

Del. crop estimates way down

NEWARK, Del. — The severity of the 1983 drought is reflected in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's September crop production estimates. The national average corn yield is now projected at 85.1 bushels per acre, down 26 percent from last year's record 114.8 bushels and down 15 percent from last month's estimate. According to University of Delaware extension crops marketing specialist Carl German, the corn yield is expected to be the lowest since the frost-damaged crop of 1974.

Estimates of corn acreage to be harvested are considerably down from a month ago, the economist says. In August the federal crop reporting service predicted 52.41 million acres would be picked. They've reduced that estimate to only 51.56 acres as compared to last year's total of 73.15 million acres. The 1983 corn crop is projected at 4.39 billion bushels, 48 percent less than last year's record crop.

Delaware's corn yield now is forecast at 11.3 million bushels — that's 39 percent less than the 18.6 million bushel record crop in 1982, German says. The state average yield is forecast at 75 bushels per acre, down 27 bushels an acre from last year.

Of the major corn-producing states, only four are expected to have average yields of 100 bushels

or more per acre—Minnesota, Nebraska, Texas and Wisconsin. Yields in Kentucky and North Carolina are expected to average only 50 bushels an acre.

The U.S. soybean crop is estimated at 1.535 billion bushels, down 33 percent from a year ago and 17 percent below the August estimate. The national yield is expected to average 24.9 bushels an acre compared to last year's record 32.3 bushels and last month's estimate of 29.7 bushels.

At an estimated 6.13 million bushels, the economist said Delaware's soybean crop could be 6 percent smaller than last year's. The average yield is estimated at 25 bushels an acre, one bushel more than in 1982. Only five states—Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska and Ohio—are expected to have average yields of 30 bushels or more. Eleven major states will probably have average yields below 20 bushels an acre.

With a 1983 corn crop of 4.39 billion bushels and carry-over stocks of about 3.45 billion, this year's corn supply would total 7.84 billion bushels, down 27 percent from last year. Carry-over stocks of corn at the end of the 1983-84 marketing year may be below one billion bushels for the first time in seven years, German says.

University of Illinois economists are predicting that, because of reduced stocks, the

price of corn will have to go high enough and stay there long enough to reduce total use about 4 percent from the current year's level," the specialist said. "They predict that exports and domestic processing of corn will probably increase marginally during the coming year. This means domestic feed use will have to cut 7 to 8 percent to adjust to the reduced supply."

The price of corn could well exceed the previous high of \$3.76 for the December futures contract, German says. It may approach \$4 a bushel. Prices will need to stay at relatively high levels for a period of perhaps two months to reduce feed demand, he says.

A 1983 soybean crop of 1.535 billion bushels and carry-over stocks of 455 million bushels would result in a total supply of 1.99 billion bushels. Assuming that a minimum pipeline carry-over supply is about 120 million bushels, soybean use may have to be cut about 10 percent during the coming year, he says.

The export demand for soybeans

should remain relatively strong because available supplies of soybeans and products in South America are small. Domestic demand may have to be reduced by about 12 to 13 percent during the year ahead. German says the price of soybeans is expected to reach new highs for the current year

November futures may go above \$10 and possibly much higher if the rate of use remains high.

With this outlook, livestock producers will be felling the squeeze, and consumers can expect to pay more for meat in the coming year.

Hunter bill passes House

HARRISBURG — Legislation introduced by Rep. Terry Scheetz to curb crop damage caused by hunters has passed the state House nearly unanimously.

House Bill 686, introduced by Scheetz last April, was sent to the Senate by a vote of 198 to 1. It would prohibit hunting and trapping in unharvested fields without permission from the farmer.

Scheetz's measure calls for fines and damages to be paid by those who fail to comply and it would change enforcement responsibility

from local police to Game Commission officials.

"Hunters who would break the law would be subject to a \$100 fine and a year-long suspension of their hunting privileges," noted Scheetz.

"This vote represented a victory for farmers and hunters. Farmers will hopefully see less damage and hunters will see fewer 'no trespassing' signs and will be able to hunt on a larger number of harvested fields.

"I expect that the measure will receive expeditious consideration in the Senate."

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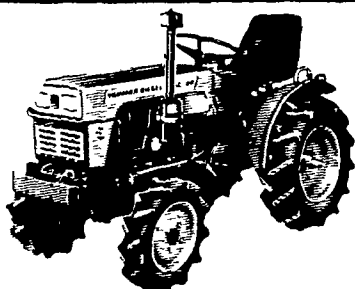
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