

2006 SOYBEAN, SORGHUM GRAIN AND SILAGE, AND SUMMER ANNUAL FORAGES PERFORMANCE TESTS

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The Season

The 2006 row crop season in Georgia can best be described as dry and hot. The first week of April was cool. Spotty rainfall during April and May resulted in drought conditions over much of the state. Early and mid May were cool but late May and early June were hot and dry. By mid June less than half of the crops were rated as good. Much of the non-irrigated crops were severely damaged by drought unless they caught a timely rain. Hot late June and July conditions and short water supply made it difficult for irrigation systems to keep up. Late July and August rains were often too late to improve the crops.

Rainfall amounts recorded monthly at the six test locations in Georgia and at Marianna, Florida are presented in the following table. The rainfall deficit during the nine month 2006 growing season averaged 12 to 14 inches (40% less). The exception was at Plains, Georgia where precipitation was normal mainly due to a wet July and August. Tropical storm 'Alberto' in June brought brief relief across south Georgia leaving the north part of the state 'high and dry'.

2006 Rainfall¹

Month	Athens ²	Calhoun ³	Griffin	Midville	Plains	Tifton	Marianna, FL ⁴
	----- inches -----						
March	1.83	3.36	2.04	0.78	1.93	0.30	1.09
April	2.33	3.86	1.66	1.96	2.90	1.68	1.68
May	1.81	2.52	1.71	1.62	2.87	2.70	5.17
June	2.38	2.90	3.01	5.85	1.68	4.17	2.14
July	3.78	2.74	2.44	1.12	5.22	2.88	2.51
August	1.76	2.39	3.35	2.00	9.98	2.85	5.51
September	1.63	4.03	2.90	1.58	2.48	2.03	1.23
October	2.17	5.04	3.11	2.19	4.85	1.14	3.32
November	3.19	3.72	4.09	2.84	3.25	2.92	3.59
Total	20.88	30.56	24.31	19.94	35.16	20.67	26.24
Normal (9 mo)	36.76	38.89	36.77	33.95	35.29	35.11	38.51

1. Georgia data provided in part by Dr. G. Hoogenboom, Georgia Station, Griffin, GA.
2. Plant Sciences Farm.
3. Floyd County location.
4. University of Florida, North Florida Research & Education Center, Marianna, FL.

Georgia producers continue to reduce planted acres of some crops. Soybean acres declined about 12%, lowest in three years. Grain sorghum decreased 14%, while forage crops continue to increase as farmers search for drought tolerant crops.

Harvest proceeded at a normal pace over most of the state. State per acre yield of 24 bushels for soybeans was 15% below last year and along with less harvested acres produced 22% less than during 2005. Sorghum for grain produced about 21% less than 2005.

Soybean rust was first found June 14th in Georgia this growing season on Kudzu near Colquitt, Georgia. This was about a month earlier than when first found in 2005 (July 15th). As during 2005, the rust did not rapidly spread but slowly moved across south Georgia. By September 15th infected rust leaves were being found in soybean fields across the soybean growing area. Apparently due to hot and dry conditions, the rust never developed into a major problem this growing season but remains a very serious threat to soybeans in this state.