crops review

general

The 2006 crop year began favorably with moderate, sometimes cool, temperatures and timely rain. This pattern lasted through late winter into mid-spring. Conditions began to worsen in May, however, when extremely dry, hot weather began to set in. The rain that came during the summer was concentrated in several extreme precipitation events. The drought was broken by a tropical system that arrived just after Labor Day. The impact of the weather on field crops was variable. Those that were planted or matured early, such as small grains, were least affected. Other crops, such as soybeans were stunted by the summer's drought and heat.

corn

The 2006 corn crop was ahead of schedule for most of the season. Planting began and was accomplished ahead of normal, and the crop matured quickly in the unusually warm temperatures during the summer. Growers were concerned throughout the season about the condition of the crop, but were pleasantly surprised to harvest an average 142 bushels per acre at summer's end. Apparently, the rain that came arrived during a critical time in the crop's development. Therefore, corn production was up from 2005, due to an increase in acreage and yield. Approximately 425,000 acres of corn was harvested for grain in 2006, up 6 percent from the 400,000 acres harvested in 2005. This resulted in a total production of 60.4 million bushels. Corn prices rose sharply during 2006 to a season average price of $3.35 per bushel. This is a 53% increase in value from 2005 and the first time corn prices topped $3.00 a bushel since 1996. The rise in price coupled with increased production resulted in a corn crop valued at $202.2 million. This was the second highest valued corn crop on record and the only corn crop to top $200 million since 1984, when the crop was valued at $204 million.

Production of corn silage, estimated at 1.0 million tons, was down slightly from the 1.1 million tons harvested in 2005, due primarily to a drop in acres harvested for silage. Silage was produced on 60,000 acres in 2006 as compared with 65,000 acres harvested for silage in 2005.

small grains

The small grain crop was rated good throughout the growing season, with few disease problems noted and crop development proceeding ahead of normal. Warm, dry conditions as the crop matured facilitated rapid grain development and dry down, As a result, small grain yields were the best on record. The wheat crop yielded an average 68 bushels per acre, tying the record set in 1997. Barley fields yielded 87 bushels per acre, setting a new state record. With 125,000 acres of wheat harvested, production is estimated at 8.50 million bushels. Barley production is estimated at 2.78 million bushels from 32,000 acres harvested. Prices for small grains, although still low, increased from 2005. The average price for 2006 wheat was $3.35 per bushel, with the State's crop valued at $28.48 million. Barley brought $1.55 per bushel, and the crop was valued at $4.32 million statewide.

soybeans

Conditions during the summer of 2006 were hard on the soybean crop. Rain was scarce by mid-July, when the early crop beans began to bloom and the last of the double-crop beans were being planted. Most of the state saw little rain from mid-July until early September, when a tropical system broke the drought. As a result, yields for soybeans, at an average 34 bushels per acre statewide, the same as the previous year. Growers harvested 465,000 acres of soybeans in 2006, down 5,000 acres from the previous year. This resulted in total production of 15.8 million bushels. At an average value of $5.95 per bushel, the total value of the 2006 soybean crop is estimated at $94.1 million.

hay

Although the hot, dry summer months were a strain on the hay crop, favorable conditions in the spring and fall resulted in respectable yields. Growers were able to harvest 156,000 tons of alfalfa and 413,000 tons of other types of hay in 2006 from 205,000 acres. Alfalfa yielded an average 3.9 tons per acre, while all other types of hay yielded 2.5 tons per acre. Prices for hay were similar to 2005, at an average $164.00 per ton. This brought the total value of the crop to $93.11 million.