

Crops

Rainfall was above normal, and temperatures were below normal, during the month of April across most of New Jersey. Planting and plowing activities were limited due to the wet and cool conditions. The below normal temperatures continued through the beginning of May, but rose to above normal by mid-month, while precipitation fell to below normal in most areas. Plowing and planting occurred where field conditions allowed, but hay fields were too wet to cut. Temperatures were variable during the month of June, with below normal rainfall. By the end of June, soil moisture was short to adequate across most of the state, and irrigation was in use in some localities. The shortage of rainfall continued through the beginning of July, along with variable temperatures. By mid-July second hay cutting growth was stunted due to the heat and absence of rainfall. Heavy rainfall on July 12, 2004 damaged the cranberry crop, and submerged some soybean fields. Temperatures remained variable during August; and excessive moisture lowered hay quality and created disease problems in many localities. September saw above normal temperatures and a shortage of soil moisture in many parts of New Jersey, while excess moisture caused disease problems in some areas. Disease problems continued during October in some fields, producing a short supply of some fall vegetable crops.

Corn planted in 2004 totaled 86,000 acres, 72,000 of which were harvested for grain. Yield increased 30 bushels to 143 bushels per acre. This increase in yield raised production by 3.40 million bushels to a level of 10.30 million bushels. Acres harvested for silage decreased by 5,000 acres to 13,000. Silage yield was up 5 tons per acre from the previous year to 20 tons per acre. Production was 260,000 tons, 4 percent less than in 2003. Growers received \$2.20 per bushel for their grain, a decrease of 61 cents per bushel from 2003's price of \$2.81 per bushel. The total crop value for corn for grain increased by 17 percent from 2003's \$19.4 million to \$22.7 million in 2004.

Soybean planted acreage increased by 15,000 to 105,000 acres, and harvested acreage increased by 15,000 to 103,000 acres for 2004. Soybean yield increased 8 bushels per acre from last year to 42 bushels per acre in 2004. Production increased to 33 million bushels from 2003's 2.99 million bushels. There was an decrease of \$2.05 in the price received in 2004 to \$5.45 per bushel, compared to 2003's return of \$7.35 per bushel. Total crop value increased by 7 percent from 2003's \$22.0 million to \$23.6 million in 2004.

The 28,000 acres planted to winter wheat in 2004 were 3,000 less than in 2003. Harvested acreage was estimated at 24,000, a decrease of 2,000 acres below 2003's harvested acres. Yield at 47 bushels per acre was 5 bushels per acre more than the previous year. Production at 1.13 million bushels was up 3 percent from 2003. The season average price of \$3.30 was 20 cents more than the price in 2003. The total crop value for winter wheat increased by 10 percent from 2003's \$3.39 million to \$3.72 million in 2004.

Barley planted and harvested acres decreased by 1,000 acres each to 3,000 and 2,000, respectively, in 2004. Yield, at 63 bushels per acre, was up 18 bushels per acre from 2003. Production decreased by 7 percent from 2003 to 126,000 bushels. The prices received by growers increased by 15 cents from 2003's \$1.95 per bushel to \$2.10 per bushel in 2004. The value of barley produced increased 1 percent from 2003 to \$265,000.

Acres of hay harvested remained unchanged at 120,000 in 2004. Alfalfa and other hay remained unchanged from 2003 at 30,000 and 90,000 acres, respectively, in 2004. Yield for alfalfa hay increased by .20 ton to 3.7, and the yield for other hay increased by .10 ton to 1.9 tons per acre in 2004. The overall yield was 2.35 tons per acre. Alfalfa production was 111,000 tons and other hay production was 171,000 tons; the resulting total hay production was 282,000 tons. The season average price for all hay decreased by \$5.00 per ton from 2003's \$125.00 to \$120.00 in 2004. Overall, total crop value increased by 3 percent in 2004 to \$34.8 million.

Potato planted acreage decreased 500 acres to 2,300 acres, while harvested acreage decreased 500 acres to 2,200 acres. Yield was up 20 hundredweight at 270 hundredweight per acre in 2004 from 2003's 250 hundredweight per acre. Total production was down 12 percent from 2003 to 594,000 hundredweight. The season average price of \$6.00 was \$0.30 more than 2003's \$5.70 per hundredweight. Total crop value decreased by 7 percent to \$3.56 million in 2004.

Sweet potatoes planted and harvested acreage increased by 100 acres to 1,200 acres each. Yield increased by 15 hundredweight from last year at 140 hundredweight per acre. Total production increased by 30,000 hundredweight to 168,000 hundredweight. The season average price of \$26.30 was \$0.50 more than 2003's \$25.80 per hundredweight. Total crop value increased by 24 percent to \$4.42 million.