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NEWS RELEASE

VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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BARLEY, CORN AND SOYBEAN ACREAGE UP; WHEAT, COTTON AND PEANUT ACREAGE DOWN

Virginia's barley producers have increased their acreage this year to 80,000 acres, according to the results of a survey conducted March 1 by the Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service. This amounts to a 7 percent increase from the 2002 crop year. Corn producers intend to plant 510,000 acres, which is 2 percent above last year. Acreage intended for soybeans is expected to increase by 30,000 acres to 510,000.

Winter wheat acreage seeded last fall for harvest this spring was 210,000 acres, down 20,000 acres from last year. Cotton producers intend to reduce acreage in 2003 to 95,000. This is a 5 percent below last year's planted acres.

Peanut producers expect to plant 35,000 acres this year, this is 23,000 acres or 40 percent below last year's estimate. Peanut acreage continues to decline due to the effects of the new peanut program. Hay acreage intentions remain unchanged from last year at 1,370,000 acres.

Tobacco acreage intentions devoted to flue, barley, dark fired and sun will be mixed in 2003. Producers expect to harvest 20,000 flue-cured tobacco acres in 2003, a 7 percent decrease from 2002. Fire-cured tobacco producers intend to harvest 800 acres which is equal to last years estimate. Burley producers intend to harvest 6,500 acres this year which is 700 acres lower than the 2002 estimate. Sun-cured acreage intentions remained unchanged from last year at 70 acres.

Planting of major row crops is just in the beginning or in the planning stages, therefore producers could change their plans as the planting season progresses.

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**Cooperating with Virginia Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services**

U.S. Corn Planted Acreage Virtually Unchanged from 2002; U.S. Soybean Acreage Down 1 Percent

U.S. **corn** growers intend to plant 79.0 million acres of corn for all purposes in 2003, virtually unchanged from 2002 but 4 percent above 2001. Expected acreage is up in the eastern Corn Belt as growers are switching back to corn after planting soybeans last year when persistent wet weather in the spring prevented them from seeding corn.

Soybean growers in the U.S. intend to plant an estimated 73.2 million acres of soybeans, down 1 percent from last year and, if realized, the lowest planted area since 1998. This is the third consecutive year that soybean acreage has declined in the United States. Growers in most of the Corn Belt and central Great Plains States intend to plant fewer acres in 2003.

All U.S. **wheat** planted area is expected to total 61.7 million acres in 2003, up 2 percent from 2002. Winter wheat planted area for the 2003 crop is 44.3 million acres, up 6 percent from 2002. Of the total, about 31.9 million acres are Hard Red Winter, 8.2 million acres Soft Red Winter, and 4.2 million acres White Winter. The 2003 other spring wheat planted acreage is estimated at 14.6 million, down 7 percent from last year. Of the total, about 13.8 million acres are Hard Red Spring wheat. Area planted to Durum wheat is intended to total 2.83 million acres, down 3 percent from a year ago.

All U.S. **cotton** plantings for 2003 are expected to total 14.3 million acres, 2 percent above last year. Upland acreage is expected to total 14.1 million acres, a 2 percent increase from 2002. Producers in the Southeast region and Arizona intend to decrease acreage from last year. All other cotton producing States intend to increase planted acreage, except for Oklahoma growers who intend to plant the same acreage as last year. American-Pima cotton growers intend to decrease their plantings to 200,000 acres, down 18 percent from 2002. The decrease is primarily in California, where producers are intending to plant 40,000 acres less than last year.

U.S. **peanut** producers intend to plant 1.24 million acres of peanuts in 2003, down 8 percent from one year ago. Of the nine producing States, six intend to plant fewer acres than in 2002. Florida and South Carolina intend to plant more acres, while New Mexico intends to show no change in planted area from 2002. Producers continue to adjust to the peanut provisions adopted in the 2002 Farm Bill. Southeast growers (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina) intend to plant 801,000 acres, down 1 percent from a year ago. In the Virginia-North Carolina region producers intend to plant 125,000 acres, down 21 percent from 2002. Growers in the Southwest (New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) intend to plant 318,000 acres, 19 percent below 2002.

U.S. **flue-cured tobacco**, at 241,000 acres, is 2 percent below a year ago. Flue-cured acreage accounts for 58 percent of this year's expected total tobacco acreage. Acreage in North Carolina, the leading flue-cured State, is down 6 percent from last year. Harvested acreage is also expected to decline in Virginia and Florida by 7 percent and 13 percent, respectively. Plans for flue-cured tobacco in Georgia are up 9 percent over last season, while South Carolina expects an 11 percent increase in harvested acres. Acreage in these two States is expected to increase to compensate for the low 2002 production and lack of carryover into the 2003 season.

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