



News Release

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KENTUCKY FARMERS EXPECTING SMALLER CORN AND SOYBEAN CROPS

Crop prospects generally declined during August due to dry soil conditions according to the Kentucky Field Office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Corn and soybean yields declined with the dry conditions while tobacco yields were unchanged. Over one-quarter of the corn crop was mature and awaiting the start of harvesting on the first of the month while the burley crop was nearly 50 percent cut and housed in barns for curing.

Corn production in **Kentucky** was forecast at 157.6 million bushels, down 3 percent from the August forecast and 10 percent from the 2007 crop. The decrease from the 2007 crop was due to a decline in acreage as yield was up 8 bushels from last year. Yield was forecast at 137 bushels per acre, down 4 bushels from the August forecast. Acreage harvested for grain at 1.15 million acres was down 210,000 acres from the large 2007 crop. Dry conditions hurt the corn yield during August but the crop was generally reaching maturity by the time very dry conditions occurred in late month. Yield forecasts for the State were varied with some areas getting adequate rain while others remained very dry. **U.S.** corn production was forecast at 12.1 billion bushels, down 2 percent from last month and 8 percent below 2007. Based on conditions as of September 1, yields were expected to average 152.3 bushels per acre, down 2.7 bushels from August but 1.2 bushels above last year. If realized, yield would be the second highest on record, behind 2004, while production would be the second largest, behind last year.

Soybean production by **Kentucky** farmers was forecast at 47.5 million bushels, down 8 percent from the August estimate while up 69 percent from the 2007 crop. The increase was due to both a larger harvested acreage and increased yield per acre. Yield was estimated at 36 bushels per acre, down 3 bushels from August. Harvested acreage was forecast at 1.32 million acres, an increase of 240,000 acres from the previous year. Acreage in the State not planted to corn this year was planted to soybeans where possible. The weather during July and August was not very cooperative for soybean production. Double crop soybeans (soybeans planted after the winter wheat harvest) have been suffering from a generally dry summer. Moisture is needed to fill pods with beans and some soaking rains are needed. **U.S.** soybean production was forecast at 2.93 billion bushels, down 1 percent from the August forecast but up 13 percent from last year. If realized, this would be the fourth largest production on record. Based on September 1 conditions, yields were expected to average 40.0 bushels per acre, down 0.5 bushel from last month and down 1.2 bushels from 2007.

Kentucky burley tobacco production for September 1 was forecast at 144.9 million pounds, unchanged from August while down 6 percent from the 2007 crop. The smaller production was due to a decrease in harvested acreage as yield was up 100 pounds. Burley yield at 2,100 pounds per acre was unchanged from the previous month. August was a very dry month which limited production growth but also limited disease and pest problems. Production for the **Burley Producing States** totaled 196.7 million pounds, down 2 percent from the August forecast and 5 percent below last year. Yields were expected to average 2,050 pounds per acre, 21 pounds below last month but 99 pounds above a year ago.

Kentucky dark fire-cured tobacco was forecast at 37.5 million pounds, up 15 percent from the August forecast and 51 percent from the 2007 crop. **Dark air-cured tobacco** was estimated at 20.1 million pounds, up 12 percent from August and 71 percent from last year's crop. The increase in dark air and dark fire poundage from August was due to an increase in harvested acreages.

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