Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service

Farm Facts

USDA

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Farmers Expecting Better than Average Yields for 2003

Tennessee farmers are expecting better than average yields for most of their 2003 crops, although they experienced less than ideal planting conditions this spring. Based on an August 1 crop yield survey conducted by the Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service, corn, soybeans, burley tobacco, and hay are all expected to show increased yields from the previous year. Cotton yields are forecast to decline from a year ago, but are still above the 5-year average. Record yield and production are projected for this year's hay crop. State Statistician Debra Kenerson stated, "Weather caused numerous delays in planting this year's crops, but mild temperatures and timely rains during the growing season have producers optimistic for a better than average year." The August forecast, which is based on farmers' expectations of final yields as of the first of the month, showed the following: **Corn**, 120 bushels per acre, up 13 bushels from year earlier; **Cotton,** 664 pounds per acre, down 77 pounds from 2002; **Soybeans,** 33 bushels per acre, up 2 bushels from a year ago; **Burley Tobacco,** 2,000 pounds per acre, 100 pounds above last year; and **Other Hay**, 2.50 tons per acre, up 0.3 tons from last year and a new state record.

Corn Yields Third Highest on Record

Tennessee's corn production is forecast at 75.6 million bushels, up 14 percent from a year ago. Corn yields are expected to average 120 bushels per acre, 13 bushels above 2002 and the third highest yield on record. Acres for grain are estimated to increase 2 percent from last year to 630,000, the highest since 1996. A relatively warm, dry spring allowed corn planting to begin early and progress ahead of the 5-year
average throughout April. Farmers experienced frequent planting delays during May due to persistent precipitation and finished behind schedule. Timely rains and moderate temperatures during June and July, however, proved beneficial to the crop's development, specifically during pollination. As of the first week of August, 80 percent of the crop had reached the dough stage with nearly half of the crop having entered the dent or beyond stage. Over three-fourths of the crop was rated in good-to-excellent condition.

Soybean Production Largest in 6 years

Soybean production is forecast at 38.0 million bushels, up 9 percent from 2002 and the largest production since 1997. Yields are expected to average 33 bushels per acre, 2 bushels better than a year ago. Acreage for harvest is estimated at 1.15 million acres, 3 percent above last year. Frequent showers and thunderstorms during the first half of May prevented producers from making any substantial progress with planting, lagging almost 2 full weeks behind normal by the third week of the month. During the month of June, planting continued to be slowed by wet conditions, but was virtually completed by the first week of July. As of August 3, soybeans were developing about a week behind the normal pace with over a half of the crop blooming and one-fourth setting pods. The crop was rated in mostly good-to-excellent condition.

Cotton Production Down 10 Percent

Cotton production is forecast at 740,000 bales, down 10 percent from 2002 and the lowest expected production in three years. Cotton yields are expected to average 664 pounds per acre, down 77 pounds from a year ago. Cotton growers planted 560,000 acres, down 1 percent. Producers are expected to harvest 535,000 acres, up 1 percent from 2002. Wet, cool weather during May hindered growers from making any substantial progress planting this year's cotton crop. Adverse weather during the month resulted in thousands of acres being re-planted and thousands more lost to flooding. Growers wrapped up planting activities by mid-June, almost two full weeks behind normal. Consequently, the crop's development has lagged one to two weeks behind normal throughout the growing season. As of August 3, the crop was in mostly fair-to-good condition with 64 percent setting bolls, compared with 92 percent normally setting bolls at this time.

Burley Production Lowest Since 1942

Burley production as of August 1 is forecast at 56.0 million pounds, down 2 percent from 2002 and the lowest in 61 years. Yields are forecast to average 2,000 pounds per acre, up 100 pounds from a year earlier. Burley growers plan to

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harvest 28,000 acres, 7 percent below a year ago. Tobacco transplanting began on schedule in early May, but quickly fell behind due to frequent showers and thunderstorms. Transplanting was completed slightly behind the 5-year average by the end of June. Black shank and blue mold have caused problems, as wet weather during June and July encouraged the spread of diseases. Over half of the acreage had been topped by August 3 with the majority of the crop rated in fair-to-good condition. Yields per acre for the dark types are all down from last year. Tennessee's dark-fired tobacco yields are forecast at 2,900 pounds for Type 22, Eastern Dark-Fired, and 3,200 pounds for Type 23, Western Dark-Fired. Type 35, Dark Air-Cured, is forecast at 2,400 pounds per acre.

