



TENNESSEE  
AGRICULTURAL  
STATISTICS  
SERVICE

P.O. Box 41505  
Nashville, TN 37204-1505  
1-800-626-0987

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/tn>

cooperating with  
Tennessee Department  
of Agriculture



# Agri-News

**Debra K. Kenerson**  
**State Statistician**

[nass-tn@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass-tn@nass.usda.gov)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JANUARY 10, 2003

## TENNESSEE PRODUCERS FACED MANY CHALLENGES IN 2002

Tennessee crop producers faced many challenges during the 2002, from flooding along creeks and rivers during the spring in the West to drought conditions during the most of the year in the East. Weather impacted both the amount of acreage planted and harvested, as well as average yields, according to the recent survey conducted by the Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service (TASS). Cotton, burley tobacco, and hay acreage were all down from 2001. Average yields for all crops either dropped or remained the same as the year earlier, with corn and soybeans showing the largest percentage declines. TASS State Statistician, Debra Kenerson, noted, "In many ways, this has been a difficult year for a number of our State's farmers. They have endured adverse spring weather resulting in re-planting and lost fields, to drought conditions this summer, and ending with numerous showers this fall contributing to additional flooding and crop losses." Survey results showed cotton production down from 2001, but still the fourth largest crop on record. Corn acreage remained basically the same as 2001, but yield and production fell 19 percent from the year earlier. Although soybean acreage increased from 2001, average yields fell 3 bushels per acre resulting in a 2 percent decline in production. Burley tobacco production continued its downward trend, as did the dark-fired tobaccos. Both alfalfa and other hay production fell from 2001, but all hay production is still the third largest on record.

### COTTON CROP RANKS AS FOURTH LARGEST

Although growers withstood a difficult season, they still produced 813,000 bales of cotton, up 2 percent from the December 1 forecast, but down 17 percent from the previous year's record crop. This production ranks as the fourth largest on record. Growers planted 570,000 acres during 2002, down 50,000 acres from 2001, and harvested 535,000 acres, 13 percent below a year ago. Yields averaged 729 pounds per acre, up 43 pounds from the December 1 forecast, but down 34 pounds from 2001. This is the second highest yield on record, surpassed only by 2001's average of 763 pounds. During 2002, cotton producers experienced their worst spring planting conditions since 1991, as cold and wet weather led to planting delays and abandonment of flooded acreage. Growers also struggled in the fall to harvest their cotton crop as persistent rainfall caused numerous delays, but the majority of acreage was combined and ginned by year's end.

### CORN PRODUCTION DOWN 19 PERCENT; SORGHUM UP 15 PERCENT

Corn for grain production is estimated at 66.3 million bushels, down 19 percent from 2001. The final yield, at 107 bushels per acre, was down 25 bushels from the record high of 132 bushels per acre the previous season. Tennessee corn producers planted 690,000 acres during 2002, up 10,000 from 2001. Harvested area for grain was 620,000 acres and 55,000 acres for silage. Silage yield, at 15.0 tons per acre, was down 4.0 tons from the previous year with production totaling 825,000 tons. Although corn planting was completed on time this past spring, the crop experienced difficulties with insects, freezing temperatures, wet fields, and flooding along the Mississippi River during the 2002 growing season. Grain sorghum production in 2002 is estimated at 2.48 million bushels, up 15 percent from 2001. Area harvested for grain, at 31,000 was up 4,000 from 2001, while average yield per acre was unchanged from a year earlier.

### SOYBEAN ACREAGE INCREASES BUT PRODUCTION DOWN

The State's soybean production, at 34.7 million bushels, was 2 percent below 2001. The average yield per acre in 2002 is estimated at 31 bushels per acre, one bushel below the November 1 forecast and 3 bushels lower than 2001. Producers planted 1,160,000 acres and harvested 1,120,000 acres in 2002, both up 8 percent from 2001. Soybean planting began around the first of May, but fell behind normal as rain soaked fields delayed planting. During the fall, wet weather caused producers to struggle to get mature beans out of the fields and harvest fell as much as two weeks behind the normal pace. Heavy rains also caused the flooding of thousands of acres during the fall.

### BURLEY PRODUCTION LOWEST SINCE 1941

Tennessee's final burley production, at 55.5 million pounds, was 13 percent below 2001 and the lowest since 1941. Growers harvested 30,000 acres, 2,000 acres below a year earlier and the smallest acreage in 75 years. Yield per acre averaged 1,850 pounds, down 150 pounds from 2001. The burley tobacco crop was truly a mixed bag. Some areas received rainfall at a good time and the crop developed normally. Unfortunately, rainfall in the major producing areas of Middle and East Tennessee was infrequent and widely scattered during the growing season. Production of all dark-fire types also showed a decline from 2001. Production of Type 22, at 14.5 million pounds, was down 26 percent, while Type 23, at 1.24 million pounds, was down 25 percent from 2001. Type 35 production was also down 25 percent to 1.30 million pounds. Dark-types final yields per acre are estimated at: Type 22 - 2,900 pounds; Type 23 - 3,100 pounds; Type 35 - 2,600 pounds.

(OVER)