

# Ark. Farmers Reap 20 Percent Of Sorghum Crop In A Week

**LITTLE ROCK, ARK.**

**R**ain this weekend could expand areas of flattened crops left by Isaac, county extension agents said.

For a row crop year where so much went right – including early planting that led to an earlier harvest – Isaac’s timing was a large fly in the ointment.

As the storm crawled northward last week it dumped locally heavy amounts in parts of the Delta, filling ditches, streams and flooding the low ends of crop fields, as well as causing lodging, or flattening of rice and other crops. Lodging is an issue because it makes harvesting the crop much harder.

“If we get a fairly substantial rain this weekend, it will cause us more problems that Isaac,” said Chad Norton, Lincoln County extension staff chair for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. “More rain and more wind will lodge more rice.”

Until Isaac, Arkansas’ irrigated crops were faring well.

The National Weather Service said northeastern Arkansas could see rainfall up to 2 inches with Friday’s system. In Woodruff County, many fields were still drying out in the days since Isaac.

“I hadn’t seen many combines in the field so far this week,” Eugene Terhune, Woodruff County extension staff chair said Friday. “Those in areas where the soil is sandier is where they were able to get back to combining.”

The amount of damage 2 inches of rain might bring depends “on where you are in the county. We received from 1 to 10 inches in some places.”

The big fear with the weekend system is for rice that lodged during Isaac’s sojourn.

“The trouble is when rice goes down, it’s leaning against the standing rice,” Terhune said. “It won’t take much of a push to those plants to expand the areas of lodged rice.”

In the week they raced Isaac, Arkansas farmers reaped a fifth of their sorghum and nearly finished off the corn harvest, according to figures from this week’s crop report from the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

On average, Arkansas growers had just under five days suitable for field work last week; just enough time to see where forecast models would take then Tropical Storm Isaac to landfall and beyond.

“We did have severe lodging of our corn variety plots from the wind and rain,” said Dennis Bailey, Jefferson County extension staff chair for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. “All the beans I visited were OK it appears.”

“All farmers are busy in the beans and remaining rice” working to get those crops out of the field, he said.

Isaac did make a huge impact in the U.S. Drought Monitor map of Arkansas. The most severe form of drought “exceptional,” was reduced from covering nearly half the state to covering

just 12.39 percent in the map issued Thursday. The Drought Monitor also showed Arkansas with 0.16 percent of the state as having no drought, something last seen June 19. (See map at [http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/DM\\_state.htm?AR,S](http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/DM_state.htm?AR,S))



**Flattened corn in a demonstration plot in Jefferson County, Ark. Heavy weather associated with Isaac is blamed for the damage.**

(U of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture photo by Dennis Bailey)

The NASS report Tuesday said that corn was 91 percent harvested, up from 78 percent the previous week and nearly double the 46 percent five-year average.

Cotton was 1 percent harvested, on par with the five-year average.

Rice was 44 percent harvested, doubling the previous week’s figure and well ahead of the 16 percent five-year average.

Sorghum was 85 percent harvested, up from 65 percent the previous week and ahead of the 37 percent five-year average.

Soybean farmers also doubled their harvest to 16 percent from 8 percent the previous week. The five-year average is 5 percent.  $\Delta$



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