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USDA Expects 75-year-high Corn Acreage in 2012

Washington, March 30, 2012 – Driven by favorable prices, U.S. farmers intend to plant 95.9 million acres of corn in 2012, up four percent from 2011, according to the *Prospective Plantings* report released today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). If realized, this will be the largest corn acreage in the United States since 1937, when producers planted 97.2 million acres of corn.

Producers across many of the Corn Belt states are expected to set new record highs in 2012. Farmers in Iowa, the top U.S. corn-growing state, intend to set a new record for the state by planting 14.6 million acres, up four percent from 2011. Growers in Idaho, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota also intend to plant record-high acreages. The largest year-over-year increase is expected in North Dakota, where farmers are recovering from last year's floods and declared their intentions to plant 3.4 million acres of corn, up 52 percent from last year.

The corn acreage increase, coupled with weather conditions in the Southern Plains resulted in a soybean acreage decrease. U.S. soybean growers intend to plant 73.9 million acres in 2012, down one percent from last year. Affected by the drought conditions that have continued from last year into early March, Texas and Oklahoma farmers plan significant reductions in soybean acreage, expecting to dedicate 24 and 15 percent fewer acres respectively to the crop this year. These decreases are offset by acreage increase in other states, such as New York and North Dakota, where farmers are expected to set new records.

Also affected by difficult weather conditions, U.S. cotton growers expect to plant fewer acres in 2012. The expected cotton area this year is 13.2 million acres, down 11 percent from last year. Heavy precipitation in the Delta Region has already delayed fieldwork in some areas. A mild winter in some cotton-growing states also has producers bracing for potentially higher than normal insect and weed pressure this year.

Prospective Plantings provides the first official, survey based estimates of U.S. farmers' 2012 planting intentions. NASS's acreage estimates are based on surveys conducted during the first two weeks of March from a sample of more than 84,500 farm operators across the United States. *Prospective Plantings* and all NASS reports are available online at www.nass.usda.gov.

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