



NEWS RELEASE

VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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VIRGINIA'S HAY YIELDS BETTER THAN EXPECTED IN 2003

Virginia's hay yields were better than expected in 2003. All other crops were about average, according to the Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service's year end report. Overall this was a good year for the Commonwealth's farmers despite the wet weather conditions throughout the state.

All hay yields averaged 2.69 tons per acre which is a record high. Production of all hay totaled nearly 3.46 million tons. Other hay yields averaged 2.60 tons to the acre which was the highest yield ever recorded in the state. Production is estimated at 2.99 million tons from 1.15 million acres, 71 percent above the 2002 production. Alfalfa acres harvested were 130,000, with a yield of 3.50 tons per acre. Production of alfalfa hay totaled 455 thousand tons, 52 percent above 2002 production.

Virginia's corn producers harvested an average of 115 bushels per acre for grain this season, 49 bushels higher than last year. Corn for grain production is estimated at nearly 38 million bushels, up 89 percent from the 2002 production. Acres harvested for silage totaled 135,000, with a yield of 17.5 tons per acre.

Soybean yields averaged 34.0 bushels per acre from 480,000 acres. Soybean production is estimated at 16.3 million bushels, 61 percent above the 2002 production.

Virginia's peanut producers harvested an average of 2,900 pounds per acre this season, 800 pounds per acre above last year. Peanut production is estimated at 95.7 million pounds, down 20 percent from the 2002 production.

Cotton production is estimated at 120,000 bales, up 26 percent from last year. The cotton yields for 2003 averaged 678 pounds per acre, up 213 pounds per acre from 2002's 465 pound average. Producers harvested 85,000 acres in 2003 which was down 13, 000 acres from a year earlier.

Flue-cured tobacco yields averaged 1,650 pounds per acre, 690 pounds per acre less than was harvested in 2002. Virginia's production is expected to total nearly 31.4 million pounds, down 39 percent from 2002, reflecting a large decrease in acreage. Burley tobacco yields averaged 1,300 pounds, down 200 pounds per acre from last year. Burley production is estimated at nearly 1.6 million pounds, down 20 percent from the 2002 crop.

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**U.S. PEANUT PRODUCTION UP 25 PERCENT FROM 2002;
U.S. COTTON PRODUCTION UP 6 PERCENT**

U. S. production of **peanuts** in 2003 totaled 4.14 billion pounds, up 25 percent from last year's crop and up 1 percent from the November 1 forecast. Planted area for the U.S., at 1.34 million acres, was down 1 percent from 2002. Harvested area totaled 1.31 million acres, up 1 percent from 2002. The U.S. yield per harvested acre averaged a record high 3,159 pounds, up 598 pounds from 2002.

All U.S. **cotton** production is estimated at 18.2 million bales, up fractionally from last month and 6 percent more than last year's production. Yield is expected to average a record high 725 pounds per acre, up 60 pounds per acre from a year ago. Harvested area, at 12.1 million acres, is down slightly from December and 3 percent below 2002.

U.S. **corn for grain** production is estimated at 10.1 billion bushels, down 2 percent from the November forecast but up 12 percent from the 9.01 billion bushels produced in 2002. The average U.S. grain yield is estimated at 142.2 bushels per acre, 1.0 bushel below the November forecast but up 12.2 bushels from 2002. Both production and yield estimates are the largest on record. The previous record for both was set in 1994 when production was estimated at slightly below the 10.1 billion bushels being estimated for 2003 and yield was 138.6 bushels per acre.

U.S. **soybean** production in 2003 totaled 2.42 billion bushels, down 1 percent from the November forecast and 12 percent below the 2002 level. This is the lowest production level since 1996. The average yield per acre is estimated at 33.4 bushels, 0.4 bushel below the November forecast and 4.6 bushels below the 2002 final yield. This is the lowest yield since 1993.

All hay production in the U.S. for 2003 is estimated at 157 million tons, down 2 percent from the October 1 forecast but up 4 percent from the 2002 total. Acreage harvested, at 63.3 million acres, is down less than 2 percent from the October forecast and 2002. The average yield, at 2.48 tons per acre, is down 0.02 ton from the October forecast but up 0.14 ton from the previous year.

U.S. **tobacco** production in 2003 totaled 831 million pounds, down 2 percent from the October 1 forecast and 5 percent below 2002. Growers harvested 416,210 acres in 2003, up 1 percent from the previous forecast but 3 percent below last year. Yield per acre averaged 1,997 pounds, a 47 pound decrease from the October forecast and down 52 pounds from 2002.

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