

The progress of the 2008 growing season was slowed due to variable temperatures and rainfall in early spring. Temperatures were variable during the month of April; from ten degrees below normal, to over ten degrees above normal in many localities. Most areas experienced below normal precipitation for the month. The month began with temperatures near normal the first week of April, and rose to above normal by mid-month in most localities. Temperatures were variable throughout May; from up to sixteen degrees below normal, to over ten degrees above normal in many locations. For the month, temperatures were below normal and precipitation above normal. Topsoil moisture was mostly adequate to surplus after mid-May. Temperatures rose to above normal for the first half of June. Warmer temperatures, and inadequate rainfall, resulted in a decrease in topsoil moisture. Temperatures moderated the second half of June, but a continued lack of adequate rainfall necessitated the use of irrigation during the latter part of June. During July, the central and northern part of the state had adequate rainfall; but the southern area of the state continued to be affected by dry weather. The dry weather and heat wave affected the corn crop, which did not get sufficient rain when needed. Some farmers chopped corn for silage because ear development was not full. No-till soybeans fell behind in growth due to late planting because the ground was hard and dry following the wheat harvest. Dry weather conditions during August affected the corn crop in the entire state, and irrigation was needed in many localities. The dry weather conditions also affected the soybean crop; and double-cropped soybeans were slow to develop. However, occasional heavy rains and hailstorms caused considerable damage to various crops, during the latter part of August. Wet and mild weather conditions prevailed during September; and producers were relieved by much needed rainfall. Increased rainfall during the month of September arrived too late to improve yield expectations for field corn. Early crop soybeans displayed small soybean pods due to the prolonged dry weather. Dry conditions continued through most of the month of October. Temperatures fell during the final week of October, with frost reported in some localities.

Corn: Corn planted for all purposes in 2008 totaled 85,000 acres and 74,000 were harvested for grain. Yield decreased 8 bushels to 116 bushels per acre from the previous year's yield of 124 bushels. The decrease in acreage lowered production by 1.6 million bushels to 8.6 million bushels. Growers received a market year average of \$4.15 per bushel for their grain, a decrease of \$0.50 per bushel from 2007's price of \$4.65 per bushel. Total crop value, for corn for grain decreased by 25 percent from \$47.3 million in 2007 to \$35.7 million in 2008.

Soybeans: Soybean planted and harvested acreages increased by 10,000 acres to 92,000 acres planted and 90,000 acres harvested in 2008. The soybean yield was

down one bushels per acre from 2007's yield of 31 bushels per acre to 30 bushels in 2008. Production increased to 2.70 million bushels in 2008, from 2.48 million bushels in 2007. The average price received by growers decreased by \$1.35 from \$10.10 per bushel in 2007 to \$8.75 per bushel in 2008. Total crop value decreased by 6 percent to \$23.6 million.

Winter wheat: The 35,000 acres planted to winter wheat in 2008 was 4,000 acres more than in 2007. Harvested acreage was at 33,000, an increase of 5,000 acres, too. The yield at 61 bushels per acre was 10 bushels per acre more than the previous year's. Production at 2.01 million bushels was up 41 percent from 2007. The season average price of \$6.30 per bushel was \$0.50 more than the price in 2007. Total crop value increased by 53 percent to \$12.7 million.

Barley: Barley planted and harvested acreage remained unchanged from 2007 at 3,000 and 2,000 acres, respectively. The yield was 71 bushels per acre, an increase of 3 bushels per acre over last year. Production in 2008 increased, by 4 percent, to 142,000 bushels. The average price received by growers was up by \$1.55 per bushel in 2008 to \$4.25. The value of barley produced increased by 64 percent from \$367,000 in 2007 to \$604,000 in 2008.

Hay: All hay harvested acres was unchanged in 2008 at 115,000 acres. Alfalfa hay and other hay acres remained unchanged, at 20,000 and 95,000 acres respectively. The alfalfa hay yield increased by 7 percent to 2.9 tons per acre. Yield for other hay increased by 19 percent, to 1.9 tons per acre. The overall hay yield was 2.08 tons per acre. Alfalfa production was 58,000 tons and other hay production was 181,000 tons; the resulting total hay production was 239,000 tons. The season average price for all hay decreased \$10.00 per ton from \$158 in 2007 to \$148.00 per ton in 2008. Overall, the total hay crop value increased by 9 percent in 2008, to \$35.3 million.

Potatoes: Potatoes planted and harvested acreage totals decreased by 400 acres to 2,000 acres in 2008. The yield was 230 hundredweight per acre, a decrease of 35 hundredweight from 2007. Production was 460,000 hundredweight in 2008 compared with 636,000 hundredweight in 2007. The total crop value increased, by 31 percent from \$4.60 million in 2007 to \$6.03 million in 2008.

Sweet Potatoes: Sweet potato planted and harvested acreage was unchanged, at 1,200 acres, from the previous year. The yield was 125 hundredweight per acre, an increase of 25 hundredweight from last year's. In 2008, production increased by 25 percent, to 150,000 hundredweight. The average price per hundredweight increased by \$7.90 to \$35.30 in 2008. The value of production totaled \$53 million.