

NASS

Agriculture Counts

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Pa. State Statistician

Editor's note: This is a monthly column from the Pennsylvania Ag Statistics Service (PASS), a field office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA). The Website is www.usda.gov/nass/.

SEE YOU AT

AG PROGRESS DAYS

If you are attending Ag Progress Days at Penn State from Aug. 19-21, please stop by our booth. This year, we will be in the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture building. We will be there all three days to provide information, discuss the use of NASS statistics, and personally thank you for helping with the recent Ag Census.

We will have information about agricultural production, our confidentiality pledge to all survey respondents, lesson plans for math and agriculture, Internet access, free mail and e-mail subscriptions, and more.

Access To All Our Statistics

For the latest details about acreage, forecasted yields, average prices, and crops in storage in Pennsylvania and around the nation, see www.usda.gov/nass/. Try the QuickSTATS button or see individual reports through the Search button where you can select the item of interest from the Commodity list. Please call us at (717) 787-3904 if you don't have access to the Internet.

For example, the acreage and yield information shown below is taken from the "Crop Production" report issued around the 10th of each month with the latest acreage and yield statistics. Another report of interest is the "Agricultural Prices" report issued near the end of each month.

2003 Acreage

In my May article, I discussed the June Acreage survey. The resulting "Acreage" report was issued June 30 with acreage for many crops across the nation.

In Pennsylvania, growers expect to harvest 900,000 acres of grain corn or 3 percent more than last year, 365,000 soybean acres or 4 percent more, 4,000 sorghum acres or 33 percent more, 1.9 million acres of dry hay or 5.5 percent more, 3,700 tobacco acres (Maryland- and Pennsylvania-type only) or 9 percent more, and 14,000 acres of potatoes, same as last year.

Keystone small grain acreage is expected to be 160,000 wheat acres or 14 percent less than last year, 140,000 acres of oats (unchanged from 2002) and 65,000 barley acres or 7 percent more.

One item of national interest is that all harvested tobacco acres is estimated at 413,710 acres, down 3 percent from both the 2002 crop and 1 percent below the March Intentions report. If realized, this would be the lowest harvested acreage since 1874.

Crop Forecasts

Last month I discussed NASS yield forecast statistics. Here are the latest results for the 2003 crop in Pennsylvania. All yield forecasts assume normal growing conditions for the remainder of the season.

As of July 1, Pennsylvania oat yield is expected to be 67 bushels, winter wheat 50 bushels, and barley 64 bushels per acre. After combining these yield forecasts with acreage statistics from the June Acreage Survey, Pennsylvania wheat production is expected to be 20 percent below 2002, oat production up 10 percent, and

barley production down 6 percent from last year.

Based on July 1 conditions, the Pennsylvania peach crop is expected to be 70 million pounds, up 17 percent from last year. Tart cherry production in Pennsylvania is forecast to be 5 percent less than last year. However, at 218 million pounds, the national crop is about 3.5 times larger than 2002 but still 41 percent lower than 2001. These production swings are due mostly to the 2002 Michigan crop, which was devastated by unusual spring weather.

Sweet cherry production in Pennsylvania is expected to be 4 percent below last year.

Sweet corn for fresh market at 15,900 harvested acres is 1 above last year but 7 percent below 2001. Sweet corn processors have contracted 1,200 acres in 2003 compared to 1,400 acres last year. Snap bean processors have contracted 8,400 acres, 11 percent above last year's 7,600 acres.

Maple Syrup

Pennsylvania's 2003 maple syrup production came in at 48,000 gallons, down 13 percent from last year's 55,000 gallons and 30 percent below the 69,000 gallons in 2001. Over the past 12 years, only 3 years produced less syrup: 40,000 gallons in 1993, 43,000 in 1995, and 47,000 in 2000.

Sugarmakers set more taps this year, so the reduction in Pennsylvania syrup production was due to a lower yield per tap. There were 364,000 taps set during 2003, 8 percent more than the 337,000 taps set last year. Each tap averaged 0.132 gallons of syrup per tap, down from the 0.163 gallons last year and 0.192 gallons in 2001. Similar to last year, temperatures were generally too warm for good sap flow in Pennsylvania.

