

# Final 2012 Crop Production Report Upholds Yield Records In Soybeans, Corn And Rice

JONESBORO, ARK.

The final numbers for Arkansas' 2012 crop year are in and have reaffirmed the expected yield records in soybean, corn and rice crops, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

(See: USDA: "Ark farmers produce record soybean, corn, rice crops in 2012," <http://bit.ly/VLX4pa>.)

2012 was found, too, to be the second-best on record for Arkansas cotton yields, according to the report released on Friday.

In addition to the final 2012 crop production estimates, the USDA also released the results of its "Winter Wheat Seedings" report. Arkansas' winter wheat acreage was estimated at 660,000 acres up 20 percent, or 110,000 acres, from the previous year and "right in line with expectations," Scott Stiles, extension economist for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture said on Saturday. "That's the highest planted acreage in Arkansas since 2008's 1.07 million acres. As for the U.S., soft red winter wheat acreage was up 16 percent."

The acreage increase coincided with strong wheat prices, he said.

"We planted roughly half our wheat acres in October and were 98 percent planted by Nov. 25," Stiles said. "During October and November we saw strong prices in the July wheat futures contract. Prices settled at \$8.73 in October and close to there in November at \$8.70.

"Couple that with the fact November 2013 soybeans were trading in the \$13 to \$13.40 range at that time, the economics of double-cropping was very enticing to growers," he said. "The outlook for 2013 cotton prices was also a factor in the wheat acreage increase."

Double-cropping is practice in which farmers plant soybeans in just-harvested winter wheat acreage.

Cotton and corn acres, whose numbers converged in 2012, will likely continue in their opposite directions in 2013, with corn acres on the rise.

"Cotton Grower' magazine just released the results of its own 2013 cotton acreage survey and Arkansas cotton acreage had a '3' in front of it," Stiles said. "Cotton acreage hasn't been that low since 1983, when more favorable soybean prices pulled cotton acres down to 320,000."

Stiles, who spends much of his December, January and February on the road to county production meetings discussing the economic outlook for row crop farmers, said, "there's still continued talk at meetings of increasing corn acres in 2013.

"We may be shocked at the increase if the weather permits all the intended acres," Stiles said, adding that a real surprise will be the in-

crease in corn acres in traditional rice areas."

"Rice prices are holding up well on the fears of losing acreage to soybeans or corn," he said. "There are other factors that growers are considering and high input costs and more intensive management of cotton and rice is also behind the expansion in corn and to a lesser degree soybeans."

Corn – The final production number for corn, 123.7 million bushels, topped even November's record-promising estimate of 122.13 million bushels. Yields were up from 2011, leaping from 142 bushels an acre to 178 bushels an acre, up one bushel from November's estimate. Harvested acres were 695,000 in 2012, compared with 520,000 acres in 2011.

Cotton – Cotton production came in at 1.32 million bales, compared to 1.277 million the year before. The yield was 1,083 pounds of lint per acre, well up from the November estimate of 1,051 pounds, and above the 2011 figure of 929 pounds per acre. The yield was the second best in Arkansas, whose record of 1,114 pounds per acre was set in 2004. Harvested cotton acreage declined from 660,000 in 2011 to 585,000 in 2012.

Rice – Arkansas retained its rice crown in 2012, with an estimated 95.99 million hundredweight, up from 78.1 million the year before. Yields were up from 2011 were up too, from 6,770 pounds in 2011 to 7,470 pounds in 2012. Acres increased slightly from 1.15 million in 2011 to 1.29 million in 2012. The old record of 7,230 pounds per acre was set in 2007.

Sorghum – Sorghum acres jumped between 2011 and 2012 from 90,000 acres to 135,000 harvested acres. Yield per acre rose as well, from 72 bushels per acre in 2011 to 84 in 2012. Production was pegged at 11.34 million bushels in November's estimate, up from 6.48 million bushels in 2011.

Soybeans – Arkansas farmers harvested fewer acres in 2012 – 3.16 million – than the previous year, 3.28 million. Their yields were significantly higher in 2012, 43 bushels per acre, compared with 2011's 38.5 bushels per acre. Total production was 135.88 million bushels last year, up from 126.28 million bushels in 2011.

Friday's report marked the first outing for USDA's new release time of noon Eastern. In the past, reports were released at 8:30 a.m. Also out on Friday were the World Agricultural Supply and Demand estimates, "Rice Stocks," the "Cotton and Grain World Markets," "World Agricultural Production," "Cotton Ginnings" and the annual crop production. ([http://nass.usda.gov/Newsroom/Notices/01\\_08\\_2013.asp](http://nass.usda.gov/Newsroom/Notices/01_08_2013.asp))

The next milestone report will be the "Prospective Plantings" at the end of March. Δ



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