



Tennessee News Release

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In Cooperation with Tennessee Department of Agriculture

EARLY YIELD FORECAST SHOWS MIXED RESULTS

NASHVILLE, August 12, 2008 – Widely scattered rainfall during the growing season has led to the potential for highly variable crop yields in the Volunteer State. In areas that have received timely rains, yield prospects are above average-to-excellent, but areas that haven't received beneficial rainfall; appear average at best. Overall, forecasted yields for the State's major row crops are up substantially from the drought-impacted yields of last year, but less than average for the five-year period prior to 2007. Farmers are optimistic that soaking rains will arrive over the upcoming weeks to provide a late boost for crop development. An August 1 survey of farmers conducted by the Tennessee Field Office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, showed the following: **Corn**, 118 bushels per acre, up 12 bushels from a year earlier; **Cotton**, 765 pounds per acre, up 200 pounds from last year; **Soybeans**, 30 bushels per acre, 12 bushels above the previous year; **Burley Tobacco**, 2,000 pounds per acre, up 400 pounds from last year; and **Hay, except alfalfa**, 2.1 tons per acre, up 0.7 tons from 2007.

COTTON PRODUCTION LOWEST SINCE 1986

Tennessee's cotton production is forecast at 470,000 bales, down 22 percent from last year's production of 600,000 bales and, if realized, the lowest since 1986. Cotton yields are expected to average 765 pounds per acre, up 200 pounds from the previous year. Producers expect to harvest 295,000 acres, down 215,000 acres from 2007. The decrease in acreage is mainly due to declines in the major producing counties, such as Haywood and Gibson, who have alternative planting choices. Also, cotton prices have been mostly stagnant, leading producers to switch to other crops, such as corn and soybeans. The crop has received the heat units needed for adequate growth, but could use another shower to boost development. Around August 1, the crop was rated in mostly good condition and was setting bolls at a normal pace.

SOYBEAN PRODUCTION SOARS PAST 2007

Soybean production is forecast at 41.4 million bushels, up 137 percent from last year. Soybean yields are forecast at 30 bushels per acre, 12 bushels above 2007. Acreage for harvest is estimated at 1,380 million acres, up 410,000 from a year ago. As of the first week of August, development was progressing at a normal pace. Full-season soybeans are in good condition, but the majority of the soybeans planted after wheat, need a good rain soon to make a decent crop. As of August 3, the crop was rated in mostly good-to-fair condition.

CORN PRODUCTION DOWN NEARLY A TENTH

Tennessee's corn production is forecast at 75.5 million bushels, down 9 percent from a year ago. Farmers expect to harvest 640,000 acres for grain, 145,000 less than last year. Based on conditions as of August 1, yields are expected to average 118 bushels per acre, 12 bushels above 2007 but 8 bushels below the 5-year average. Producers reported highly variable potential yields on the August survey, ranging from less than 50 to more than 150 bushels per acre. This can mainly be attributed to a dry pattern that occurred during the critical pollination stage in July. In some cases, the condition of early planted fields appears vastly different from the later planted ones, even within the same county. The crop is currently drying down and the harvest of silage is underway. As of August 3, the crop was rated in mostly good-to-fair condition.

APPLES REBOUND FROM A YEAR AGO

Apple growers produced an estimated 9.0 million pounds of apples, up from last year's record low of 100,000 pounds. Tennessee recovered nicely from last year's catastrophic downturn caused by an Easter freeze and a prolonged drought.

(OVER)

BURLEY PRODUCTION UP 25 PERCENT

As of August 1, burley production is forecast at 26.0 million pounds, 25 percent above a year ago. Yields are forecast to average 2,000 pounds per acre, up 400 pounds from 2007. Acreage for harvest is estimated at 13,000 acres, unchanged from 2007. A good burley and an excellent dark tobacco crop are in the works for 2008. Timely rains on a late transplanted crop have growers very optimistic. In general, growers are expecting a crop similar to 2006. Producers are topping now and as of the week ending August 3, 44 percent of the crop had been topped, compared with the five-year average of 50 percent. Some farmers reported that the leaves are lapping over in the rows, something they usually don't do until harvest time. Tennessee's dark-fired tobacco yields are forecast at 3,200 pounds per acre, while dark air-cured is forecast to yield 2,700 pounds per acre, both well above 2007.

HAY SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER THAN 2007

Hay production, excluding alfalfa, is forecast at 3.78 million tons, 59 percent above 2007. Yields are expected to average 2.1 tons per acre, up 0.7 tons from last year. Acreage is estimated at 1.8 million acres, up 100,000 acres from a year earlier. The 2008 hay crop is at the point where it could turn into an average year or one similar to last year, depending on rainfall the next several months. Spring provided plenty of moisture to jumpstart pastures and hayfields and led to excellent production from the first cuttings. However, the weather turned hot and dry during the summer leaving many pastures and hay fields with moisture deficits. There have been some second cuttings, but production has been generally shorter than normal. The number of acres cut increased as producers sought to overcome low hay stocks coming out of the winter. As of the week ending August 3, the State's pastures were rated in mostly fair condition.

CROP FORECASTS: TENNESSEE AND UNITED STATES, AUGUST 1, 2008, WITH COMPARISONS

Crop	Units	Harvested Acres		Yield Per Acre		Production	
		2007	Indicated 2008	2007	Indicated 2008	2007	Indicated 2008
		Thousands		Number of Units		Thousands	
TENNESSEE							
Apples	lb.	---	---	125	11,250	100	9,000
Corn for grain	bu.	785	640	106	118	83,210	75,520
Cotton ¹	lb.	510	295	565	765	600	470
Hay, All (excluding Alfalfa)	ton	1,700	1,800	1.40	2.10	2,380	3,780
Peaches	ton	---	---	---	---	0 ²	1.90
Soybeans	bu.	970	1,380	18	30	17,460	41,400
Tobacco, All	lb.	19.98	21.40	1,934	2,443	38,636	52,280
Dark fire-cured	lb.	6.2	7.2	2,600	3,200	16,120	23,040
Burley	lb.	13.0	13.0	1,600	2,000	20,800	26,000
Dark air-cured	lb.	0.78	1.20	2,200	2,700	1,716	3,240
Winter Wheat	bu.	260	550	41.0	65.0	10,660	35,750
UNITED STATES							
Apples	lb.	---	---	25,100	---	9,113,900	9,165,200
Corn for grain	bu.	86,542	79,290	151.1	155.0	13,073,893	12,287,875
Cotton ¹	lb.	10,489	7,849	879	842	19,207	13,767
Hay, All	ton	61,625	60,439	2.44	2.45	150,304	147,955
Peaches	ton	---	---	8.41	---	1,129	1,094
Soybeans	bu.	62,820	73,341	41.2	40.5	2,585,207	2,972,577
Tobacco, All	lb.	356.0	350.4	2,191	2,271	779,899	796,009
Dark fire-cured	lb.	14.6	16.9	2,855	3,337	41,688	56,390
Burley	lb.	106.3	96.5	1,951	2,071	207,387	199,735
Dark air-cured	lb.	4.98	7.20	2,706	2,950	13,476	21,240
Winter Wheat	bu.	35,952	40,252	42.2	46.6	1,515,989	1,874,857

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

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