITED STATES							
Apples ¹	lb.	---	---	---	---	9,931,700	9,254,700
Corn for grain	bu.	70,648	86,542	149.1	151.1	10,534,868	13,073,893
Corn for silage	ton	6,477	6,071	16.2	17.5	105,129	106,328
Cotton ²	lb.	12,731.5	10,492.2	814	871	21,587.8	19,033.0
Cottonseed	ton	---	---	---	---	7,347.9	6596.0
Hay, All	ton	60,927	61,625	2.34	2.44	142,336	150,304
Other	ton	39,493	39,955	1.78	1.95	70,330	77,729
Alfalfa	ton	21,434	21,760	3.36	3.35	72,006	72,575
Peaches ¹	ton	---	---	---	---	1,010.1	1,026.9
Sorghum for grain	bu.	4,937	6,805	56.2	74.2	277,538	504,993
Sorghum for silage	ton	347	399	13.4	15.6	4,642	6,206
Soybeans	bu.	74,602	62,820	42.7	41.2	3,188,247	2,585,207
Tobacco, All	lb.	339.0	356.0	2,146	2,187	727,347	778,624
Dark fire-cured	lb.	11.85	14.6	3,324	2,858	39,392	41,720
Burley	lb.	103.7	106.3	2,095	1,945	217,255	206,805
Dark air-cured	lb.	4.30	4.98	3,059	2,706	13,155	13,476
Winter Wheat	bu.	31,117	35,952	41.7	42.2	1,298,081	1,515,989

¹Forecast. Preliminary final data to be released January 23, 2008.

²Production in 480-lb. net weight bales. U.S. production includes American-Pima cotton.

³No significant commercial production due to freeze damage.

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