New State Record for Hay Production

Hay production, excluding alfalfa, is forecast at 4.88 million tons, up 11 percent from 2002 and a new state record. Although hay producers experienced numerous delays this spring in harvesting their crop, the wet weather has contributed to record setting yields. Yields are expected to average 2.50 tons per acre, up 0.3 tons from last year. The first cutting of other hay began on schedule during the first week of May, but was slowed due to persistent rains. By mid-June, nearly all of the State's alfalfa hay and 80 percent of the other hay acreage had been cut once. With mild temperatures and regular rainfall throughout June and July, producers have already been able to make second and third cuttings on some fields. Both alfalfa and other hay have been rated in mostly good condition throughout the growing season.

Apple Production Up from Last Year

Apple production is estimated at 9.0 million, up 2.5 million pounds from 2002. Development of the state's apple crop progressed at a normal pace through most of the growing season. Above normal rainfall in many areas this season has benefitted some orchards and presented problems in others with increased disease pressure.

Crop Forecasts: Tennessee and United States, August 1, 2003, with Comparisons

Crop	Unit	Harvested Acres		Yield Per Acre		Production	
		2002	Indicated 2003	2002	Indicated 2003	2002	Indicated 2003
		Thousands		Number of Units		Thousands	
Tennessee							
Apples	lb.	---	---	---	---	6,500	9,000
Corn for grain	bu.	620	630	107	120	66,340	75,600
Cotton[1]	lb.	530	535	741	664	818	740
Hay, All (excluding Alfalfa)	ton	2,000	1,950	2.20	2.50	4,400	4,875
Peaches	lb.	---	---	---	---	4,000	3,500
Soybeans	bu.	1,120	1,150	31.0	33.0	34,720	37,950
Tobacco, All	lb.	35.90	34.04	2,096	2,155	75,261	73,366
E. Dark-fired (22)	lb.	5.0	5.1	3,110	2,900	15,550	14,790
W. Dark-fired (23)	lb.	.39	.40	3,550	3,200	1,385	1,280
Burley (31)	lb.	30.0	28.0	1,900	2,000	57,000	56,000
One-sucker (35)	lb.	.51	.54	2,600	2,400	1,326	1,296
Winter Wheat	bu.	300	270	46.0	52.0	13,800	14,040
United States							
Apples	lb.	---	---	---	---	8,555,600	9,266,600
Corn for grain	bu.	69,313	71,915	130.0	139.9	9,007,659	10,064,452
Cotton[1]	lb.	12,426.6	12,302.4	665	667	17,208.6	17,103.5
Hay, All (excluding Alfalfa)	ton	41,362	40,838	1.86	2.01	77,138	82,066
Peaches	lb.	---	---	---	---	2,575,400	2,618,100
Soybeans	bu.	72,160	72,626	37.8	39.4	2,729,709	2,862,039
Tobacco, All	lb.	428.66	413.71	2,055	2,031	880,734	840,236
E. Dark-fired (22)	lb.	7.45	7.60	3,126	2,966	23,292	22,540
W. Dark-fired (23)	lb.	2.79	2.80	3,636	3,371	10,145	9,440
Burley (31)	lb.	158.60	149.20	1,892	1,949	300,051	290,800
One-sucker (35)	lb.	2.61	2.74	2,922	2,641	7,626	7,236
Winter Wheat	bu.	29,651	36,491	38.5	46.9	1,142,802	1,712,150

[1] Production in 480-lb. net weight bales. U.S. production includes American-Pima cotton. **REMINDER:** All forecasts in this report are based on conditions about August 1 and do not reflect any possible weather affects since that time.

Hired Workers Up 1 Percent, Wage Rates Up 4 Percent From a Year Ago

There were 1,273,000 hired workers on the Nation s farms and ranches the week of July 6-12, 2003, up 1 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 953,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 320,000 workers. Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of $8.88 per hour during the July 2003 reference week, up 31 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of $8.18 per hour, up 28 cents from last July, while livestock workers earned $8.62 per hour compared with $8.38 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at $8.28 per hour, was up 26 cents from last year. The number of hours worked averaged 40.0 hours for hired workers during the survey week, unchanged from a year ago.

The largest increases in number of hired farm workers over last year occurred in the Pacific (Oregon and Washington), Northeast I (New England and New York), Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada and Utah) and Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia) regions. In the Pacific region, the Washington cherry harvest continued at peak levels much longer than normal, and ideal weather in Oregon allowed the cherry and raspberry harvests to progress rapidly. The cool, wet spring in the Northeast I region delayed planting of field and vegetable crops, which pushed many of the normal mid-June field activities into the survey reference week, resulting in an increased demand for field workers. Production of apricots and cherries in Utah was up considerably from the freeze-damaged 2002 production levels, and winter wheat harvest was in full swing in Colorado, which caused a greater need for hired workers in the Mountain II region. Dry, seasonable weather in Tennessee more than offset the persistent wet conditions over much of Kentucky and West Virginia, causing more hired workers to be necessary in the Appalachian II region.

