



# NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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## **USDA EXPECTS TOTAL CORN, SOYBEAN ACRES ON PAR WITH LAST YEAR Principal Crop Area Expected to Decline Nearly 8 Million Acres**

**Washington, March 31, 2009** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture expects that the total area planted to corn and soybeans nationwide will hold steady in 2009 but that the area planted to principal crops will decline by nearly 7.8 million acres, according to the *Prospective Plantings* report released today by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

Farmers indicated their intention to plant 76 million acres to soybeans in 2009. If realized, this would be the largest planted area on record, just ahead of the 75.5 million acres planted last year. Increases of 100,000 acres or more are expected in Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Carolina and North Dakota. The largest decreases in soybean acres are expected in Missouri and South Dakota, both down 150,000 acres from 2008.

Growers plan to plant 85 million acres of corn, down 1 percent from last year and down 9 percent from 2007. While lower corn prices and unstable input costs may have slowed corn planting somewhat, this would be the third-largest acreage since 1949, behind 2007 and 2008.

Wheat acreage is expected to decline 7 percent, to 58.6 million acres. Cotton plantings are also expected to be down 7 percent, to 8.8 million acres – the smallest area since 1983.

Nationwide, NASS expects the total area planted to principal crops to decline by approximately 7.8 million acres, or 2.4 percent, from last year. Included in this total are corn, sorghum, oats, barley, winter wheat, rye, durum wheat, other spring wheat, rice, soybeans, peanuts, sunflower, cotton, dry edible beans, potatoes, sugar beets, canola and proso millet, as well as harvested area for all hay, tobacco and sugar cane.

The *Prospective Plantings* report provides the first official survey-based estimate of U.S. farmers' planting intentions for 2009. NASS surveyed approximately 86,000 farm operators across the United States during the first two weeks of March.

NASS will publish data on actual planted area in the *Acreage* report, released June 30 at 8:30 a.m. EDT. All NASS reports are available online at [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov).

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