

CROP HIGHLIGHTS

ACREAGE: Indiana's five major field crops totaled 12.2 million acres for harvest during 2008, down one percent from the 2007 harvested acreage. Corn acreage for harvest was 14 percent below a year ago, while soybean acreage for harvest increased 13 percent. Winter wheat harvested acreage was up 51 percent from a year ago, but all hay harvested acreage was down 3 percent from the 2007 level. Oat acreage for harvest decreased 37 percent from 2007. Other crops showing harvested acreage changes were snap beans for processing, down 10 percent while tomatoes for processing decreased one percent. Popcorn acreage for harvest decreased 12 percent from 2007. In addition, watermelons harvested acreage decreased 3 percent, while tomatoes for fresh market harvested acreage decreased 10 percent from 2007.

YIELDS: The 2008 growing season got off to a slow start due to cold, wet soil conditions. By May 18th, only 68 percent of the intended corn acreage and 23 percent of the soybean acreage had been planted. Severe flooding occurred the first week of June in several central and southern counties causing many acres of corn and soybeans to be drowned out. Wet weather continued throughout the spring hindering planting progress especially in southern Indiana. In fact, by June 15th, the southern districts were only at 91 percent planted for corn and 60 percent for soybeans. The persistent rain showers also made it difficult for farmers to cut and bale hay without it getting wet. Winter wheat harvest was also slowed but good yields were obtained in most areas. The major field crops had plenty of moisture until the middle of August when soils began to dry out. By August 24th, 54 percent of the topsoil was rated short or very short. Soils remained dry until Hurricane Ike brought some much needed precipitation to the state during the second week of September. However, strong winds also caused damage to many corn fields and some soybeans. Harvest began in mid September and continued at a slow pace throughout the fall. By November 2nd, Indiana corn harvest was 74 percent complete and soybean harvest was 91 percent complete. In some areas stalk quality was an issue causing a considerable amount of corn to lodge from the heavy winds produced by Hurricane Ike. Minimal rainfall allowed farmers plenty of time to harvest, however, the corn crop was slow to dry down with moisture content hovering around 20 percent in many fields. Moisture levels finally came down to acceptable levels in early November allowing farmers to finish harvest. The average yield for corn in 2008 was 160 bushels per acre, 6 bushels above the 2007 yield, and the 2nd highest on record. The average yield for soybeans was 45 bushels per acre, 1 bushel below the 2007 yield. The average yield for winter wheat at 69 bushels per acre was 13 bushels above the previous year's yield of 56 bushels per acre. The average oat yield at 75 bushels per

acre was up 22 bushels from last year's yield of 53 bushels per acre. All hay yield at 3.16 tons per acre was .84 tons higher than the 2007 yield. Popcorn averaged 4,500 pounds per acre, up 300 pounds from the 4,200 pounds per acre produced a year earlier.

PRODUCTION: Corn produced during 2008 totaled 873.6 million bushels, 11 percent below the 2007 level of 981.0 million bushels. Soybean production was 244.4 million bushels, 11 percent above the 220.3 million bushels produced a year earlier. Winter wheat production increased 86 percent from a year earlier, to 38.6 million bushels. Popcorn production totaled 274.5 million pounds, 5 percent below the 2007 level. Oat production of 375 thousand bushels was 12 percent below the 424 thousand bushels produced in 2007. All hay production, at 1.9 million tons, increased 32 percent. Peppermint production decreased 22 percent while spearmint production increased 4 percent from 2007. Apple production increased 15 percent to 23.0 million pounds. Blueberry production totaled 3.8 million pounds, a 138 percent increase from the previous year.

"Just Before Harvest"
Photographer ~ Anna Porter
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