

KENTUCKY PRESS RELEASE



Kentucky Agricultural Statistics Service
P.O. Box 1120
Louisville, KY 40201
502-582-5293 or 1-800-928-5277

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CROP PROSPECTS REMAIN FAVORABLE FOR KENTUCKY FARMERS

The 2004 crop production year through August has been cool and wet over most of Kentucky according to the Kentucky Agricultural Statistics Service. Yield and production forecasts remain unchanged from August 1 for Kentucky's corn, soybean, and burley tobacco crops. Crops continue to develop well, with corn harvest underway and tobacco cutting and housing in full swing.

Kentucky burley tobacco production as of September 1 was forecast at 204.8 million pounds, 3 percent above the 2003 level. The estimated crop would be 95 percent of the effective quota of 216.4 million pounds. The increase in production resulted from a small increase in harvested acreage and yield. Acres for harvest were estimated at 105,000 acres, an increase of 2,000 acres from a year earlier. Yield was estimated at 1,950 pounds per acre, up 25 pounds from the 2003 crop. Blue mold and black shank have been present in many fields this season and will reduce the yield and quality of the crop. Dark tobacco was 58 percent cut as of September 5, while burley tobacco cutting was 65 percent complete. For the **8-State Burley Belt** production was forecast at 301.5 million pounds, 7 percent above a year ago. Yields were expected to average 1,929 pounds per acre, up 79 pounds from 2003.

Corn production in **Kentucky** was forecast at 161.9 million bushels, up 9 percent from the 2003 crop. This would be the largest corn crop since 1992. Yield was estimated at 142 bushels per acre, up five bushels from the 2003 crop. The estimated yield equals the record high set in 2001. Harvested acreage was estimated at 1.14 million acres, an increase of 60,000 acres from a year earlier. Cooler weather through most of August has slowed development somewhat with 91 percent of the crop dented or beyond, 60 percent mature and 10 percent harvested as of September 5. The **U.S.** corn production was forecast at 11.0 billion bushels, up fractionally from last month and 8 percent above last year. Yields are expected to average 149.4 bushels per acre, up 0.5 bushel from August and 7.2 bushels above last year. If realized, both production and yield would be the largest on record. The previous record for both was set by the 2003 crop.

Kentucky soybean production was forecast at 52.1 million bushels, down 2 percent from the large 2003 crop. The smaller production was brought about by a reduction in yield per acre. Yield was estimated at 41 bushels per acre, down two bushels from last year's record high yield of 43 bushels per acre. Harvested acreage was forecast at 1.27 million acres, an increase of 30,000 acres from the 2003 crop. As of September 5, soybeans had set pods on 95 percent of the acreage, 25 percent were turning yellow and 10 percent were shedding leaves. **U.S.** soybean production was forecast at 2.84 billion bushels, down 1 percent from the August forecast, but up 17 percent from 2003. If realized, this would be the second largest soybean production on record. Yields are expected to average 38.5 bushels per acre, down 0.6 bushel from August, but up 5.1 bushels from 2003. Cool weather, including frost in the upper Midwest, limited yield prospects.

LELAND E. BROWN
Director