

# CROPS

The planting season of 1999 got started early with farmers beginning to plant ahead of normal. By April 4, 67 percent of the oats had been planted compared with 17 percent in 1998 and the five-year average of 25 percent. One percent of the corn crop was already planted by this time. This compares with less than one percent planted in 1998 and the five-year average of less than one percent. By the middle of April, planting came almost to a standstill due to heavy rains. By the end of April, only seven percent of the corn crop had been planted and less than one percent of the soybeans were in the ground. However, the rain was beneficial to the wheat crop and with the mild winter brought wheat development to about two weeks ahead of normal. The crop was rated 12 percent excellent, 65 percent good, 20 percent fair and three percent poor on April 25. Warm, dry weather during the first week of May allowed corn planting to reach 58 percent, surpassing the five-year average of 51 percent and well ahead of the progress of 1998 at 38 percent. By the end of May, corn was 97 percent planted while soybeans were at 79 percent planted. Mild temperatures in the northern districts were beneficial to the wheat crop, while in the southern districts the wheat crop suffered from too much moisture. As of May 28, the crop was rated 15 percent excellent, 66 percent good, 17 percent fair and two percent poor. The development of the crop had reached 63 percent filled by May 30, compared to 68 percent in 1998 and 41 percent for the five-year average. An estimated seven percent was turning yellow compared to 27 percent in 1998 and the five-year average of eight percent.

Adequate rainfall throughout June helped both the corn and soybean crops develop ahead of the five-year average. Most progress occurred during the first week of the month when corn planting reached 99 percent and soybean planting reaching 90 percent. Harvest of wheat began the middle of the month and was 46 percent complete by June 27, ahead of 51 percent for 1998 and the five-year average of 24 percent. In July soils became drier and continued dry into August causing stress to the crops. Wheat harvest continued and by mid-July was 99 percent completed compared to 98 percent in 1998 and 94 percent for the five-year average. A severe thunderstorm with high winds passed through central Illinois in mid-August flattening some corn fields, but provided some much needed rain to the area. Thunderstorms across the state during this time, combined with cooler temperatures, helped to relieve some crop stress caused by extremely dry weather.

Drier weather during September and October allowed harvest to begin early and progress at near record levels. Harvest began shortly before the middle of September and had advanced to 28 percent for corn and 14 percent for soybeans by September 26. The harvest of corn was well ahead of the five-year average of nine percent as well as 20 percent for 1998. Soybean harvest was a little ahead of the five-year average of 13 percent and 15 percent for 1998. By October 17, corn was 72 percent harvested, ahead of the five-year average of 49 percent and 56 percent for 1998. Soybean harvest stood at 75 percent, ahead of the five-year average of 74 percent and 68 percent for 1998. Ideal weather conditions continued throughout the harvest season and pushed harvest well ahead of normal. By November 7, 98 percent of the corn crop had been harvested and 99 percent of the soybean crop had been harvested. This compares with a five-year average of 89 percent for corn and 96 percent for soybeans.

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1/ 1977=100

## CROP PRODUCTION INDEX

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