



Tennessee News Release

Tennessee Field Office · PO Box 41505 · Nashville, TN 37204 · (615) 781-5300 · www.nass.usda.gov
In Cooperation with Tennessee Department of Agriculture

TENNESSEE'S AGRICULTURE EXPERIENCES FREEZER BURN

NASHVILLE, August 10, 2007 – After weathering a devastating Easter freeze, Tennessee farmers are now locked in a battle with drought conditions that have gripped the State all summer long. The prolonged dry spell has caused significant reductions in corn and hay yields, but only moderate declines in cotton, soybeans, and tobacco. These forecasted outcomes, based on an August 1 survey of farmers conducted by the Tennessee Field Office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, showed the following: **Corn**, 95 bushels per acre, down 30 bushels from a year earlier; **Cotton**, 869 pounds per acre, down 76 pounds from last year; **Soybeans**, 33 bushels per acre, 6 bushels below the previous year; **Burley Tobacco**, 2,100 pounds per acre, down 100 pounds from last year; and **Hay, except alfalfa**, 1.5 tons per acre, down 0.8 tons from 2006. State Director Debra Kenerson explained, "The farmer based yields from the August 1 survey provide the first true picture of the impact this year's weather has had on the State's crops. These forecasts will be updated throughout the growing season to reflect any potential changes to Tennessee's crops before harvest."

COTTON PRODUCTION DOWN MORE THAN A THIRD

Tennessee's cotton production is forecast at 860,000 bales, down 37 percent from last year's record high of 1.37 million bales. Cotton yields are expected to average 869 pounds per acre, down 76 pounds from the record a year ago but, if realized, the third highest yielding crop. Producers expect to harvest 475,000 acres, down 220,000 acres from 2006. This decrease is mainly due to a shift to corn and stagnant cotton prices. Many producing areas received beneficial rains in mid-July, but conditions have deteriorated with below normal rainfall and above normal temperatures the past 4 weeks. As with other crops, reported yields were highly variable, depending on the area and whether they received rain from hit-and-miss thunderstorms. As of the week ending August 5, the crop was rated in mostly good condition and was setting bolls at a pace nearly one week ahead of normal.

SOYBEAN PRODUCTION DOWN A FIFTH

Soybean production is forecast at 35.3 million bushels, down 20 percent from last year and the lowest since 2002. Soybean yields are forecast at 33 bushels per acre, 6 bushels below 2006. Acreage for harvest is estimated at 1.07 million acres, down 60,000 from a year ago. Virtually all of Tennessee's soybean crop had been planted by the end of June and the majority of the crop had emerged by the first week of July, slightly ahead of average. As of the week ending August 5, the crop was rated mostly fair-to-good. Nearly 90 percent of the crop was blooming and 72 percent of the crop was setting pods. Double crop beans have been especially hard hit by the drought, although recent scattered showers have helped in a few areas.

CORN PRODUCTION UP 19 PERCENT

Despite less than average yields, Tennessee's corn production is forecast at 74.1 million bushels, up 19 percent from a year ago. This increase is due to a historical single year increase in acreage. Farmers expect to harvest 780,000 acres for grain, 280,000 more than last year and the highest since 1985. Based on conditions as of August 1, yields are expected to average 95 bushels per acre, 30 bushels below 2006 and 32 bushels below the 5-year average. As of the week ending August 5, almost 90 percent of the state's corn crop had reached the dough stage with two-thirds of the crop in the dent stage, both on pace with normal. The continuing drought has impacted the entire crop substantially as half of the crop was rated in very poor to poor condition. After an extended period of no rainfall statewide, spotty showers have corn fields within miles of each other looking night and day different.

