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NEWS RELEASE

VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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COMMONWEALTH FARMERS HAVE A DISAPPOINTING HARVEST IN 2002

Virginia's 2002 crop yields were well below the average for most crops, according to a year end survey conducted by the Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service. The 2002 growing season started off cool and wet and ended hot and dry. Due to the adverse weather conditions both planted and harvested acres of most row crops were down from previous years.

The survey indicated corn yields averaged only 66 bushels per acre, down sharply from last year's 123 bushel yield. This is the lowest yield since 1993 when a summer long drought held yields to only 60 bushels per acre. Virginia's corn for grain production is estimated at 20.1 million bushels harvested from 305,000 acres, down 50 percent from last year and 58 percent from 2000. Silage yields averaged only 11.5 tons per acre, the lowest yield since the 10.0 tons per acre harvested in 1999.

Soybean producers were able to harvest an average of 23 bushels per acre, down 35 percent from last year. Soybean production totaled 10.1 million bushels, 41 percent below last season's production.

Flue cured tobacco yields for the 2002 season were equal to last year's yield of 2,370 pounds per acre. Virginia's 2002 flue-cured production is expected to total 50.96 million pounds, up nearly 5 percent from last year. Burley tobacco yields averaged 1,900 pounds per acre, up 280 pounds per acre from last year. Burley production is estimated at 13.68 million pounds, up nearly 10 percent from the 2001 crop.

Peanut producers harvested an average of 2,100 pounds per acre this season, down 1,030 pounds per acre from last year. Peanut production is estimated at 119.7 million pounds, down 49 percent from the 2001 production.

Virginia's cotton production is estimated at 99,000 bales, down nearly 51 percent from last year. The cotton yields for 2002 averaged 485 pounds per acre, down 444 pound per acre from 2001's 929 pound average. Producers harvested 98,000 acres in 2002 compared with 104,000 acres in 2001.

Hay production in Virginia totaled 2.05 million tons, down 25 percent from 2001. Yield, at 1.5 tons per acre was .59 tons per acre less than in 2001 and the lowest yield since 1986.

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Cooperating with Virginia Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services

U.S. Corn Production Down from 2001; Soybeans Down 6 Percent

The nation's corn for grain production is estimated at 9.01 billion bushels, virtually unchanged from the November forecast but down 5 percent from the 9.51 billion bushels produced in 2001. The average U.S. grain yield is estimated at 130.0 bushels per acre, 2.4 bushels above the November forecast but down 8.2 bushels from 2001.

U.S. soybean production in 2002 totaled 2.73 billion bushels, up 1 percent from the November 1 forecast but 6 percent below 2001. The average yield per acre in 2002 is estimated at 37.8 bushels per acre, 0.3 bushel above the November 1 forecast but 1.8 bushels below the 2001 yield.

Production of U.S. peanuts in 2002 totaled 3.32 billion pounds, down 22 percent from last year's crop and down 5 percent from the November 1 forecast. Planted area for the U.S., at 1.36 million acres, was down 12 percent from 2001. Harvested area totaled 1.30 million acres, down 8 percent from 2001. The U.S. yield per harvested acre averaged 2,561 pounds, down 468 pounds from 2001.

The U.S. all cotton production is estimated at 17.1 million bales, down 1 percent from last month and 16 percent less than last year's record high production. Yield is expected to average 663 pounds per harvested acre, down 42 pounds per harvested acre from a year ago. Harvested area, at 12.4 million acres, is down 3 percent from December and 10 percent below 2001.

U.S. tobacco production in 2002 totaled 890 million pounds, up less than 1 percent from the October 1 forecast but 10 percent below 2001. Growers harvested 430,280 acres in 2002, down 1 percent from the previous forecast and less than 1 percent below last year. Yield per acre averaged 2,068 pounds, a 28 pound increase from the October forecast but down 225 pounds from 2001. Flue-cured production is estimated at 526 million pounds, an increase of 1 percent from the October 1 forecast but 9 percent less than last year. Harvested acres totaled 246,100, down 1 percent from the previous forecast but 3 percent above 2001. Flue-cured yields averaged 2,137 pounds, an increase of 31 pounds from the October forecast but 295 pounds below 2001. Burley production totaled 304 million pounds in 2002, virtually unchanged from the October 1 forecast but 9 percent below last year. Growers harvested 159,600 acres in 2002, down 1 percent from the previous forecast and 3 percent less than last year. Yield per acre averaged 1,904 pounds, up 24 pounds from the October forecast but 129 pounds below last year. Factors contributing to the yield decline were drought and disease pressure, particularly black shank.

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