

SOYBEANS

Production of **soybeans** was estimated at 28.1 million bushels, down 53 percent from the 2006 crop and the smallest crop in eight years. The smaller crop was brought about by a decrease in yield and smaller harvested acreage. Yields were down significantly from the 2006 crop. Yield was estimated at 26 bushels per acre, down 18 bushels from last year's record tying high yield of 44 bushels. Acreage harvested as beans was estimated at 1.08 million acres, down 290,000 acres from the previous year and the smallest harvested acreage in 19 years. Daviess County was the leading production county with 2.55 million bushels. Six counties had production exceeding 1.00 million bushels.

Kentucky farmers began planting soybeans in late April but progress was slowed by cool soil temperatures. By the end of April, only 2 percent of the State's acreage had been planted. This was behind the 2006 planting of 6 percent and the five year average of 4 percent. Farmers in May were generally planting in dry soils. By early June some producers were waiting for rain to complete their planting because some soil moisture was too dry for germination. On June 17 virtually all of the single crop soybeans had been planted and 24 percent of the double crop soybeans were planted. Double crop soybeans were planted following the winter wheat harvest. Planting continued into the first week of July. During July soybeans were blooming and setting pods. By July 29, 66 percent

of the soybeans were blooming with 36 percent setting pods. Both were ahead of the 2006 crop and the five year average.

During August soybeans needed rain for pod development. As August progressed, the soybean condition declined due to lack of moisture. Fields planted earlier in the year did better than the double cropped beans. Double crop soybeans were a general disappointment due to the dry hot growing conditions. The plants never really got established and growing. As the drought continued into September, the quality of the soybean crop declined further. Some double crop fields were cut for silage or hay instead of harvested for beans. As of September 2, 92 percent of the soybeans were setting or had set pods, 28 percent had leaves turning yellow and 11 percent had dropped leaves. During September crop condition continued to decline. Soybean harvest started in late September and by September 23, 12 percent of the crop had been harvested. This was ahead of last year's 3 percent and the average of 4 percent. Small size of the bean produced was a concern for some producers, especially those with double crop soybeans. Soybean harvesting continued through October into November. Yields were down due to the dry summer and varied greatly across the State depending on rainfall received and when it rained. The dry summer especially hurt double crop soybeans.

OTHER CROPS

Kentucky farmers harvested 12.3 million bushels of **winter wheat** during the summer of 2007. The was down 46 percent from the large 2006 crop and the smallest crop in 16 years. The smaller crop resulted from reduced harvested acreage and lower yield per acre. The smaller acreage resulted from many farmers abandoning their winter wheat for grain after experiencing devastating freezing temperatures mid-April. Yield was estimated at 49 bushels per acre, down 22 bushels from the 2006 record high of 71 bushels per acre.

The winter wheat crop came out of a relatively mild winter in mostly good condition. Following good Spring development, a killing frost Easter weekend dashed the hopes of many farmers in Kentucky. Following the freeze, 80 percent of the winter wheat crop condition was rated poor or very poor. Many farmers cut their damaged wheat for hay or burned it down and replanted with early season soybeans. Of the crop left in the field, farmers expected greatly reduced yields. Wheat disease and pest issues were minor. Harvesting of the wheat for grain began in early June with 8

percent harvested by June 3. By July 8, 93 percent of the winter wheat crop had been harvested. Final yield and test weights were better than farmers initially expected.

Alfalfa hay production was estimated at 540,000 tons, down 48 percent from the 2006 crop. Yield was estimated at 1.80 tons per acre, down 1.9 tons from a year earlier. Harvest acreage at 300,000 acres was the largest harvested acreage since 2002. **Other hay** production was estimated at 3.60 million acres, down 32 percent from the 2006 crop. Yield at 1.50 tons per acre was down .90 ton from a year earlier. Harvested acreage at 2.40 million acres was up 200,000 acres from the 2006 crop.

An Easter freeze destroyed much of the first cutting of alfalfa hay that was well developed at the time of the freeze. To compensate for the loss of the first cutting of alfalfa hay and to fill the void left by drought limited alfalfa and other hay yields, farmers cut an estimated 2.70 million acres for hay. This was a record high. Farmers cut as many acres of alfalfa and other hay as they could to produce hay supplies to winter their cattle.