



News Release

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Rainy May impacts Virginia's winter wheat yield

RICHMOND, Va. – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) released its July crop condition report today based on the Agricultural Yield survey conducted at the beginning of month. The telephone survey queried about 125 farms in Virginia.

“This year's winter wheat crop experienced one of the wettest months of May on record in some areas in the state,” said Herman Ellison, Virginia state statistician. “The crop yield is the lowest since 2010 when yield was estimated at 51 bushels per acre.”

Virginia farmers expect to harvest 10.3 million bushels of **winter wheat** during 2016. The expected crop for 2016 would be down 26 percent from the previous year. The forecast was based on crop conditions as of July 1 and decreased 11 percent from the June forecast. Growers expect a yield of 59.0 bushels per acre, down 7.0 bushels from 2015 and down 4.0 bushels from June. Farmers seeded 220,000 acres last fall with 175,000 acres to be harvested for grain. Acres for other uses totaled 45,000 acres and is used as cover crop for tobacco or cut as silage or hay.

A cold, wet spring impacted the crop. Yields were reduced due to the spring freeze and quality is variable. Some fields were abandoned due to the freeze. Farmers in some parts of Virginia experienced one of the wettest months of May on record. There were reports of head scab from prolonged rain during head fill. Crop conditions as of Jul 3 were rated 1% very poor, 9% poor, 29% fair, 55% good, and 6% excellent. Wheat harvest is in full swing and running behind normal. As of July 3, 63% of the crop was harvested, compared to 68% last year and 77% for the five-year average.

Winter wheat production for the **Nation** was forecast at 1.63 billion bushels, up 8 percent from the June 1 forecast and up 19 percent from 2015. Based on July 1 conditions, the United States yield is forecast at 53.9 bushels per acre, up 3.4 bushels from last month and up 11.4 bushels from last year. The expected area to be harvested for grain or seed totals 30.2 million acres, down 6 percent from last year.

Barley producers in **Virginia** forecast harvesting 1.15 million bushels for 2016, down 4 percent from last year. Acres expected to be harvested for grain total 18,000 acres, 2,000 above last year. Producers expect a yield of 64.0 bushels per acre, down 11.0 bushels from 2015. **U. S.** production is expected to total 183 million bushels. Acres harvested is forecast at 2.58 million acres, down 17 percent from last year. Growers nationwide anticipate a yield of 70.9 bushels per acre, increased 2.0 bushels from 2016.

Flue-cured tobacco production in **Virginia** is forecast at 50.4 million pounds, 2 percent higher than the 49.5 million pounds produced in 2015. Acres for harvest are estimated at 21,000, down 500 acres from the 21,500 acres harvested last year. Yield per acre is forecast at 2,400 pounds, up 100 pounds from last year. **U. S.** production is forecast at 486 million pounds down slightly from 2015. Acres harvested is estimated at 209,000 acres, down 5.0 percent from last year. Yield per acre is forecast at 2,324 pounds, up 114 pounds from the previous year.

“We really appreciate the farmers taking the time to complete the July Agricultural Yield survey,” Ellison said. “We realize farmers are busy, but by participating in the survey, they have provided pertinent information for decision-making for all entities actively involved in any aspect of the agricultural industry.”

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