

2005 SOYBEAN, SORGHUM GRAIN AND SILAGE, AND SUMMER ANNUAL FORAGES PERFORMANCE TESTS

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The Season

Growing conditions across the state continued during most of the year to be favorable for good row crop production, with adequate or above average moisture but cool temperatures that lingered through July. Late season planting was held up a few weeks in the latter part of June by excessive moisture, but the overall status of the crops was very good to excellent for the second consecutive season. Dry conditions returned during September and the fall which reduced yield of some late maturing crops but allowed most harvesting operations to be completed on time.

Rainfall amounts recorded monthly at the six test locations in Georgia and at Marianna, Florida during the 2005 growing season are presented in the following table. The primary weather feature of this growing season was once again hurricane or tropical storm events, in which the remnants of one hurricane (Dennis) and three tropical storms (Arlene, Cindy, and Tammy) moved near or across Georgia during the hurricane season, resulting in flood and wind damage. Dennis did the most damage. This was the most active hurricane season on record with 26 tropical storms or hurricanes being named. July was one the wettest months on record, with rainfall 212% above normal at Griffin, GA. Further, total rainfall for the months of June, July, and August across the Piedmont Region and at Griffin and Athens was near 100% above normal, while rainfall at Calhoun was near the 30 year average for the period. Average rainfall was above normal (20%) for the nine-month growing season at five of the test locations. (Rome in the Limestone Valley Region was down 30%).

2005 Rainfall¹

Month	Athens ²	Calhoun ³	Griffin	Midville	Plains	Tifton	Marianna, FL ⁴
	----- inches -----						
March	7.07	3.50	7.18	6.63	9.29	6.53	8.43
April	5.61	3.39	4.91	3.39	5.30	5.96	7.82
May	1.87	1.65	1.99	1.61	1.57	1.72	3.71
June	7.70	3.35	4.60	5.59	7.56	7.23	8.33
July	10.05	4.64	15.14	6.22	12.13	5.83	5.96
August	4.97	3.39	7.35	7.37	6.18	3.46	15.57
September	0.00	1.00	0.14	0.01	0.65	0.02	1.79
October	4.07	1.26	2.50	7.91	1.02	0.58	0.44
November	3.05	5.36	2.92	1.61	4.08	4.13	3.33
Total	44.39	27.54	46.73	40.34	47.78	35.46	55.38
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 soybean acreage decreased to 180,000 this year, 100,000 acres or 36% less than last year. This decrease in acreage came about after two consecutive years of increases. State per acre yield of 28 bushels per acre was not as good as last year's crop. Further, less planted acres coupled with lower yields produced 57% less than during 2004. Sorghum for grain and silage acreage decreased 11% from 2004. Sorghum for grain was planted to the fewest acres since 1969. Acreage planted to forages increased 10% this growing season.

Soybean rust was first detected in the continental United States on November 9, 2004 in Louisiana and was confirmed on soybean leaf samples in Georgia and kudzu leaf samples in Florida on November 19, 2004, too late to impact the 2004 crop. The rust was monitored in Florida during the winter of 2005 and found to overwinter on kudzu just north of Tampa, FL.

The rust began to move across the extreme southeastern U.S. in late winter, spring and summer 2005 and was found on some volunteer soybeans in Seminole County, Georgia in February (those soybeans were destroyed), but it was not detected anywhere else in the state of Georgia until July 15th near Tifton, Georgia. Hurricane Dennis could have helped deposit spores across south Georgia. After this discovery in the center of the state on July 15th the assumption was that the disease could be anywhere across the Coastal Plain Region, therefore the Extension Service recommended that producers begin a spray program to prevent the rust. Soybean rust did not spread rapidly or increase in intensity as once thought could happen (70-80% of producers that sprayed could have prevented the spread). Each location in the Georgia soybean OVT was sprayed to prevent Soybean Asian Rust, thus the rust was not detected in any of our research plots. Soybean Asian Rust has the potential to devastate a soybean crop, thus requiring close monitoring of the 2006 crop.