

## CROP HIGHLIGHTS

**ACREAGE:** Indiana's principal field crops totaled 12.7 million acres for harvest during 2017, up one percent from 2016. Soybean acreage in 2017 was up 300 thousand acres from the previous year; corn for grain was down 280 thousand acres. Soybean acreage was an all-time high. Hay acreages saw increases with alfalfa and other hay up 60,000 and 20,000 acres respectively.

**YIELDS:** The beginning of the 2017 season saw flooding rains and the 2<sup>nd</sup> warmest April on record for the State, preventing farmers from getting a timely start on spring fieldwork. Farmers received a much appreciated break at the end of April when the rain lessened and fields began to dry out. Unfortunately, this reprieve in weather was only temporary as increased precipitation and cold temperatures arrived in May. Heavy rain showers followed each round of planting leading to slower than normal emergence and germination. Many of the plants that made it out of the ground were submerged in water, which ultimately created more work for farmers as they replanted many acres during the spring. There were also a few days of freezing temperatures in May that kept growth behind schedule. June brought warm, sunny days that provided ideal conditions for the replanted fields.

Beginning with the first seeds sown in April through the final planting day in June, Indiana farmers had an average of 3.3 days per week that were suitable for fieldwork. Although farmers had fewer days available to work in the fields than last year, they were able to remain close to last year's planting pace. The first half of the planting season for both corn and soybeans began ahead of schedule, but repeated heavy rain showers in May slowed planting pace, putting it slightly behind the five-year average by the end of the month.

Winter wheat harvest progressed ahead of last year and the five-year average for most of the harvest period, which meant that double-cropped soybeans made it in the ground fairly quickly. Soybeans began to emerge quickly in mid-May, but growth tapered off due to cold temperatures and wet weather late in the month. Many soybean fields needed to be replanted due to poor emergence, and the replanted seedlings seemed to grow fairly well despite the weather.

By mid-June, 98% of corn was planted and 86% had emerged, on pace with 2016 but slightly behind the five-year average. Much of the crop would be replanted due to oversaturation. Towards the end of the June, corn fields began to show large variation in height, maturity and condition, with only 46% in good to excellent condition. Warmer and sunnier conditions in late June and early July provided farmers with many opportunities to replant damaged crops. Average days suitable for fieldwork jumped to 4.9 days per week. The storms returned in July, leaving standing water in many fields, stunting crop development.

During the final days of June, corn and soybean progress were both slightly behind average, with corn only 8% silking and soybeans 14% blooming. Increased humidity at the end of the month kept farmers very busy applying late-season Nitrogen and spraying to protect corn fields from a variety of diseases. The excess moisture from the rain also left some soybeans yellowed. Soybean condition remained relatively steady at 51% good to excellent through the beginning of July.

As the season progressed, heavy rains with strong winds persisted, making the season challenging for farmers. Weed pressures increased and crop condition declined, largely due to decreased efficiency of sprays and Nitrogen loss from the numerous storms. By the end of July, both corn and soybeans were rated under 50% in good to excellent condition for the Central and Southern regions, and over 50% in Northern region. Corn and soybeans in Central Indiana were rated near 40% good to excellent, a result of saturating rains throughout the growing season.

The Indiana corn yield was 180 bushels per acre, while soybeans yielded 54 bushels per acre on average.

**PRODUCTION:** Indiana corn production in 2017 totaled 934 million bushels, 1 percent below 2016's total of 946 million bushels. Indiana's soybean production totaled 321 million bushels, down 1 percent from 2016's 324 million bushels. Indiana wheat production at 17.8 million bushels was down 21 percent mostly on fewer acres, though yield was also lower than the previous year. All hay production at 1.64 million tons, was down 8 percent from the previous year.



"Corn Rows"  
Photographer ~~ Jaden Cords  
Age 14, Medaryville, IN