

## CROP HIGHLIGHTS

**ACREAGE:** Indiana's principal field crops totaled 11.1 million acres for harvest during 2019, 880 thousand acres less than 2018. Soybean acreage at 5.4 million and corn acreage at 5.0 million were down 600 thousand and 200 thousand acres less respectively from the previous year.

**YIELDS:** The 2019 spring planting season was the most difficult in recent memory. Extremely wet weather kept planters out of the fields for most of April and May, with planting only really picking up during mid-June. Farmers saw an average of 1.9 days suitable for fieldwork per week throughout the months of April and May. By the end of May, only 22% of corn had been planted, significantly lower than the 85% five-year average, and soybeans were 11% planted, compared to a 63% five-year average.

Weather conditions started to look up in June, which saw three weeks with over 4 days suitable for fieldwork. However, above average rainfall for the month still kept soil moisture levels high, and corn and soybean planting remained well behind schedule heading into July. With the extremely unusual spring, farmers had to make tough decisions on whether to stick to their planting intentions, switch acres to another crop, or to take prevent plant payments.

The first full week of July saw corn planting all but wrapped up, albeit about a month behind the five-year average, with soybean planting not far behind. Farmers took advantage of the dry July weather to focus on nutrient and pest management, winter wheat harvest, and catching up on hay cuttings, which had also fallen behind schedule due to the excessively wet spring. July brought below average levels of precipitation, a welcomed sight for most, and a large increase in days suitable for fieldwork, with weekly averages ranging from 4.9 to 6.5 days suitable. Though by the end of the month, soil moisture levels had fallen below the five-year averages, irrigation rigs were running, and fields in some areas were showing signs of moisture stress.

At the end of July, both corn and soybean development were still well behind schedule. As of July 28, only 40% of corn was silking, compared to the 84% five-year average, and 37% of soybeans were blooming, compared to the 79% five-year average. At that time, 38% percent of both corn and soybeans

were rated in good to excellent condition, compared to 69% and 57%, respectively, last year. Winter wheat harvest was mostly completed by the end of the month, one of the few progress items that remained on schedule during this challenging season.

Throughout the remainder of the growing season, corn and soybean progress continued to lag the five-year averages by significant margins. By September 1, only 33% of both corn and soybeans were rated in good to excellent condition, compared to 72% for both crops in 2018.

With harvest already delayed due to late planting, inclement weather throughout November further delayed progress. By December 1, harvest as all but finished with soybeans at 96% harvested and corn at 93% harvested. The Indiana corn yield was 169 bushels per acre, while soybeans yielded 51 bushels per acre.

**PRODUCTION:** Indiana corn production in 2019 totaled 814.6 million bushels, 16 percent below 2018's total of 967.7 million bushels. Indiana's soybean production totaled 273.4 million bushels, down 20 percent from 2018's 342.7 million bushels. Indiana wheat production at 16.1 million bushels was down 13 percent. All hay production at, 1.29 million tons, was down 7 percent from the previous year.



"Pathway to Production"  
Photographer -- Grace Kessinger  
Age 10, Elwood, IN