

Crops

Rainfall was plentiful and periodically excessive for most of the growing season. Prolonged rains kept some of the New Jersey corn and soybean fields so wet that both planting and harvesting were delayed or prevented. Heavy cloud cover from a very wet spring and earlier summer also delayed crop development. August rains diluted herbicide sprays, causing higher than normal weed infestation in most fields. The wet and cool weather conditions during the months of May and June, in 2003, delayed hay cutting in most fields. Mild weather conditions in September and early October boosted dry hay production in most localities. Harvest of small grains was delayed by the wet and cool weather conditions during May and June.

Corn planted in 2003 totaled 80,000 acres, 61,000 of which were harvested for grain. Yield increased 52 bushels to 113 bushels per acre. This increase in yield raised production by 2.62 million bushels to a level of 6.89 million bushels. Acres harvested for silage remained unchanged at 18,000. Silage yield was up 4 tons per acre from the previous year to 15 tons per acre. Production was 270,000 tons, 36 percent higher than in 2002. Growers received \$2.75 per bushel for their grain, a decrease of 2 cents per bushel from 2002's price of \$2.77 per bushel. The total crop value for corn for grain increased by 60 percent from 2002's \$11.8 million to \$19 million in 2003.

Soybean planted acreage decreased by 10,000 to 90,000 acres, while harvested acreage decreased by 9,000 to 88,000 acres for 2003. Soybean yield increased 10 bushels per acre from last year to 34 bushels per acre in 2003. Production increased to 2.99 million bushels from 2002's 2.33 million bushels. There was an increase of \$1.60 in the price received in 2003 to \$7.00 per bushel, compared to 2002's return of \$5.40 per bushel. Total crop value increased by 67 percent from 2002's \$12.6 million to \$20.9 million in 2003.

The 31,000 acres planted to winter wheat in 2003 were 7,000 less than in 2002. Harvested acreage was estimated at 26,000, a decrease of 6,000 acres below 2002's harvested acres. Yield at 42 bushels per acre was 15 bushels per acre less than the previous year. Production at 1.09 million bushels was down 40 percent from 2002. The season

average price of \$3.05 was 5 cents less than the price in 2002. The total crop value for winter wheat decreased by 41 percent from 2002's \$5.65 million to \$3.33 million in 2003.

Barley planted and harvested acres remained unchanged at 4,000 and 3,000, respectively, in 2003. Yield, at 45 bushels per acre, was down 25 bushels per acre from 2002. Production decreased by 36 percent from 2002 to 135,000 bushels. The prices received by growers increased by 35 cents from 2002's \$1.60 per bushel to \$1.95 per bushel in 2003. The value of barley produced decreased 22 percent from 2002 to \$263,000.

Acres of hay harvested remained unchanged at 120,000 in 2003. Alfalfa and other hay remained unchanged from 2002 at 30,000 and 90,000 acres, respectively, in 2003. Yield for alfalfa hay increased by 35 percent to 3.5, while yield for other hay increased by 13 percent to 1.8 tons per acre in 2003. The overall yield was 2.23 tons per acre. Alfalfa production was 105,000 tons and other hay production was 162,000 tons; the resulting total hay production was 267,000 tons. The season average price for all hay increased by \$11.00 per ton from 2002's \$110 to \$121 in 2003. Overall, total crop value increased by 34 percent in 2003 to \$32.6 million.

Potato planted acreage increased 200 acres to 2,800 acres, while harvested acreage increased 100 acres to 2,700 acres. Yield was down 9 percent at 250 hundredweight per acre in 2003 from 2002's 275 hundredweight per acre. Total production was down 6 percent from 2002 to 675,000 hundredweight. The season average price of \$5.70 was \$2.50 less than 2002's \$8.20 per hundredweight. Total crop value decreased by 34 percent to \$3.85 million in 2003.

Sweet potatoes planted and harvested acreage decreased by 100 acres to 1,100 acres each. Yield remained unchanged from last year at 125 hundredweight per acre. Total production decreased by 12,000 hundredweight to 138,000 hundredweight. The season average price of \$25.80 was \$2.60 more than 2002's \$23.20 per hundredweight. Total crop value increased by 2 percent to \$3.56 million.

