

Crop Summary - 2002

2002 Crop Summary: Utah again suffered through a drought in 2002, marking the fourth consecutive year the state has been plagued by a lack of water. Winter snowpack levels were down compared to normal amounts. Precipitation levels were between 40%-90% of normal by the end of February.

Spring field activities progressed on normal schedules. However, in anticipation of the drought, plantings of barley, spring wheat, corn, and dry beans were down from 2001. Late spring frosts in May and June damaged emerging grains and alfalfa hay crops. In some areas, alfalfa hay was so damaged that farmers cut early in order to clear the field and get the second crop growing. The frost also hit fruit trees during bloom season and caused heavy damage to a large portion of the fruit crop. Poor water supplies caused many farmers to harvest small grains and corn for hay or silage instead of for grain or seed.

July and August were generally hot and dry. Topsoil and subsoil moisture conditions which were not good entering summer rapidly deteriorated. By the end of August, 85% of topsoil moisture and 80% of subsoil moisture was in short to very short supply. Irrigation and stock water supplies were similarly depleted. By the end of August, 84% of irrigation water and 85% of stock water supplies were in short to very short supply.

Small grain harvests kept to historical schedules, beginning around the third week of July and continuing into the first week of September. Corn growth and maturity stages progressed at normal rates through the summer. The first three cuttings of alfalfa hay also proceeded on a normal time line. However, fourth cutting of alfalfa was slightly behind schedule, in part due to fall rains that slowed harvest. Yields for alfalfa hay, barley, spring wheat, and winter wheat were below 2001 yields.

Fall brought cooler temperatures and much needed rain. Fall plantings of winter wheat began the second week of September and continued to the end of October. Corn for silage harvest was completed on schedule while corn for grain harvest was about a week behind schedule as fall rains slowed the beginning of harvest.

Crop Production Index (1977=100):Crops, by Commodity Grouping Utah, 1995-2002

Year	Small Grain <i>Percent</i>	Hay <i>Percent</i>	Fruit ¹ <i>Percent</i>	Other Crops <i>Percent</i>	Total Crops <i>Percent</i>
1995	136	144	76	105	131
1996	125	137	110	106	128
1997	136	148	81	116	136
1998	130	151	122	105	138
1999	129	149	48	108	131
2000	101	136	127	105	125
2001	86	138	60	96	117
2002	65	124	20	87	101

¹ Fruit production index is derived from total production.