

Arkansas Crops Play Catch Up; Corn Harvest Begins In S. Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

Arkansas corn is speeding toward harvest, nearly all cotton is setting bolls and nearly half the rice crop has seed heads, according to the weekly crop report from the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

For crops that were planted, or replanted so late in the game, the plants have done a great deal of catching up this summer.

A quarter of the state's corn is mature, compared to 34 percent last year and well ahead of the 12 percent five-year average. With 98 percent of cotton setting bolls, the crop is ahead of last year's, and the five-year average of 95 percent. Rice heading, at 44 percent, is ahead of the 42 percent five-year average, but behind last year's 72 percent average. Seventy-nine percent of soybeans are blooming, just below the 80 percent five-year average, but off the 2010 pace at 87 percent.

The corn harvest has taken its first steps in Chicot and Desha counties.

"We've had good growing conditions and all the corn is irrigated," said Wes Kirkpatrick, Desha County extension staff chair with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture. "The bulk of our ground in production is irrigated - 75-plus percent. Overall, things look pretty good."

However, as harvest approaches in areas further north, where flooding was more serious near the White, Black and Arkansas rivers, "that's when you'll start hearing about problems," said Kevin Lawson, extension corn and grain sorghum verification program associate.

Statewide, pastures have taken a turn for the worse, with only 5 percent being rated as good, zero percent are excellent. Seventy-nine percent were rated poor or very poor. △



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