The largest decreases in number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in California, the Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi), Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia) and Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri) regions. In California, extreme heat during the two weeks prior to the reference week matured vegetables and strawberries rapidly, causing many fields to be harvested in order to minimize crop loss. Therefore, considerably fewer workers were needed during the reference week. In the Southern Plains, pasture grasses were plentiful in most areas, lessening the need for supplemental feeding and thereby reducing the demand for livestock workers. Also, scattered rains delayed vegetable harvest in east Texas, lowering the need for field workers. Rain and saturated soils kept field worker demand low in the Delta, Appalachian I and Corn Belt II regions, and poor drying conditions in the Delta region caused hay harvest to be delayed. Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in Florida, the Lake (Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin), Mountain II, Delta and Southern Plains regions. The higher wages in Florida and the Lake regions were mainly due to a higher percentage of nursery and greenhouse workers in the work force.

All Mushroom Sales Virtually Unchanged, Value Down 2 Percent Sales of the 2002-2003

Sales of the 2002-2003 U.S. mushroom crop were 844 million pounds, virtually unchanged from 2001-2002 but down 2 percent from two seasons ago. Value of sales for the U.S. mushroom crop is $889 million, down 2 percent from the previous season but 2 percent above the 2001-2002 season. The number of growers, at 260, is down 8 from last season. Average price is $1.05 per pound, down 2 cents from 2001-2002. Sales reported by growers of Agaricus mushrooms for fresh market are 692 million pounds, virtually unchanged from last season. Sales of Agaricus mushrooms for processing are 139 million pounds, 2 percent below last season. Value of sales for all Agaricus mushrooms totaled $852 million dollars, down 2 percent from the previous season but 3 percent higher than 2000-2001.

Prices Received by Farmers: Tennessee & U.S., July 2003 with Comparisons

Commodity	Unit	Tennessee			United States		
		July 2002	June[1] 2003	July [2] 2003	July 2002	June[1] 2003	July [2] 2003
		Dollars Per Unit					
Winter Wheat	bu.	3.10	3.05	---	3.19	2.93	2.85
Corn	bu.	2.42	2.81	2.60	2.13	2.34	2.09
Cotton Lint	lb.	.355	.466	[4]	.353	.453	.469[3]
Soybeans	bu.	5.60	6.28	6.15	5.35	6.09	5.84
All beef cattle	cwt.	57.20	63.60	66.20	63.70	74.90	74.30
Steers/heifers	cwt.	72.00	80.00	83.00	66.50	78.70	77.60
Cows	cwt.	35.00	39.00	41.00	37.40	42.00	44.30
Calves	cwt.	78.00	88.00	90.00	95.20	102.00	103.00

[1] Entire month. [2] Mid-month. [3] Based on purchases first half of month. [4] Price not published to avoid disclosure of individual firms.

Farm Computer Usage and Ownership

Tennessee: A total of 41 percent of Tennessee farms now have Internet access, compared with 34 percent with Internet access in 2001. Half of the state's farms currently have access to a computer, compared with less than a fourth six years ago.

United States: A total of 48 percent of U.S. farms now have Internet access, compared to 43 percent with Internet access in 2001. Fifty-eight percent of farms have access to a computer in 2003, compared to the 2001 level of 55 percent. Fifty-four percent of all U.S. farms own or lease a computer, up from 50 percent in 2001. Farms using computers for their farm business increased from 29 percent in 2001 to 30 percent in 2003. It appears that computer usage, ownership and Internet access on farms have begun to level off.

In 2003, 82 percent of U.S. farms with sales and government payments of $250,000 or more have access to a computer, 79 percent own or lease a computer, 68 percent are using a computer for their farm business, and 72 percent have Internet access. For farms with sales and government payments between $100,000 and $249,000, the figures are: 70 percent have access to a computer, 66 percent own or lease a computer, 49 percent are using a computer for their farm business, and 54 percent have Internet access. For farms with sales and government payments between $10,000 and $99,000, there were 57 percent that reported having computer access, 52 percent own or lease a computer, 32 percent use a computer for their farm business, and 47 percent have Internet access.

Farm Computer Usage: Tennessee and United States, 1997, 1999, 2001, and 2003

Year	Tennessee Farms				United States Farms			
	With Computer Access	That Own or Lease Computers	Using Computers For Farm Business	With Internet Access	With Computer Access	That Own or Lease Computers	Using Computers For Farm Business	With Internet Access
	Percent							
1997	24	17	7	8	38	31	20	13
1999	35	28	13	24	47	40	24	29
2001	42	36	16	34	55	50	29	43
2003	50	41	18	41	58	54	30	48