

OKLAHOMA CROP PRODUCTION

1999 CROP REVIEW

Burt Bartlett

Oklahoma's wheat production, at 150.5 million bushels, tied 1983 for the sixth lowest production in the past 20 years. The lowest number of harvested acres since 1972, at 4.3 million, more than offset the fourth highest yield in Oklahoma history. Mild temperatures and mostly ample soil moisture during the first half of 1999 aided wheat growth and development. Harvest began in Cotton county on May 21st and was essentially completed statewide by mid July.

Production of other small grains had diverse results. Barley production was half of the previous year primarily due to tying the lowest number of harvested acres since records began in 1899. Production of oats increased 57 percent from 1998 because of higher harvested acreage and yield. Rye production dropped 32 percent from the previous year but still eclipsed one million bushels for the third straight year.

Ample moisture benefited row crops during early development and mild temperatures during maturity boosted crop production. The corn crop rose 57 percent from the previous year to the highest production since 1932. An average yield of 145 bushels per acre tied 1996 as the record high. Production of grain sorghum increased 18 percent from 1998 due largely to more harvested acres. The second year of the boll weevil eradication program helped boost cotton production 3 percent above the previous year because of more acreage being harvested. An average yield of 461 pounds per acre is the fourth largest in the 105 years of record keeping. Soybean production increased 12 percent from 1998 due largely from the 360,000 harvested acres which tied 1979 as the record-high. After four consecutive years of decrease, peanut production increased 19 percent from the previous year.

After a drought-reduced hay crop in 1998, hay production reached 5 million tons for the third time in 90 years of record keeping. Alfalfa production increased 38 percent from 1998. Production of all other hay, at 3.74 million tons, tied 1997 as the highest output on record.

Minor crop production varied by crop. Pecans, at 63 million pounds, shattered the previous record high of 53 million pounds set in 1967. Production of watermelons decreased slightly from 1998. An April frost nipped many peach trees causing production to decrease 25 percent from the previous year.