LOWEST BURLEY PRODUCTION IN 80 YEARS

As of August 1, burley production is forecast at 25.2 million pounds, 18 percent below a year ago and the lowest since 1927. Yields are forecast to average 2,100 pounds per acre, down 100 pounds from 2006. Most producers are looking at a reduced crop that is expected to be below average, but surprisingly good considering the dry conditions. Acreage for harvest is estimated at 12,000 acres, down 2,000 from 2006. Development of the crop is later than normal as a result of dry conditions earlier in the year forcing growers to delay transplanting. Although harvest has begun in some areas, many producers are still waiting for a rain which, for at least the dark-types, will be critically important. One of the problems facing growers with the ongoing drought is the lack of pond water for irrigation. However, black shank and other diseases have been reduced substantially from a year ago. Tennessee's dark-fired tobacco yields are forecast at 3,000 pounds per acre, while dark air-cured is forecast to yield 2,500 pounds per acre, both down from 2006.

(OVER)

LOWEST HAY YIELD SINCE 1988

Hay production, excluding alfalfa, is forecast at 2.79 million tons, 33 percent below 2006. Yields are expected to average 1.5 tons per acre, down 0.8 tons from last year and the lowest since 1988. Acreage is estimated at 1.86 million acres, up 60,000 acres from a year earlier. The number of acres cut increased as producers were forced to harvest fields normally not cut because of the need for hay. Also, some CRP land has been released for emergency grazing and hay cutting. Prospects for a decent 2007 hay crop seem very bleak. Prolonged feeding last fall and winter depleted many farms' hay stocks. Also, first cuttings this spring were only about 50 percent of normal or less, due to the April freeze. A summer drought has led to limited to no second cuttings and dismal future cutting chances. As of the week ending August 5, nearly two-thirds of the State's pastures were rated in very poor-to-poor condition with 84 percent of the State reporting very short to short hay stocks.

APPLE PRODUCTION VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT

Although the State's apple crop was nearly a complete loss, apple growers managed to produce an estimated 100,000 pounds, a precipitous drop from last year's 10.0 millions pounds and the lowest level on record. A severe freeze struck the State during Easter weekend, causing significant commercial orchard damage.

CROP FORECASTS: TENNESSEE AND UNITED STATES, AUGUST 1, 2007, WITH COMPARISONS

Crop	Units	Harvested Acres		Yield Per Acre		Production	
		2006	Indicated 2007	2006	Indicated 2007	2006	Indicated 2007
		Thousand		Number of Units		Thousand	
TENNESSEE							
Apples	Lbs	---	---	---	---	10,000	100
Corn for grain	Bu	500	780	125	95	62,500	74,100
Cotton ¹	Lbs	695	475	945	869	1,368	860
Hay, All (excluding Alfalfa)	Tons	1,800	1,860	2.30	1.50	4,140	2,790
Peaches	Tons	---	---	---	---	1.9	²
Soybeans	Bu	1,130	1,070	39	33	44,070	35,310
Tobacco, All	Lbs	19.80	19.05	2,482	2,416	49,135	46,025
Dark fire-cured	Lbs	5.30	6.40	3,200	3,000	16,960	19,200
Burley	Lbs	14.00	12.00	2,200	2,100	30,800	25,200
Dark air-cured	Lbs	0.50	0.65	2,750	2,500	1,375	1,625
Winter Wheat	Bu	190	300	64	39	12,160	11,700
UNITED STATES							
Apples	Lbs	---	---	---	---	9,931,700	9,284,700
Corn for grain	Bu	70,648	85,418	149.1	152.8	10,534,868	13,053,617
Cotton ¹	Lbs	12,731.5	10,636	814	783	21,587.8	17,345.5
Hay, All (excluding Alfalfa)	Tons	39,423	40,338	1.78	1.87	70,000	75,347
Peaches	Tons	---	---	---	---	1,010.12	1,026.95
Soybeans	Bu	74,602	63,285	42.7	41.5	3,188,247	2,625,274
Tobacco, All	Lbs	338.9	354.07	2,144	2,189	726,644	774,950
Dark fire-cured	Lbs	11.85	13.3	3,324	3,168	39,392	42,140
Burley	Lbs	103.6	105.2	2,095	2,006	217,085	211,060
Dark air-cured	Lbs	4.3	4.65	3,059	2,758	13,155	12,825
Winter Wheat	Bu	31,117	37,188	41.7	41.3	1,298,081	1,537,262

¹ Production in 480-Lbs net weight bales. U.S. production includes American-Pima cotton. ² No significant commercial production due to freeze damage.

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