

2011-2012 SMALL GRAIN PERFORMANCE TESTS

*Edited by J. LaDon Day, Anton E. Coy
 and John D. Gassett*

The Season

Georgia small grain farmers in the Fall of 2011 faced higher than normal warm temperatures and dry, low soil moisture conditions for the small grain forage and grain planting season. The unfavorable conditions continued unabated for much of the small grain seeding and growing season. With the hindrance of dry fields, land preparation and planting of small grain were delayed in some areas or not planted. Georgia wheat producers seeded 280,000 acres of wheat during the 2011-2012 crop year. This was the most wheat planted in three years and an increase of 12% over the previous year. Rye producers seeded 190,000 acres, 5% less than last year; oat acreage also decreased 5%, totaling 60,000 acres.

Rainfall amounts recorded monthly at the five test locations in Georgia and at Marianna, Fla. during the 2011-2012 growing season are presented in the following table. At all locations across the state rainfall amounts were below normal for the nine-month reporting period. Rainfall received across the southern two-thirds of the state averaged 30% less or down 11 inches for the growing season. However, the area around Plains only received 19.44 inches of rain during the season, 17.7 inches or 48% less than normal. Record warm temperatures lingered for much of the growing season across the state of Georgia.

2011-2012 Rainfall¹

Month	Year	Calhoun ²	Griffin	Midville	Plains	Tifton	Marianna, FL ³
----- inches -----							
October	2011	2.43	3.91	2.46	1.22	4.81	1.08
November	2011	6.70	3.92	2.05	1.96	1.34	1.86
December	2011	5.38	4.03	2.28	4.47	1.80	3.72
January	2012	6.61	2.96	1.03	1.70	1.13	1.93
February	2012	3.00	1.21	2.27	2.76	3.61	2.10
March	2012	5.23	3.54	3.63	2.02	4.71	5.94
April	2012	1.48	0.44	1.07	1.49	1.21	2.14
May	2012	2.53	5.02	6.09	1.13	3.48	1.37
June	2012	1.53	1.85	5.52	2.69	5.24	7.35
Total (9 months)		34.89	26.88	26.40	19.44	27.33	27.52
Normal (9 months)		43.09	38.38	32.50	37.12	35.02	38.59

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

Georgia farmers seeded more small grain during 2011-2012 than the previous year due mainly to more favorable commodity prices. Wheat acres planted increased by 50,000. Later planting of wheat was hampered in some areas due to wet soil conditions. The weather remained warm throughout the small grain growing season, which reduced vernalization of most wheat varieties. A drier spring helped abate small grain diseases, which required less treatment but decreased yields and lowered quality and test weight of grain.

Some harvest of wheat around Plains was the earliest ever as combines began rolling the first week of May. There was a total of 200,000 acres of wheat grain harvested this year, 20,000 acres or 11% more than 2011, which produced 8.8 million bushels (20% less than last year). Wheat yield for the 2012 Georgia crop was 44 bushels per acre yield, 20% less than last year's per acre yield and 12 bushels per acre less than the record 2008 crop. Harvested acres of oats remained the same as during 2011. Forty thousand acres of rye were harvested for grain, 33% more than last year. Rye production in Georgia is primarily for forage and/or a cover crop.