Crops

2000 Nebraska Summary

Crop year 2000 was challenging for Nebraska dryland producers as precipitation levels dropped below those of recent years and sent dryland yields sharply lower. Corn, sorghum, and soybean dryland yields were the lowest since 1995, while alfalfa and small grain yields were generally the lowest in ten years. Drought began in many southeastern counties during the fall of 1999 and spread throughout the southern half of the state during the spring and summer of 2000. This allowed spring planting to start early and be completed well ahead of normal.

During the height of growing season, August precipitation was the lowest since 1947, with less than one inch recorded. Water contents in some southwestern reservoirs dropped to historic lows, dating back over 40 years. Statewide, 83 counties qualified during 2000 for natural disaster designation. CRP and roadsides were opened for forage use in many areas. However, irrigated yields did well. While few new record highs were set for irrigated crops, irrigated yields were significantly above ten-year averages. This was in part the result of temperatures in the eastern third of the State which never hit the prolonged extremes that are often associated with drought years. Days above 95 degrees were near the 20 year norm in all three of the eastern districts, while near 20 year highs in the western portions of Nebraska. Temperatures were normal or below during the height of the critical corn pollination period, limiting the stress caused by short soil moisture supplies. Harvest of fall crops began early due to the early planting date, low humidity associated with the drought conditions and late summer temperatures which were well above normal. In many cases, grain was harvested below standard moisture because producers were not able to get the crop out of the field in time. This saved drying costs but resulted in yield loss at the elevator.

By crop, corn acreage declined for the third straight year while soybeans continued the record breaking streak of acreage increases. Sharp increases in soybean acreage were noted in central, southwestern and south central counties with corresponding declines noted in corn, sorghum and wheat for most of these same areas. Sorghum acreage stopped its continual decline and for the first time in eight years was above year ago levels. Wheat continued the successive decline begun in 1996. Statewide, wheat yields were 12 bushels below the record high set just one year earlier. Hay yields were impacted significantly by the dry conditions. The resulting hay stock levels declined to 40 year lows during the following winter months, driving hay prices to triple year ago levels in some areas of Nebraska.

Crops: Indexes, 1977=100
Nebraska, Selected Years, 1960-2000 [1]

Year	Feed Grains	Food Grains	Hay	Oil Crops	Miscellaneous [1]	All Crops	Feed Grains	Food Grains	Hay	Oil Crops	Miscellaneous [1]	All Crops
	Index of Crop Yield per Harvested Acre						*Index of Crop Production*					
1960	85	81	70	78	90	63	55	84	89	11	81	58
1965	71	57	78	65	83	71	46	54	94	40	68	52
1970	76	109	76	61	96	78	56	92	81	44	90	62
1975	84	91	85	75	97	85	76	95	86	80	115	81
1980	85	108	99	83	109	90	90	105	94	131	138	98
1985	126	111	106	100	118	120	138	87	90	209	127	135
1990	125	109	102	96	117	118	130	83	96	200	196	131
1995	106	117	119	92	101	107	113	83	96	248	156	123
1996	142	100	123	125	109	133	159	71	99	333	154	161
1997	130	106	110	113	114	123	149	68	90	353	174	156
1998	143	131	124	122	117	137	161	80	102	406	172	172
1999	137	137	125	118	118	134	149	79	102	444	189	168
2000	121	103	103	106	123	116	131	58	80	427	169	149

[1] Miscellaneous crops include potatoes, sugarbeets, dry beans, popcorn (discontinued in 1982), millet (beginning in 1968; discontinued in 1985), alfalfa seed (discontinued in 1982), and red clover seed (discontinued in 1981).