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## **Canada**

### **Agricultural Situation**

# **Statistics Canada Releases November 2001 Estimates of Principal Field Crop Production 2001**

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#### **Report Highlights:**

Production declined for all major crops in 2001 except grain corn, according to the November Crops Survey of 33,250 farmers. Production of spring wheat (16.7 MMT) was the lowest since 1998, durum wheat production (3.1 MMT) plunged 46% from 2000, and soybean production (1.6 MMT) was down 41%. Grain corn production (8.2 MMT) showed better results, rising 20% despite poor growing conditions in southern Ontario.

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## November 2001 Estimates of Production of Principal Field Crops

The following is based on the December 5, 2001 Statistics Canada release of its *Field Crop Reporting Series*, "Production of Principal Field Crops, November 2001."

Western Canadian producers have faced a difficult season. Growing conditions were the worst since the 1988 drought, and input costs kept climbing while export commodity values continued to languish at low levels. Although the 1988 drought was harder on yields, the current operating environment makes low production seasons more difficult for farmers to absorb.

Production declined for all major crops in 2001 except grain corn, according to the November Crops Survey of 33,250 farmers. Production of spring wheat was the lowest since 1998, durum wheat production plunged 46% from 2000, and soybean production was down 41%. Grain corn production showed better results, rising 20% despite poor growing conditions in southern Ontario.

**Table: November Estimates of Field Crop Production**

Canadian Crop	2000 '000 metric tonnes	2001	% Change '01/00
Durum wheat	5,647	3,055	-45.9%
Spring wheat	19,357	16,717	-13.6%
Total wheat	26,804	21,282	-20.6%
Barley	13,468	11,355	-15.7%
Corn	6,827	8,171	19.7%
Canola	7,126	5,062	-29.0%
Oats	3,389	2,769	-18.3%
Field peas	2,864	2,196	-23.3%
Soybeans	2,703	1,582	-41.5%
Flaxseed	693	702	1.3%

Soil moisture reserves carried over from the fall of 2000 were low. Spring rains did not provide adequate precipitation for crops, and the summer brought hot and dry weather. Southern Alberta, southern Saskatchewan and southwestern Manitoba were the most severely affected. Harvest came to these areas and those fields that were not abandoned, turned over to livestock, or worked under yielded little for the year. Weather across the west was unseasonably warm and dry, setting the stage for low soil moisture in 2002.

Fuel and fertilizer costs, key inputs for crop production, continued to rise throughout the season, hitting a peak in mid-summer. Export prices and movement, particularly for canola and wheat, two of the main grain exports, were stagnant throughout the fall. Although prices have recently

risen, prospects appear slim for significant improvement, given the excellent crops in the United States and other exporting countries.

Eastern Canadian producers have fared better than those in the west, but overall 2001 has been disappointing. In Ontario, corn and soybean production yields were down because of a dry summer combined with damp harvest conditions. Quebec growing conditions were better, and that province finished the season with average yields on all grains.

### **Barley Supplies Are Tight**

Canadian barley production was estimated at 11.4 million metric tonnes, down from 13.5 million tonnes in 2000 but 300,000 tonnes better than the September Statistics Canada estimate. As the harvest progressed throughout Alberta and Saskatchewan, which together account for nearly 80% of Canadian production, farmers found yields to be slightly better than earlier estimates.

The barley yield across western Canada was 47.4 bushels per acre, down from the five-year average of 56.4. This yield is the lowest since 1989 (45.1 bushels per acre). Low yields and dry weather led producers to hold on to their barley stocks. This exaggerated the tight supply situation caused by the lower production. Canadian feed processors, feedlots and other domestic users have been unable to satisfy their requirements, and have turned to the United States for feed grains. This has resulted in an unprecedented volume of U.S. corn shipped into western Canada this crop year - some analysts forecast imports of as much as 1.0 million metric tonnes.

