

CROP HIGHLIGHTS

ACREAGE: Indiana's five major field crops totaled slightly over 12.1 million acres for harvest during 2012, down slightly from 2011. Corn acreage for harvest was up by 5 percent from a year ago, while soybean acreage for harvest was down about three percent. Winter wheat harvested acreage was down 25 percent from a year ago, and all hay harvested acreage was down 6 percent from the 2011 level. Oat acreage for harvest decreased 29 percent from 2011. Other crops showing harvested acreage changes were tomatoes for fresh market, down 8 percent while tomatoes for processing acreage was unchanged. Sweet corn acreage for harvest decreased 14 percent, and watermelon harvested acreage decreased 3 percent from 2011. In addition, cucumbers for processing increased 20 percent from 2011, and cantaloupes for fresh market decreased 19 percent.

YIELDS: Planting of row crops got off to a record early pace due to warm, sunny conditions in March which allowed soils to dry out enough to support tillage and planting equipment. By April 29th, 70 percent of the intended corn acreage had been planted compared with 20 percent for the 5-year average. Planting progress continued to move at a rapid pace and 97 percent of corn acreage had been planted by May 20th. Dry conditions persisted and by June 17th, 85 percent of the topsoil was rated either short or very short of moisture. By mid-June, wheat harvest was in full swing in most areas of the state, and it was evident that the crop benefitted from the warm spring and was already ripe by the time the drought effects took hold. Fruit growers were less fortunate, as the warm March encouraged early development and left trees vulnerable to temperature drops and frosts in April. Fruit crop potential was already significantly damaged before the extreme heat and dry weather set in. As the summer progressed, drought conditions grew extreme through a large part of Indiana. The average temperature for June and July combined was 76.4 degrees and average total rainfall was 3.78 inches. It would be the 3rd hottest (to 1895) and 4th driest (to 1930) on record. By comparison, these two months were the 20th hottest and 7th driest during the Midwestern drought year of 1988. These two months were the second hottest and driest in the dust bowl year of 1933. By the end of July every county in the state was under moderate to exceptional drought conditions. The fever broke around mid August with the arrival of precipitation and a moderation in temperatures. This was too late for most of the corn crop, as four percent was mature at that point, 39 percent was in dent and 83 percent in dough. Soybeans were in a position to benefit, however, and the rains continued through pod fill and increased the potential for the crop. While the warm and dry conditions to this point had been good for the harvest of hay, fields were nevertheless under stress and regrowth was slow. The late season precipitation revived grass hay and alfalfa fields and yielded an opportunity for growers concerned about hay shortages to put up another cutting. Corn harvest began after the third week of August, and was interrupted occasionally by rains until it concluded on November 18th. Soybean harvest began later and concluded at the same time.

The average yield for corn in 2012 was 99 bushels per acre, 47 bushels below the 2011 yield. Soybeans yielded 44.0 bushels per acre, 1.5 bushels below 2011. The average yield for winter wheat, at 67 bushels per acre, was 5 bushels above the previous year's yield of 62 bushels per acre. The average oat yield of 70 bushels per acre was up 9 bushels from the previous year's yield of 61 bushels per acre. All hay yield of 2.34 tons per acre was down .50 ton from the 2011 yield of 2.84 tons per acre. Popcorn averaged 2,800 pounds per acre, down 1,200 pounds from the previous year's yield.

PRODUCTION: Corn produced during 2012 totaled 597.0 million bushels, 29 percent below the 2011 level of 839.5 million bushels. Soybean production was 226.2 million bushels, 6 percent below the 240.7 million bushels produced a year earlier. Winter wheat production decreased 19 percent from a year earlier, to 20.1 million bushels. Popcorn production totaled 221.0 million pounds, 20 percent below the 2011 level. Oat production of 350 thousand bushels was 18 percent below the 427 thousand bushels produced in 2011. All hay production, at 1.48 million tons, was down 22 percent from the previous year. Peppermint production of 510 thousand pounds decreased 15 percent while spearmint production of 224 thousand pounds increased 66 percent from 2011. Blueberry production totaled 1.5 million pounds, a 6 percent decrease from the previous year.



"Wheat Harvest"
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