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TENNESSEE FARMERS SET RECORDS IN 2003

Tennessee producers “finished-off” an excellent growing season in 2003 with new state record yields for cotton, soybeans, and alfalfa hay, according to a recent survey conducted by the Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service. Most of the State’s row crops benefitted from moderate temperatures and timely showers all year. Corn production was the highest in 83 years, while burley production continued a downward trend and fell to its lowest level in 62 years. State Statistician Debra Kenerson noted that “Although wet weather during the spring hindered planting progress, favorable conditions throughout the summer and fall allowed for excellent crop growth and development.” Survey results showed cotton production up from 2002 and the third largest crop on record. Corn acreage and yield both increased from the year earlier, resulting in the largest crop since 1920. Soybean acreage remained unchanged from 2002, but yield jumped 10 bushels, giving Tennessee its highest production in nearly two decades. Burley tobacco acreage dropped to the lowest level since 1927, while dark-type tobacco acreage rose slightly. Both alfalfa and other hay production increased from 2002, resulting in the third largest hay crop on record.

STATE RECORD COTTON YIELD

Tennessee’s cotton production is estimated at 875,000 bales, up 7 percent from 2002 and the third largest crop on record. Producers planted 560,000 acres, down 5,000 acres from a year ago, and harvested 530,000 acres, the same as in 2002. The State’s final yield averaged 792 pounds of lint per acre, 51 pounds above 2002 and a new state record. Wet, cool weather during May hindered growers as they planted their 2003 crop. Crop development lagged one to two weeks behind normal throughout much of the year, but near ideal weather during the summer and fall months kept the crop in mostly good condition. Moderate temperatures during October also proved to be beneficial as it helped bolls mature properly and kept defoliation progress in line with normal. Harvest was virtually completed by the third week in November, slightly behind normal.

CORN PRODUCTION UP 24 PERCENT; SORGHUM UP 32 PERCENT

Corn for grain production is estimated at 82.5 million bushels, up 24 percent from 2002 and the highest since 1920. The final yield, at 131 bushels, is 24 bushels above 2002 and just one bushel below the record setting yield of 132 bushels in 2001. Tennessee corn growers planted 710,000 acres during 2003, up 20,000 from 2002. Harvested area for grain was 630,000 acres, 10,000 acres more than the previous year, with 50,000 acres for silage. Silage yield, at 17.0 tons per acre, was up 2.0 tons from 2002 with production totaling 850,000 tons. Planting of the State’s corn crop started during the first week of April and favorable weather conditions throughout the growing season proved beneficial for crop development. Grain sorghum production in 2002 is estimated at 3.28 million bushels, up 32 percent from 2002 and the highest in 11 years. Area harvested for grain, at 40,000 acres, was up 9,000 acres from a year earlier. Sorghum yield is estimated at 82 bushels per acre, 2 bushels better than 2002 and the highest since 1996.

NEW RECORD SOYBEAN YIELD

The State’s final soybean yield, at 41 bushels per acre, was 10 bushels above 2002 and a new state record. Soybean production, at 45.9 million bushels, was up 32 percent from 2002 and the highest in 19 years. Producers planted 1,150,000 acres, down 10,000 acres from the previous year and harvested 1,120,000 acres, the same as in 2002. Soybean planting began on schedule during the last week of April, but rapidly fell behind normal due to wet conditions. Despite persistent rains throughout much of the spring and early summer, most of the crop was planted by the first week of July. The crop was rated in mostly good condition all season and development progressed at a normal pace. Warm temperatures and mostly dry weather during November allowed the crop ample time to maximize maturity and yields and provided favorable conditions for harvest.

LOWEST BURLEY PRODUCTION IN 62 YEARS

Tennessee’s burley production, at 54.6 million pounds, was down 4 percent from 2002 and the lowest production since 1941. Yield per acre averaged 1,950 pounds, 50 pounds better than the previous year. Growers harvested 28,000 acres, 7 percent below 2002 and the smallest acreage since 1927. Tobacco transplanting began on schedule in early May, but quickly fell behind due to frequent showers. Despite disease problems and some wind and hail damage, crop development still progressed at a pace ahead of normal in mostly good condition. By the first week

of November, growers had stripped over half of the burley crop. Production of Type 22, at 15.6 million pounds, was up 0.1 million pounds from 2002; Type 23, at 1.32 million pounds, was down 5 percent from a year earlier; and Type 35 production was 1.35 million pounds, up 2 percent from 2002. Dark-type final yields per acre are estimated at: Type 22 - 3,000 pounds; Type 23 - 3,300 pounds; and Type 35 - 2,500 pounds.