Nationally, maple syrup production in 2003 totaled 1.24 million gallons, 11 percent below above the 2002 crop. There were 6.62 million taps set this year compared to 6.75 million taps last year. Each tap averaged .187 gallons of syrup compared to .206 gallons last year.

In Pennsylvania, the value of the 2002 crop was \$1.47 million, down from the \$1.75 million in 2001. Nationally, the crop was valued at \$38.4 million.

Complete maple statistics are found in the 36-page June issue of the "Crop Production" report release June 11, 2003. It can be found at www.usda.gov/nass/; use the Search button and select Maple Syrup from the Commodity list.

Farm Expenses

It is no surprise to you that farm input costs always seem to go up. A recent report gives the agricultural community facts to back up that claim.

In the Northeast, the overall average costs per farm increased by 1.7 percent from 2001 to 2002 while nationwide costs increased by 2 percent. The Northeast region includes the 11 states from Maryland to Maine.

The top five Northeastern expenses per farm for 2002 follow with the change from the previous year: 1) Feed costs essentially unchanged. 2) Farm services up 6 percent. 3) Labor up 4 percent. 4) Supplies and repairs up 3 percent. 5) Improvements and construction down 4 percent. See our Website for the complete report.

A special "thank you" is extended to those of you that completed our surveys. Thanks again. Your help is essential to keep an accurate "Agriculture Counts."

Caterpillar Equipment To Be Featured At National Pike Show

BROWNSVILLE (Washington Co.) — The National Pike Steam, Gas, Horse and Construction Equipment Show is featuring Caterpillar equipment and Pennsylvania built engines this year.

Widely known as "the largest digging show in the USA," the National Pike Show will take place August 8-10 at the show grounds located just off Route 40, 5 miles west of Brownsville, and 20 miles east of Washington.

The show regularly features many operating Caterpillar tractors, graders, scrapers, bulldozers and other vintage Cat machines. There will also be 20 or more shovels, draglines, backhoes and cranes, several powered by Caterpillar engines.

Other attractions include the Rusty McGinness Erie Steam Shovel, engines and tractors, antique farm tractors and equipment, antique cars and trucks, a large craft display and a flea market.

Admission is \$4.00 per person, children under 12 free. Friday is



Caterpillar tractors and equipment will be featured at this year's National Pike Steam, Gas, Horse and Construction Equipment Show in Washington Co., August 8-10. Shown above, from left, are a 1926 Caterpillar 5 ton tractor and a 1927 Caterpillar 60 tractor, both pulling old scrapers.

Senior Citizens Day with seniors admitted for \$2.00. There are several eating areas, daily entertainment, plenty of shade, free parking, and free primitive

camping.

For more information, call Lou McMaster, (724) 356-2307, or Bob Kelly, (724) 796-1377. Website: www.nationalpike.com.

PDA Releases Dates For Fall Graded Feeder Cattle Sales

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) has released the following dates for the Fall Pennsylvania Graded Feeder Cattle Sales.

These dates have been selected so area producers can plan ahead to market their feeder cattle.

Cattle will be sold in uniform lots according to USDA grade, weight, sex and breed or color. Some sales will not accept cattle with dairy breeding, yearlings, bulls or cattle with horns. Cattle that have been dehorned should be healed. Castrated males should be healed and guaranteed against stags.

Personnel from the Livestock Division of the PDA Bureau of Market Development will grade the cattle for frame size and muscle thickness, using USDA Feeder Cattle grading standards.

Dates and locations are as follows:

EIGHTY-FOUR AUCTION SALES, EIGHTY-FOUR (Washington County) — Sale Date & Time: Friday, October 3, 2003 - 7:00 p.m. Cattle received: Friday, October 3, 2003 - 7:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Estimated headage: 700. No cattle with horns, dairy breeding or bulls will be accepted. Contact: Clair Kearns (724) 239-2124 Sale Barn: (724) 222-9965.

MIDDLEBURG LIVESTOCK AUCTION, MIDDLEBURG (Snyder County) — Sale Date & Time: Friday, October 3, 2003 - 7:00 p.m. Cattle received: Friday,

October 3, 2003 - 7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Estimated headage: 300 to 400. Contact: Bill Weist (570) 837-2222 or Larry Benfer (570) 837-5638. Sale Barn: (570) 837-2222.

