

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

Date: July 10,2020

Report Number: AU2020-0010

Report Name: Lower Acreage and Production Expectations for Austrian Arable Crops in 2020

Country: Austria

Post: Vienna

Report Category: Grain and Feed, Oilseeds and Products, Agricultural Situation

Prepared By: Roswitha Krautgartner

Approved By: Kimberly Sawatzki

Report Highlights:

Latest official data show a small decline (-0.3 percent) of Austrian arable crops acreage in 2020 compared to the previous year. Persistent drought during winter and spring reduces yields particularly in the eastern regions of Austria. Total Austrian grains production is expected to be about 6 percent lower in 2020 than in 2019. This is due to the slight reduction in acreage and lower yield expectations caused by unfavorable weather conditions, mainly the drought. However, there are large regional differences reported across Austria. In the eastern regions, precipitation came too late for crops to reach their full yield potential. However, good yields are expected in the western and southern regions.

Austrian Arable Crops Acreage 2020

Latest official data show a small decline (-0.3 percent) of Austrian arable crops acreage in 2020 compared to the previous year (Source: Agrarmarkt Austria / [AMA](#)). The 2020 acreage follows some of the trends of the previous years.

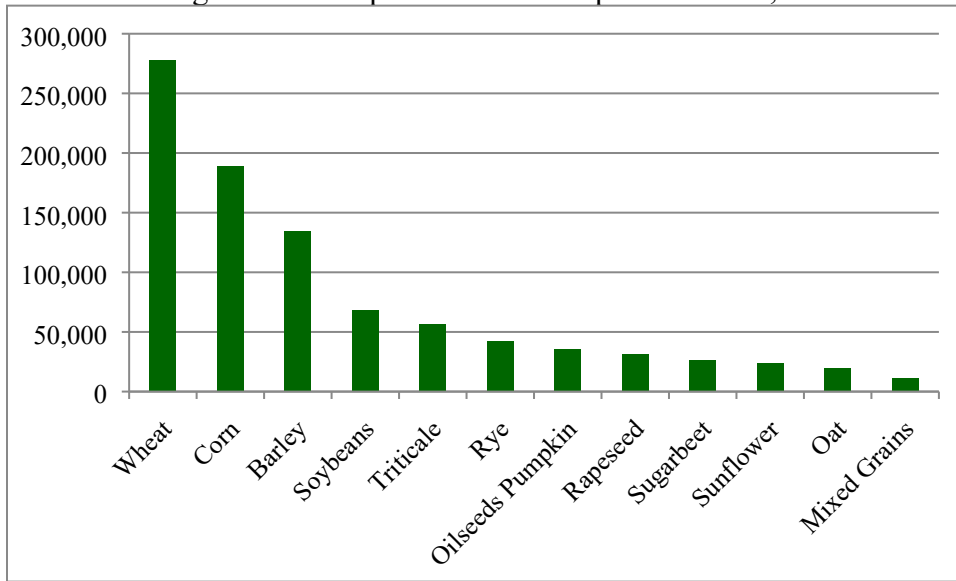
Soft wheat, the most important Austrian crop, was sown to a lesser extent (-2,293 ha / -5,666 acre or -0.9 percent) compared to last season, while spelt wheat area was expanded in organic and conventional fields thanks to its attractive price (+2,888 ha / +7,136 acre or +23.4 percent). Despite good price impulses, durum wheat area declined (-222 ha / -549 acre or -1.3 percent), with reduced winter durum wheat area but slightly increased summer durum wheat area, which could not offset the losses of winter sowings. Winter barley plantings have followed the upward trend of the past few years (+1,405 ha / +3,472 acre or +1.4 percent); as barley, which is the first crop to be harvested, in recent years impressed with good yields despite the drought. Spring barley area shrunk again after significant slumps in previous years and reached a record low (-4,392 ha / -10,853 acre or -12.3 percent). The persistent droughts in recent years including the current year are not favorable for spring barley plantings. Due to lower prices, rye area was reduced (-1,104 ha / -2,728 acre or -2.5 percent), but is still above the area of 2017 and 2018. Triticale experienced a reversal of the multi-year upward trend, the area decreased due to the reduction in contract areas for bioethanol (-3,773 ha / -9,323 acre or -5.3 percent). Total cereals (not including corn) acreage in 2020 is estimated 1.5 percent lower than in 2019.

Corn (for grain production) discontinues its multi-year upward trend in 2020 (-8,252 ha / -2,391 acre or -4.2 percent), as prices did not develop attractively. Sunflowers were among the winners of spring sowings (+2,314 ha / +5,718 acre or +10.9 percent). Sunflowers benefited from the need to re-sow damaged/destroyed sugar beet plantings. The area of oilseed rape is again reduced after significant declines of acreage in previous years due to suboptimal cultivation conditions, increasing pest problems and low prices (-4,212 ha / -10,408 acre or -11.8 percent).

Despite the efforts by the Austrian sugar industry to increase plantings of sugar beets, sugar beet area in 2020 decreased by 1,173 ha (-2,899 acre or -4.3 percent). The originally significantly higher acreage in 2020 was considerably reduced through pest infestation and drought. The big winner of this year's area shifts is the oilseeds pumpkin (+10,375 ha / +25,637 acre or +41.2 percent). This crop – the kernels are used for food oil production (pumpkin seeds oil) - has reached its largest acreage in four years, but does not exceed its historical record of 2016 (39,470 ha / 97,532 acre).

