

Kentucky Winter Wheat Seeded Acreage Decreased

LOUISVILLE, KY.

Kentucky farmers seeded an estimated 490,000 acres to winter wheat during the fall of 2008 for the 2009 crop according to the Kentucky Field Office of the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. This was a decrease of 90,000 acres from the 2008 crop. Winter wheat seeded in Kentucky is utilized for grain, hay, silage and as a cover crop prior to setting tobacco. Increasing input costs and declining prices reduced acreage this fall.

Seeding of winter wheat started in late September. Farmers were waiting for improved moisture conditions for germination before planting their fall grains. Seeding progressed slowly during October as farmers waited for additional moisture to improve soil moisture. Seeding was 62 percent complete by the last week of October. On November 10, winter wheat seeding was 90 percent complete. This equaled last year and was ahead of the 81 percent for average. Most farmers report adequate moisture for seeding and germination while some report conditions too dry to seed. Condition of the

emerged crop was 1 percent very poor, 8 percent poor, 22 percent fair, 55 percent good and 14 percent excellent.

U.S. winter wheat planted area for harvest in 2009 was estimated at 42.1 million acres, down 9 percent from 2008. Seeding began last August behind the 5-year average pace and remained behind until mid-November due to wet weather and delayed row crop harvest. Nearly all of the U.S. acreage was seeded by December 1 with the exception of some intended acres in the Southeast and California. Seeding was completed by the end of December in California. The winter wheat crop condition at the end of November was rated 65 percent good to excellent compared with 44 percent the previous year.

Soft red winter wheat area, at about 8.29 million acres was down 26 percent from last year. Kentucky seeds soft red winter wheat. Large acreage decreases from last year occurred in all growing states due largely to the late row crop harvest, high input costs, and the fall in wheat prices. Planted area decreased 350,000 acres or more in Arkansas, Illinois, and Missouri. Δ



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