

Mississippi Crop Situation

October 2, 2009

Mississippi State University Extension Service

Number 25

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This Weeks Crop Report

National Agriculture Statistics Services (Mississippi) Crop Progress for Week Ending 4/12/09

Crop	This Week	Last Week	Last Year	5- Year Average
Corn – Mature	100	100	100	100
Corn – Harvested	80	79	86	95
Cotton – Open Bolls	74	70	86	93
Cotton – Harvested	0	0	7	29
Peanuts – Harvested	0	0	19	--
Rice – Mature	96	95	95	98
Rice – Harvested	29	28	49	76
Sorghum – Mature	100	99	96	99
Sorghum – Harvested	47	46	76	94
Soybeans – Turning Color	83	78	89	97
Soybeans – Dropping Leaves	59	56	71	91
Soybeans – Harvested	30	29	39	71

Crop Update + Disaster Assistance Information

Darrin Dodds, Trey Koger, Erick Larson

Negative Effects of Recent Weather on Mississippi Crops: Almost daily rainfall from September 8 until September 26 has caused significant damage to row crops in many areas of the state. Very little cotton had been defoliated prior to the excessive rainfall and none had been harvested. However, boll rot and hardlock has affected the vast majority of the cotton in the state with damage ranging from 10 to 75%. Very little cotton has been harvested as of today (October 2); however, early yield reports of 850 to 900 lbs/acre (dryland) have been received. 25% of the soybean crop had been harvested prior to the rainfall, but 40 to 50% of the state soybean crop was ready to harvest when the two and a half weeks of continuous rainfall began or became ready during that time. This percentage of the soybean crop is susceptible to rot and seed decay. An estimated 75% of corn in the state had been harvested prior to the onset of excessive rainfall. The remaining 25% will likely have lower test weights and some kernel damage (kernels sprouted in the ear) and increased harvest losses (dropped ears and stalk lodging). Anticipated corn losses range from 0 to 25%.



Cotton Defoliation: Cotton defoliation was in full swing beginning this past Saturday and continuing through yesterday. Overnight rains have halted activity for the time being. The extended weather forecast is calling for daytime highs in the mid- to upper 70s and nighttime lows between 50 and 60°F. Temperatures in this range are approaching the low point for activity when using thidiazuron defoliant. With the cooling temperatures, many defoliation applications are now consisting of three way mixtures of Drop (at increased rates such as 1:50) + Def + Prep. Others are applying Drop + Ginstar + Prep as well. The addition of Def or Ginstar will provide additional

activity at cooler temperatures compared to Drop alone. Although there is no prediction of temperatures in the low 30°F range as of yet, keep this in mind when making defoliation applications. If a frost is predicted in the extended forecast, you should make defoliation applications as soon as possible. We generally recommend the application of a boll opener 5 – 7 days prior to a frost.

Although there is some temptation to defoliate as soon as possible, caution is warranted in situations where the crop is not yet mature. This is especially true on our latest planted cotton. On those fields that were planted extremely late, many of the bolls in the upper portion of the plant are not yet mature. Defoliation applications that contain high rates of boll openers will likely freeze those immature bolls closed. The flip side to this is that at current temperatures no significant boll maturation is occurring. Based on the time of year and the extended forecast, we will likely not harvest some of these bolls in the upper portion of the plant. In these situations, the extended weather forecast will likely determine when defoliation applications are made. Further complicating defoliation decision making is a 20 to 60% chance of rain every day next week.



Disaster Assistance: Several folks have inquired about disaster assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) due to damage from excessive rainfall. Mr. Ricky Carnegie with the USDA – Farm Service Agency (FSA) state office in Jackson has provided us with the following information. The USDA-FSA contacted Governor Barbour’s Office last week advising that a disaster assessment review may need to be requested. The Governor’s office is in the process of submitting a letter requesting disaster assistance to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. Over the next 5 to 6 weeks, damage assessments will be made in each county. These assessments will be made by the County Emergency Board which is comprised of all USDA entities in each county as well as Mississippi State University Extension personnel. Any county that has suffered at least 30% yield loss of any major economic commodity will be eligible for disaster assistance in the form of low interest loans. Disaster assistance under the 2008 Farm Bill falls under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance (SURE) Program. The details of the SURE program have not yet been finalized however, state FSA officials have received some initial training on the program and more training is expected over the next several weeks.

In addition, the SURE program benefits are made in arrears after the end of the commodity marketing years. Under the SURE program, when one county qualifies for assistance (by Secretarial Disaster Designation), all contiguous counties qualify as well. However, producers must individually apply and meet the requisite total farm revenue loss in order to receive SURE benefits. In addition, producers in counties that receive a Secretarial Disaster Designation and contiguous counties, are eligible to apply for Emergency Loans with the local FSA offices. The state FSA director often delays initiating a disaster declaration review until the crops are harvested or nearly harvested because the time that is allotted from the disaster declaration until you can apply for the Emergency Loan is limited. If the declaration is made too early, the full scope of economic loss may not yet be known when the final date for requesting Emergency Loans arrives.

Loss assessments are generally limited to unavoidable events (i.e. excessive rainfall, hurricanes, excessive drought, etc.) that have occurred in the past 90 days. However, the state FSA office hopes that adverse weather that occurred during the spring of 2009 will also be included in the

determination of loss assessments. Although, the full scope of potential disaster assistance and the SURE program are unclear at this point, the information provided by Mr. Carnegie indicate that steps are being taken to secure disaster assistance for those who qualify.

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