THIRD LARGEST HAY PRODUCTION ON RECORD

Total hay production, at 4.73 million tons, was up 5 percent from 2002 and the third largest crop since records began in 1909. Hay acreage, at 2.03 million acres, remained the same as the previous year. Hay production, excluding alfalfa, at 4.60 million tons, was up 5 percent from 2002. Hay producers harvested 2.00 million acres with a final yield of 2.3 tons per acre, up 0.1 ton from a year ago. This yield tied the state record set in 2000. Total alfalfa production, at 126,000 tons, was up 11 percent from 2002. Alfalfa producers harvested 30,000 acres, unchanged from a year earlier. Yield, at 4.2 tons per acre, was also up 11 percent from 2002 and a new state record. Tennessee's hay harvest was underway in some areas by late April. Wet weather for several weeks during the spring delayed harvest and had producers concerned about the crop becoming too ripe and quality being poor. By early fall though, growers experienced warm weather and timely showers which allowed them to get second and sometimes third cuttings. Growers seeded 4,000 acres of alfalfa and alfalfa mixtures during 2003, down 2,000 acres from 2002.

2004 WINTER WHEAT ACREAGE LOWEST SINCE 1985

Total wheat acreage for 2004 is forecast at 400,000 acres, down 30,000 acres from 2003 and the lowest in 19 years. Winter wheat planting was underway by the first week of October with 15 percent of the acreage sown. By mid-month, nearly half the crop was in the ground, with rains providing excellent soil moisture for germination. By mid-November, 91 percent of the crop had been seeded and 70 percent had emerged.

Crop Estimates: Tennessee and United States, Final 2003, with Comparisons

Crop	Unit	Harvested Acres		Yield Per Acre		Production	
		2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003
		Thousands		Number of Units		Thousands	
TENNESSEE							
Apples	lb.	---	---	---	---	6,500	9,000
Corn for Grain	bu.	620	630	107	131	66,340	82,530
Corn for Silage	ton	55	50	15	17	825	850
Cotton ¹	lb.	530	530	741	792	818	875
Cottonseed	ton	—	—	—	—	291.0	327.0
Hay, All	ton	2,030	2,030	2.22	2.33	4,514	4,726
Other	ton	2,000	2,000	2.20	2.30	4,400	4,600
Alfalfa	ton	30	30	3.80	4.20	114	126
Peaches	lb.	---	---	---	---	4,000	3,500
Sorghum for Grain	bu.	31	40	80.0	82.0	2,480	3,280
Sorghum for Silage	ton	2	2	14.0	18.0	28	36
Soybeans	bu.	1,120	1,120	31.0	41.0	34,720	45,920
Tobacco, All	lb.	35.90	34.14	2,096	2,134	75,261	72,870
E. Dark-fired (22)	lb.	5.0	5.2	3,110	3,000	15,550	15,600
W. Dark-fired (23)	lb.	.39	.40	3,550	3,300	1,385	1,320
Burley (31)	lb.	30.0	28.0	1,900	1,950	57,000	54,600
One-sucker (35)	lb.	.51	.54	2,600	2,500	1,326	1,350
Winter Wheat	bu.	300	270	46.0	50.0	13,800	13,500
UNITED STATES							
Apples	lb.	---	---	---	---	8,555,600	9,351,600
Corn for Grain	bu.	69,313	71,139	130.0	142.2	9,007,659	10,113,887
Corn for Silage	ton	7,490	6,528	14.0	16.2	104,979	105,864
Cotton ¹	lb.	12,426.6	12,058.0	665	725	17,208.6	18,224.0
Cottonseed	ton	—	—	—	—	6,183.9	6,694.0
Hay, All	ton	64,497	63,342	2.34	2.48	150,962	157,123
Other	ton	41,362	39,764	1.86	2.03	77,138	80,816
Alfalfa	ton	23,135	23,578	3.19	3.24	73,824	76,307
Peaches	lb.	---	---	---	---	2,575,400	2,618,100
Sorghum for Grain	bu.	7,299	7,798	50.7	52.7	369,758	411,237
Sorghum for Silage	ton	352	343	9.5	10.4	3,360	3,552
Soybeans	bu.	72,437	72,321	38.0	33.4	2,749,340	2,417,565
Tobacco, All	lb.	428.70	416.20	2,049	1,997	878,592	831,204
E. Dark-fired (22)	lb.	7.45	7.70	3,126	3,065	23,292	23,600
W. Dark-fired (23)	lb.	2.79	2.80	3,636	3,471	10,145	9,720
Burley (31)	lb.	158.60	156.20	1,877	1,908	297,711	298,105
One-sucker (35)	lb.	2.61	2.74	2,922	2,901	7,626	7,950
Winter Wheat	bu.	29,751	36,541	38.5	46.7	1,145,602	1,707,069

¹ Production in 480-lb. net weight bales. U.S. production includes American-Pima Cotton.