INDIANA FARMER'S LIVESTOCK MARKET, HOMER CITY (Indiana County) — Sale Date & Time: Saturday, October 4, 2003 - 7:00 p.m. Cattle received: Saturday, October 4, 2003 - 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Estimated headage: 400. Contact: Becky Lipsi (724) 397-4087. Sale Barn: (724) 479-2600.

PENNSYLVANIA LIVESTOCK AUCTION, WAYNESBURG (Greene County) — Sale Date & Time: Wednesday, October 8, 2003 - 10:30 a.m. Cattle received: Tuesday, October 7, 2003 - 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Estimated headage: 1000. No bulls or yearlings will be graded. Contact: Joe Friend (301) 746-8178. Sale Barn: (724) 627-9585.

CENTRAL PA LIVESTOCK COOP - FEEDER CALF & YEARLING SALE: BELLEVILLE LIVESTOCK AUCTION, BELLEVILLE (Mifflin County) — Sale Date & Time: Friday, October 17, 2003 - 7:00 p.m. Cattle received: Friday, October 17, 2003 - 7:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon. Estimated headage: 300 to 350. Contact: Brian Glick (717) 935-2146. Sale Day: (717) 935-2146.

BEDFORD CATTLEMEN'S ASSOC. BEDFORD COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, BEDFORD

(Bedford County) — Sale Date & Time: Saturday, October 18, 2003 - 1:00 p.m. Cattle Received: Friday, October 17, 2003 - 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Estimated headage: 200. Contact: Dave Miller (814) 623-2321, Daryl Diehl (814) 735-4683, Bethany Fritz (814) 733-0109, or Joe Cogan (814) 652-9275.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY CATTLEMEN'S ASSOC., WESTMORELAND COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, GREENSBURG (Westmoreland County) — Sale Date & Time: Saturday, October 18, 2003 - 6:30 p.m. Cattle received: Saturday, October 18, 2003 - 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Estimated headage: 200. No cattle with horns, dairy breeding or bulls will be accepted. Contact: Dustin Heeter (724) 837-1402 or Conrad Dovovan (724) 593-6230.

MIDDLEBURG LIVESTOCK AUCTION, MIDDLEBURG (Snyder County) — Sale Date & Time: Friday, October 31, 2003 - 7:00 p.m. Cattle received: Friday, October 31, 2003 - 7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Estimated headage: 300 to 400. Contact: Bill Weist (717) 837-2222 or Larry Benfer (717) 837-5638. Sale Barn: (717) 837-2222. **SPECIAL NOTE:** This will be a sale for pre-conditioned cattle.

Additional information about these sales are available by calling Mark Butcher, Livestock Division, PDA Bureau of Market Development at (717) 787-5319 or available on the internet at www.agriculture.state.pa.us

Wheat Disease May Reduce State's Harvest

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — As farmers across Pennsylvania begin to harvest their wheat crops, a specialist in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences warns that the state's wheat is being threatened by a disease that could cause serious trouble for farmers already struggling after a difficult, wet spring.

Erick DeWolf, assistant professor of plant pathology, said the state has been hit hard by a disease called Fusarium head blight, or "scab," this season.

He said the disease is likely to cause serious losses by limiting crop yields and may also result in grain that is contaminated with mycotoxins, or poisons produced by fungi.

"Scab affects the heads and grain of the developing crop directly, resulting in moldy, shriveled kernels and severely reduced yields," DeWolf said. "In addition, the fungus that causes scab also can produce significant levels of mycotoxins in the diseased grain, and federal regulations prohibit that grain's use in flour."

"The severe disease observed in some fields this season is unusual in Pennsylvania," DeWolf said. "It can occur if rainy-humid weather prevails during the grain's latter, flowering growth stages when the wheat is most susceptible to infection — as it did during late May and June in the state."

De Wolf said little can be done to prevent the disease at this time, but growers can help reduce the impact of scab by harvesting wheat as quickly as possible to limit exposure to additional rains that could allow the disease to further damage the crop.

"Wheat producers may want to increase the airflow on combines," he said. "That will separate the lighter diseased kernels from healthy ones and limit the number of diseased kernels retained by the harvester. Producers also may want to consider harvesting grain at 20 percent moisture, then artificially drying and cleaning the grain to enhance quality this season."