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U.S. Growers Expect to Produce 13 Percent Less Corn than Last Year

Washington, Aug. 10, 2012 – Affected by one of the worst droughts on record, U.S. corn growers are forecast to harvest 87.4 million acres in 2012, down 2 percent from June estimates, according to the *Crop Production* report released today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service.

The 2012 growing season began on a very optimistic note for growers, with the fastest corn planting pace on record. The growers’ optimism waned, however, when the warm spring was followed by a very dry summer, developing into a drought throughout most of the Corn Belt states. Despite planting the largest number of acres to corn in the past 75 years, growers are forecast to produce 10.8 billion bushels in 2012, down 13 percent from 2011. Based on conditions as of August 1, corn yields are expected to average 123.4 bushels per acre, down 23.8 bushels from last year.

Just as with corn producers, soybean growers are greatly affected by the drought conditions in the United States. This year’s soybean production is forecast at 2.69 billion bushels, down 12 percent from 2011. Soybean yield is expected to average 36.1 bushels per acre, down 5.4 bushels from the 2011 crop.

In contrast to corn and soybeans, all wheat production remains largely unaffected by the drought and is forecast at 2.27 billion bushels, up 13 percent from 2011. Based on August 1 conditions, the yield for all wheat is forecast at 46.5 bushels per acre, up 0.9 bushel from last month, and up 2.8 bushels up from last year. Harvest in the 18 major producing states was 85 percent complete by July 29.

The report also included the first indication for this year’s cotton production. Growers are forecast to produce 17.7 million 480-pound bales this growing season, up 13 percent from 2011. Producers expect to harvest 10.8 million acres of all cotton, up 14 percent from last year. This forecast includes 10.6 million acres of Upland cotton and 233,400 acres of Pima cotton.

NASS interviewed more than 28,000 producers across the country in preparation for this report. The agency also conducted field and lab measurements on corn, soybeans, wheat and cotton in the major producing states, which usually account for about 75 percent of the U.S. production. NASS is also gearing up to conduct its September Agricultural Survey, which will focus on wheat, barley, oats and rye growers. That survey will take place during the first two weeks of September.

The *Crop Production* report is published monthly and is available online at www.nass.usda.gov.

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