



Crops review

general... Although the year began with moderate temperatures and adequate precipitation, dry conditions descended in June and remained throughout the summer. Soil moisture was rated mostly adequate and pastures were rated in fair condition. The dry weather proved ideal for small grains and helped the crop dry down for harvest. Despite a dry summer the fall brought tropical storms and rain showers which aided in corn and soybean crop development.

corn... Maryland farmers planted 460,000 acres of corn in 2008, down 15 percent from 2007. Of the 460,000 acres planted, 400,000 acres were harvested for grain, 55,000 acres were cut for silage, and the remaining 5,000 acres were abandoned. Yield for grain is estimated at 121 bushels per acre, for a total production of 48.4 million bushels. This is up 3 percent from 2007, when 47 million bushels of corn were produced from 465,000 acres. Silage yield is estimated at 15 tons per acre, up 25 percent from last year, for a total production of 825,000 tons of silage. Early frost assisted in drying down the corn quickly which added to increased silage yields.

hay... Acres harvested for hay decreased 10,000 acres from last year to 205,000 acres. Alfalfa acreage increased 5,000 acres, at 45,000 acres, a sharp contrast to acres of all other types of hay which decreased 15,000 acres to 160,000 acres. Despite decreased acreage and dry summer conditions, 2008 brought a 33 percent increase in hay production from 2007. Alfalfa production is estimated at 194,000 tons, at an average yield of 4.3 tons per acre, and the production of all other types of hay is estimated at 432,000 tons of hay, at an average yield of 2.7 tons per acre, for a total production of 626,000 tons of hay.

small grains... Maryland farmers have set a new record yield for wheat, an average 73 bushels per acre, which tops the previous record of 68 bushels per acre set in 1997. Wheat was planted on 255,000 acres this year, the largest planting since 1953. However, a large amount of this acreage was enrolled in the Maryland Cover Crop Program, leaving 180,000 acres harvested for grain. This resulted in a total wheat production of 13.14 million bushels, and compares with 11.56 million bushels produced last year. Yield for barley was also a record, at 90 bushels per acre, as compared with the previous record yield of 87 bushels per acre recorded in 2006. Producers planted an estimated 45,000 acres of barley in 2008 and harvested 35,000 acres for grain, with a majority of the remaining acreage enrolled in the Maryland Cover Crop Program. Total barley production is estimated at 3.15 million bushels, up 10 percent from 2.86 million bushels produced in 2007.

soybeans... Maryland farmers planted 495,000 acres of soybeans, 90,000 acres more than were planted in 2007. From the 495,000 acres of soybeans planted, 485,000 acres were harvested, up 24 percent from 2007. Soybean yields were better than expected a direct result of increased rain towards the end of the growing season. Yield on the harvested acreage averaged 30 bushels per acre, up 2 bushels from 2007. Production of soybeans is estimated at 14.5 million bushels. Acres harvested for hay decreased 10,000 acres from last year to 205,000 acres.