Despite price drops of organic products, the total area of arable crops under organic management again increased by 0.6 percent year-on-year. Percentagewise, sunflower, durum and spelt wheat, as well as oilseeds pumpkin, show the highest organic acreage increases in 2020. Highest relative decreases of organic acreage are expressed in sugar beet, spring barley, rapeseed, corn, and triticale plantings.

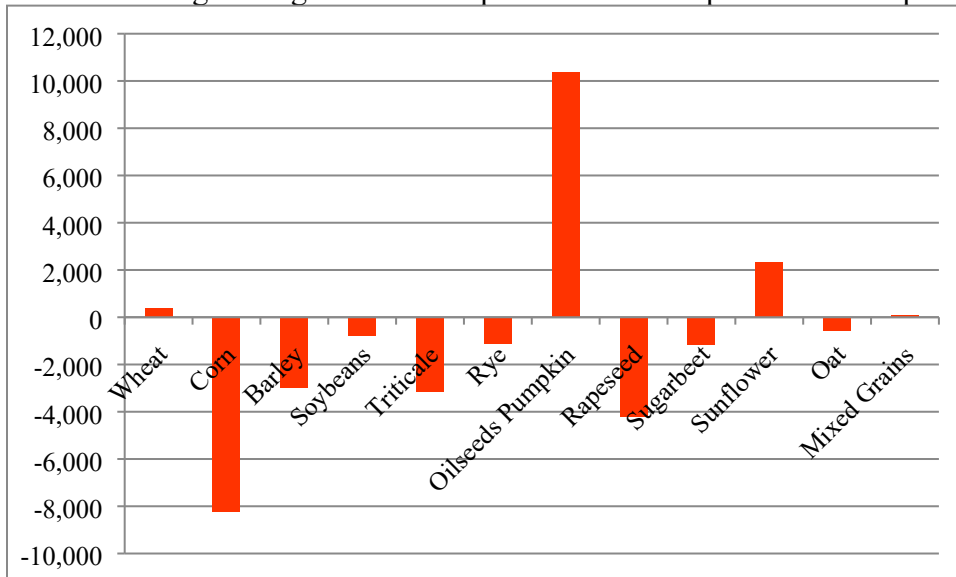
Austrian acreage of most important arable crops in hectares, 2020



Note: Wheat includes soft, durum and spelt wheat; corn includes only corn for grains production; barley includes winter and spring barley.

Source: AMA

Austrian acreage changes of most important arable crops in 2020 compared to 2019, in hectares



Note: Wheat includes soft, durum and spelt wheat; corn includes only corn for grains production; barley includes winter and spring barley.

Source: AMA

Yield Expectations

The Austrian grains harvest (excluding corn) is expected to be about 6 percent lower in 2020 due to a slight reduction in acreage and lower yield expectations than in 2019. However, there are large regional differences reported. In the eastern regions of Austria, precipitation came too late for crops to reach their full yield potential. But rather good yields are expected in the western and southern regions.

The 2020 weather pattern is roughly comparable to that of 2019. Fall 2019 was already dry and too warm. However, conditions for planting were good. On average, there was sufficient soil moisture for the emergence of the seeds. Due to the continued lack of precipitation and warm temperatures, the soils were only able to store minimal water reserves in winter, which were quickly used up in spring with the continuing drought and rising temperatures. The continuing drought in combination with cold nights led to a very slow development, especially for spring planted crops. Late frosts in spring from -6 to -8 centigrade (21 to 18 F) also left damages on the plants and often caused discoloration, deformations, or frost cracks. Some regions even reported total losses, for example in rapeseed.

The long awaited rain with moderate temperatures favorable for plant growth finally arrived but a few weeks later than in 2019. The consequences in some areas of Austria were very dry soils and crops. Most drought affected regions are the east of Lower Austria, Burgenland and parts of Styria. Crops most negatively affected by the drought are spring barley, oats and sugar beet, but also rapeseed and winter wheat. In addition, pests had good conditions to mass propagate, mainly destroying large parts of the sugar beet plantings.

In total, a slightly below-average grain harvest (corn excluded) is expected Austria-wide (minus 0.7 percent compared to the average of the past five years). Grain yields are forecast at 4.9 percent lower than in the somewhat better year 2019. The regional differences range from minus 18.7 percent in Burgenland to plus 8.5 percent in Upper Austria compared to the long-term average. Winter soft wheat as the most important type of grain in Austria, with an expected yield of 5.35 MT/ha (13.2 MT/acre), will be 2 percent below the average of the last five years, but will drop significantly compared to 2019 with a minus of 8.5 percent. Rye and triticale are grown in regions of Austria with higher precipitation. They are therefore less hit by the general drought. An increase in yield compared to the average of the past five years is expected for rye of plus 4.4 percent and plus 5.4 percent for triticale. Spring barley is hardest hit by the dry conditions. Across Austria, spring barley production is expected to be 21.1 percent below the five-year average. The most significant production decline is expected in Burgenland with a minus of 34 percent compared to 2019 and the main growing area in Lower Austria with minus 24.1 percent.

Attachments:

No Attachments.