

Delaware Growing Season Summary: 2008

Weather

The fall of 2007 was favorable for producers to complete their seeding of the 2008 winter wheat and barley crops in a timely manner. Adequate moisture was received after planting for excellent germination and early growth before the small grain crops went dormant for the winter.

Soil moisture levels during the spring planting season were adequate for good germination and periodic precipitation allowed producers to get crops planted without many delays. The rains received in April and May also benefited the small grain crops as wheat set a new record high yield in 2008 at 77 bushels per acre.

Precipitation in May was above normal which was beneficial for vegetable yields and gave the corn crop a good start. Precipitation in June and July was near normal levels and small grains were harvested on time. There were enough dry periods to get double-crop soybeans planted without delay. August precipitation was significantly below normal which reduced corn and soybean yield prospects. September precipitation was above normal which helped second crop soybean yields.

Overall, the 2008 growing season was excellent for small grain crops, better than average for vegetables, and about average for corn and soybeans.

Soybeans

Acres planted in 2008 at 195,000, was up 22 percent from the 160,000 acres in 2007. Acreage harvested increased 38,000 from 155,000 in 2007 to 193,000. Yield per acre increased 6 percent from 2007 to 27.5 bushels. Soybean production in 2008 at 5.3 million bushels was up 32 percent from 2007. The average price received at \$9.00 per bushel was down 22 percent from 2007. The 2008 crop is valued at \$47.8 million, up 3 percent from 2007.



Corn

Acres planted in 2008 at 160,000 was down 18 percent from the 195,000 acres in 2007. Acres harvested for grain decreased 33,000 from 185,000 acres in 2007 to 152,000 acres. Yield per acre increased 26 bushels from 2007 to 125 bushels. Corn production in 2008, at 19 million bushels, was up 4 percent from 2007. The value of the corn crop decreased 3 percent from 2007 to \$84.6 million. Price per bushel decreased from \$4.76 in 2007 to \$4.45 per bushel.

Wheat

There were 79,000 acres of wheat harvested from the 80,000 acres planted which was 23,000 acres (40 percent) more than planted acres for the 2007 crop. Yield per acre was a record high at 77 bushels, up 9 bushel per acre from 2007. Delaware farmers produced a record wheat crop; production in 2008 was 6.08 million bushels, up 63 percent from 2007. The value of the wheat crop increased enormously; up 76 percent from 2007 to \$36.5 million. Price per bushel was a record high \$6.00, up 8 percent from the \$5.56 level in 2007.

Barley

Acres planted at 25,000, was up 19 percent from the 21,000 acres for 2007. Acreage harvested increased 3,000 from 19,000 acres in 2007 to 22,000 acres. Yield per acre increased 2 bushels from 2007 to 80 bushels. Barley production in 2008 at 1.76 million bushels was up 19 percent from 2007. Value of the crop doubled from 2007 to \$7.4 million. Price per bushel was a record high at \$4.20 per bushel up from the 2007 level of \$2.49.

Hay

Acreage harvested increased 3,000 from 15,000 in 2007 to 18,000 acres. The 2008 yield increased 24 percent from 2.07 tons per acre in 2007 to 2.56 tons per acre. Hay production in 2008 at 46,000 tons was up 48 percent from 2007. Average price per ton was down from a record high \$214.00 in 2007 to \$184.00 per ton. The value of the hay crop increased, up 28 percent from 2007 to \$8.48 million.

Vegetables

Delaware vegetable producers experienced a relatively mixed bag during the growing season. Spring brought some unseasonably warm weather followed by some wet summer months with periodic isolated showers. The value of all Delaware vegetable production (fresh and processed) in 2008 totaled \$56.7 million.

Delaware's fresh market vegetable producers harvested 10,600 acres of crops, valued at over \$38.2 million in 2008. These numbers compare to 10,000 acres and \$26.7 million in 2007. Snap beans, cabbage, cucumbers, pumpkins sweet corn and watermelon yields increased, while potatoes, strawberries, and tomato yields decreased as compared with 2007. When compared with last year, potatoes, strawberries, sweet corn, tomato and watermelon prices increased. Snap bean and pumpkin prices decreased. Processing vegetable producers harvested 31,600 acres of crops, valued at \$18.5 million in 2008, production totaled 96.2 thousand tons, down 2 percent from 2007. Yields were down for lima beans, sweet corn and green peas when compared with 2007. Lima bean price was up 5 percent from 2007 at \$420.00 per ton, sweet corn price increased 4 percent from the 2007 price to \$76.00 per ton, and the green pea price at \$286.00 per ton, increased 4 percent from the 2007 price.