

2006-2007 SMALL GRAIN PERFORMANCE TESTS

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The Season

Drought conditions continued across Georgia as the small grain planting season began. Consequently, planting was delayed in most parts of the state as farmers waited for improved soil moisture. This crop of wheat was planted late due to unfavorable soil conditions. Unknown at the time this late seeding would turn out to be very important during the coming 2007 Spring late freeze. Georgia wheat producers seeded 400 thousand acres of wheat during the 2006-2007 crop year, an increase of 170,000 acres or 74% more than the previous year. Rye seeded acres remained the same as last year, 230,000 acres, while oat producers decreased acres by 15%. There is an increased interest in planting triticale as a forage crop mainly among the dairy farmers in Georgia.

Rainfall amounts recorded monthly at the six test locations during the 2006-2007 growing season are presented in the following table. It was another very dry year in Georgia as all locations received less than normal rainfall. The most severe shortage of moisture was in the Limestone Valley Region around Rome and Calhoun where the rainfall deficit was over 19 inches (only 54% of normal). At Griffin and Tifton only 64% and 69% of normal rainfall occurred.

2006-2007 Rainfall¹

Month	Year	Calhoun ²	Griffin	Midville	Plains	Tifton	Marianna, FL ³
----- inches -----							
October	2006	5.04	3.11	2.19	4.85	1.14	3.32
November	2006	3.72	4.09	2.84	3.25	2.92	3.59
December	2006	2.87	2.85	5.20	5.57	5.62	3.74
January	2007	2.33	4.66	3.50	3.67	3.42	8.02
February	2007	1.74	2.28	2.50	3.00	2.24	2.62
March	2007	1.41	2.50	1.62	2.00	1.52	1.25
April	2007	1.36	1.26	2.73	2.39	.45	1.24
May	2007	.26	.62	.45	.02	.13	1.71
June	2007	4.31	3.12	7.97	5.37	5.89	3.53
Total (9 months)		23.04	24.49	29.00	30.12	23.33	29.02
Normal (9 months)		42.15	37.96	32.13	36.21	33.45	38.70

1. Data for Georgia sites collected by Dr. G. Hoogenboom, Griffin Campus, Griffin, GA.
2. Floyd County location.
3. University of Florida North Florida Research and Education Center location.

The 2006-2007 small grain growing season in Georgia was once again characterized as mild with dry weather. A lack of vernalization was a problem especially for late maturing varieties. There was sporadic insect damage around the state but disease levels were low during the season.

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Even with less than ideal growing conditions and a late planted crop, the 2007 wheat crop potential was very good until the below freezing temperatures rolled in beginning on April 7 and continuing thru the 10th. In the northern half of the state above the fall line small grain that was just before and after anthesis was devastated by the cold (low temperatures at Rome and Griffin on April 7, 8, 9, 10 were 27, 25, 30, 31 and 28, 27, 33, 35 degrees, respectively). In addition, there was sporadic damage east of I-75 as far south as Savannah. The low temperature on April 8th at Statesboro and Savannah was 27 and 26 degrees, respectively. The devastation would have been worse in South Georgia except the late planted crop was at a growth stage with less potential for cold damage.

There were 250,000 acres of wheat harvested for grain, 108% more than last season. Wheat average per acre yield was 38 bu, a decrease of 22% but total acreage produced 9.5 million bushels, an increase of 62% more than 2006. Oat harvested acres for grain remained the same as last year, 30 thousand acres. Thirty thousand acres of rye were harvested for grain, an increase of 20% more than last season.