

2012 PEANUT, COTTON AND TOBACCO PERFORMANCE TESTS

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The Season

Agricultural producers in Georgia experienced another year of lower than normal rainfall. The state was dry as of March 1, although there was adequate planting moisture in most areas. Planting progressed well ahead of five-year averages. By early May, only a quarter of the state had adequate moisture. Except for southeastern Georgia, drought conditions continued through June. Irrigation began during early vegetative growth and continued through maturity in much of the state. Irrigation allowed 2/3 to 3/4 of the crop to remain in good condition throughout the season. Summer thunderstorms were beneficial to some areas. Insect and disease pressure levels increased as the season progressed. Stink bugs were a concern in some areas. White mold in peanuts was an issue and persisted through the growing season.

Seasonal rainfall totals, as shown in the table below, were 6 to 13 inches less than normal in north Georgia, with the most critical areas in the Limestone Valley region and Athens. In the Coastal Plain, rainfall was normal to 8 inches above the long-term average in the east and central areas to 17 inches below normal in the southwestern area around Plains. Extremely dry conditions (53% of normal rainfall) persisted for the last three years in Sumter County (Plains) and surrounding areas.

2012 Rainfall¹

Month	Athens ²	Attapulgus ³	Midville	Plains	Tifton
	----- inches -----				
March	2.92	4.91	3.63	2.02	4.71
April	2.39	1.62	1.07	1.49	1.21
May	2.03	2.48	6.09	1.13	3.48
June	1.82	5.80	5.52	2.69	5.24
July	3.62	8.69	3.37	4.01	6.66
August	4.35	14.56	8.39	1.87	13.41
September	3.37	4.16	2.02	3.98	3.85
October	1.24	0.87	0.43	0.59	1.57
November	1.10	0.89	1.53	0.97	1.29
Total	22.84	43.98	32.05	18.75	41.42
Normal (9 mo)	35.92	41.70	32.60	35.23	33.65

1. Data provided in part by Dr. I. Flitcroft, Georgia Station, Griffin, GA.
2. Plant Sciences Farm.
3. Attapulgus Research Center is the nearest location to the Bainbridge site.

Crop maturity progressed ahead of the five-year average and harvest conditions during 2012 were excellent. Georgia peanut producers planted 735,000 acres this year, a 54% increase from last year and the most planted since 2005. During 2012 cotton farmers seeded 1.3 million acres, 28% less than last year. Tobacco planting in the state declined slightly as 10,500 acres were transplanted during the 2012 crop year, 1,400 acres less than in 2011.

The state per acre yield for peanuts was 4,150 pounds which set a new state record and produced more than 3 billion pounds of nuts. Cotton per acre yield in 2012 of 934 pounds was 18 percent higher than last year and one of the highest per acre yields during the past seven years. Totaled over harvested acres, in 2012 yield level produced 2.5 million bales, which matched the new record for cotton production in Georgia set by last year's crop. Tobacco production in the state of Georgia this year halted a decline due to a 2% increase in per acre yield during 2012 when compared to 2011.