2003 CROP SUMMARY

Minnesota was on the receiving end of a cold winter in 2003. During January, the state had a lack of snowfall, combined with extreme cold temperatures, raised concerns about alfalfa conditions. February brought more extremely cold temperatures which caused pipes and septic tanks to freeze in some areas. Livestock conditions were adequate as well as feed supplies.

Temperatures early in March were the same as in previous months, but the second half of the month brought warmer weather and preparation for the upcoming growing season. Producers had some concerns about soil loss due to wind erosion. Feed supplies continued to be sufficient.

Weather conditions in April varied from week to week. The state received warm temperatures one week and cold, wet conditions the next. Full scale fieldwork began around the 22nd. Topsoil and subsoil moisture conditions were good throughout most of the state. Small grain plantings were ahead of the five year averages.

May was a very wet month. Field crops were in good condition and development continued to be ahead of the five year average for most items. Temperatures were below normal throughout the month, but topsoil moisture increased tremendously from the previous month.

Warm dry weather during the majority of June allowed producers to spray crops and helped advance grain development throughout the state, but storm systems halted fieldwork in the last week of the month. Flooding occurred in several parts of the state. Tornadoes, hail, and straight-line winds caused localized damage in some places throughout Central Minnesota.

During July, weather and crop progress varied across the entire state. Below average temperatures prevailed during the majority of the month. Heavy rains were also abundant within the state. Flooding and hail damage was widespread in Central and Southern areas of the state. Hay quality became a concern due to standing water in fields.

Crops became stressed due to above average temperatures and dry conditions in August. Aphids were a problem in a number of soybean fields in the South Central district and corn development lagged behind the five year averages across the state. Topsoil moisture conditions were subpar as were crop conditions.

Continued hot, dry weather in September caused corn and soybeans to mature very quickly. The lack of topsoil moisture throughout the state allowed sink holes and large cracks to begin forming across the Central region of the state. Scattered showers were received in parts of the state around the end of the month, but they were too late to aid the crop conditions for 2003.

Producers did not have any problems with harvest activities in October. Temperatures remained above normal and conditions were very dry. All crops harvested surpassed their five year averages.

By November, very few fields remained unharvested. Producers were applying fertilizers and fall tillage was moving along smoothly.

The following is a rundown on the production of Minnesota's major crops for 2003:

Minnesota's 2003 **CORN** production at 970.9 million bushels was down 8 percent from the record high production set in 2002. A yield at 146.0 bushels per acre was down 11 bushels from the record high in 2002.

SOYBEAN production was estimated at 229.4 million bushels, down 26 percent from the record high production set in 2002. The final yield was 31.0 bushels per acre, which was down 12.5 from the record high in 2002. Soybean planted acres of 7.5 million were a new record high, up 300,000 acres from the record high in 2000 and 2001.

SPRING WHEAT production was estimated at 104.4 million bushels, up 71 percent from 2002 and the highest since 1996. Acres harvested for grain was 1.8 million acres, unchanged from last year. Yield was a new record high, at 58.0 bushels per acre, up 3 bushels from the previous record yield set in 1985.

The **SUGARBEET** production of 10.0 million tons was a record high, up 3 percent from the previous high production set in 1998 and up 13 percent from 2002. Yield was estimated at 20.6 tons per acre, down 0.9 from the record high set in 2000. Sugarbeet harvested acres were 487,000 acres, up 11,000 from a year ago.