

# NEWS RELEASE



United States Department of Agriculture  
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE  
VIRGINIA FIELD OFFICE



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Number: 5

Released: March 31, 2006

## **COTTON, OAT, HAY, SWEET POTATO AND WINTER WHEAT ACREAGE UP; CORN, BARLEY AND PEANUT ACREAGE DOWN**

Virginia's cotton producers expect to increase their acreage this year to 100,000 acres, according to the results of a survey conducted March 1 by the Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service. This amounts to an 8 percent increase from the 2005 crop year. Oat producers intend to plant 17,000 acres, which is 21 percent above last year. Hay acreage intentions are up 60,000 to 1,380,000 acres. Acreage intended for sweet potatoes is expected to increase 25 percent above the previous year to 500 acres. Soybean acreage intentions remain unchanged from last year at 530,000 acres. Winter wheat acreage seeded last fall for harvest this spring was 210,000 acres, up 30,000 acres from last year.

Corn producers intend to reduce acreage in 2006 to 480,000. If realized, this would be 10,000 acres or 2 percent below last year's planted acres. Barley acreage seeded last fall for all uses was 55,000 acres, down 8 percent from last year. Peanut producers have decreased their acreage this year to 15,000 acres. This is 35 percent below last year's planted acreage.

Tobacco acreage intentions devoted to flue, burley and dark fire will be up in 2006. Producers expect to harvest 19,000 flue-cured tobacco acres in 2006, a 36 percent increase from 2005. Fire-cured tobacco producers intend to harvest 380 acres which is 40 acres above last year. Burley producers intend to harvest 2,800 acres this year which is 100 acres above the 2005 estimate.

Planting of major row crops is just in the beginning or in the planting stages, therefore producers could change their plans as the planting season progresses.

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**U.S. Corn Planted Acreage Down 5 Percent from 2005;  
U.S. Soybean Acreage Up 7 Percent  
U.S. All Wheat Acreage Down Slightly  
U.S. All Cotton Acreage Up 3 Percent**

U.S. corn growers intend to plant 78.0 million acres of corn for all purposes in 2006, down 5 percent from 2005 and 4 percent below 2004. If realized, this will be the lowest corn acreage since 2001 when 75.7 million acres were planted for all purposes. Expected acreage is down from last year in most States as producers intend to switch to other less input intensive crops due to high fertilizer and fuel costs. Dry conditions also contributed to lower corn planting intentions in the southern Great Plains.

U.S. soybean producers intend to plant 76.9 million acres in 2006, up 7 percent from last year. If realized, this will be the largest planted area on record. Acreage increases are expected in all growing areas, except in the central and southern Atlantic Coast States and the southern Great Plains. The largest acreage increase is in North Dakota, where record high soybean yields last year and high input costs have some farmers shifting acreage from other crops to soybeans. Large increases in soybean acreage are also expected across the Corn Belt, including 600,000 more acres in Illinois and 500,000 more acres in Indiana.

All U.S. wheat planted area is expected to total 57.1 million acres, down slightly from 2005. If realized, this will be the lowest all wheat acreage since 1972. Winter wheat planted area for the 2006 crop is 41.4 million acres, up 2 percent from last year. Of the total, about 29.8 million acres are Hard Red Winter, 7.42 million acres are Soft Red Winter, and 4.22 million acres are White Winter. The 2006 other spring wheat planted acreage is expected to total 13.9 million, down 1 percent from 2005. Of the total, about 13.2 million acres are Hard Red Spring wheat. Intended Durum wheat planted area is 1.83 million acres, down 34 percent from the previous year. If realized, this will be the lowest Durum wheat acreage since 1961.

All U.S. cotton plantings for 2006 are expected to total 14.6 million acres, 3 percent above last year. Upland acreage is expected to total 14.3 million, also up 3 percent. Growers intend to increase acreage in all the cotton producing States except Alabama and South Carolina, where expected acreage is down slightly from 2005. American-Pima cotton growers intend to increase their plantings 24 percent from 2005, to a record high 334,000 acres. California producers expect to plant 290,000 acres, up 26 percent from last year.

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