

Corn, Sorghum Harvests Nearly Complete As Cotton, Rice And Soybeans Lag

LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

Dry weather is helping get crops out of the field, but for those planting winter wheat, a little rain couldn't hurt.

"We could use a good rain for wheat planting," Jason Kelley, extension agronomist-wheat and feed grains, for the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, said Tuesday.

"Most areas are pretty dry now. Any rain would help, but right now the forecast looks clear," he said.

Drought has extended its grip on Arkansas. According to the Sept. 27 U.S. Drought Monitor, drought occupies 98.79 percent of the state, up from 97.82 percent a week earlier. Only Randolph County and a tiny sliver of Clay County have drought-free parts.

Winter wheat planting is 9 percent complete, ahead of the five-year-average of 6 percent, and is 2 percent emerged.

Among other crops, Arkansas' corn harvest continues to run ahead of schedule, cotton, rice and soybeans lag behind, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service report released this week.

Corn reached 96 percent complete last week, which is slightly behind last year's pace of 99 percent, but still well ahead of the five-year av-

erage of 90 percent.

Sorghum harvest is nearing completion, with 92 percent harvested, up from 86 percent last week. Last year at this time, the sorghum harvest was complete, but this year is still running ahead of the five-year-average of 87 percent.

Cotton harvest nearly doubled from this time last week, reaching 11 percent complete, compared to a five-year average of 27 percent. Fifty-three percent of the state's cotton was harvested at this time last year, but less-than-favorable conditions in 2011 slowed progress quite a bit.

Heavy rains got rice off to a slow start this year, and excessive heat only complicated matters. As of Sunday, Arkansas rice was 65 percent harvested, well behind 2010's 88 percent pace and trailing the 71-percent five-year-average.

The state soybean harvest is 23 percent complete, trailing well behind last year's 41 percent pace, and behind the five-year-average of 31 percent. However, average bean yields for September were 2 bushels per acre better than last year, which offers some optimism.

See the NASS report online at http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Arkansas/Publications/Crop_Progress_&_Condition/cw100311.pdf. △



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