### **Spring Wheat Production Lowest since 1988**

Western spring wheat production was estimated at 16.4 million metric tonnes using a yield of 28.8 bushels per acre produced on 21.6 million seeded acres. There has not been an average wheat yield below 30.0 bushels per acre in the past 11 years and the five-year average is 35.0 bushels per acre. By comparison, the 1988 drought saw spring wheat yields drop to 18.3 bushels per acre.

Southern Alberta and southern Saskatchewan had conditions more like the 1930s, with yields below the 1988 average. Crop districts in the northern half of these two provinces had yields in the 29.0 to 40.0 bushels-per-acre range, which brought up the average.

### **Durum Wheat Production Down**

A 15% drop in acreage to 5.5 million acres and a 33% drop in yield to 21.6 bushels per acre brought durum production down to 3.1 million metric tonnes, down 46% from 5.6 million tonnes in 2000. This production is about one-half the 1998 record durum crop of 6.0 million tonnes. Saskatchewan produces more than 80% of Canada's durum. Dry weather pushed the Saskatchewan yield down to 21.8 bushels per acre.

### **Pulse Crops Suffer from Lack of Moisture**

Lentils, peas and beans are a rapidly growing segment of western Canadian agriculture.

Approximately 6.9 million acres were seeded to pulse crops in western Canada, more than the combined acreage of oats, flax and rye. The hot dry weather drastically cut yields for all pulse crops. Lentil yields were down 36% from 2000 to 755 pounds per acre. Field pea yields were down 33% to 23.4 bushels per acre. Chick pea yields were down 29% to 872 pounds per acre. Despite expanded seeded acreage, overall production was down 22%. Chick peas were the exception-production was up 20% on acreage that was expanded by 70%.

### **Canola Production Drops on Reduced Acreage**

Farmers harvested 5.1 million metric tonnes of canola, a drop of 2.0 million tonnes from 2000. Canola is mainly grown in the central and northern regions of the Prairies, which escaped the brunt of the summer drought. Canola yields were 23.2 bushels per acre, down 5% from the 10-year average of 24.4 bushels per acre. A 19% decline in seeded canola acreage was the primary cause of this season's reduced production. As farmers wrapped up harvest activities, they found that yields were slightly better than forecast in the Statistics Canada September estimate. Canola production was 273,000 tonnes higher than estimated in the September report.

### **Soybean Production Down**

Soybean yields of 22.8 bushels per acre were the lowest since 1963 and well below the 10-year average of 38.8 bushels per acre. Soybean production was 1.6 million metric tonnes, down 41% from 2.7 million tonnes in 2000. Ontario, which accounts for nearly 80% of Canadian production, had one of its worst years for soybeans, posting an average yield of 21.1 bushels per acre. Dry growing conditions throughout the summer, a heavy aphid infestation, and a wet harvest were the reasons cited for the drop in yields.

Genetically modified (GMO) soybean acreage was up 63% in Quebec and up 25% in Ontario from 2000. GMO yields in Ontario were 0.8 bushels per acre better than non-GMO crops. Quebec GMO soybean yields had better results - 3.6 more bushels per acre than non-GMO fields. Soybean production in Manitoba rose to 45,000 acres in 2001. The yield was 26.7 bushels per acre, which compares favorably with those from eastern Canada.

### **Corn Production Up**

Despite poor growing conditions in southern Ontario, corn production in Canada was up. Canadian yields were 105.5 bushels per acre, compared with 99.9 in 2000; production increased 20% to 8.2 million metric tonnes. Quebec brought up the national average with a corn yield of 110.6 bushels per acre-just slightly better than the 10-year average of 108.4. Ontario yield estimates improved from the September Statistics Canada report by 6.2 bushels per acre to 103.1.

Seeded acreage of genetically modified corn crops was up 17% in Ontario and up 30% in Quebec from 2000. GMO corn yielded 8.0 bushels per acre more than non-GMO corn in Ontario, but in Quebec analysis showed yields that were basically similar.

### **Hot Mustard**

Although mustard seed is a relatively small crop, Canada is the world's largest producer. Canadian mustard seed production was 88,900 metric tonnes in 2001, down sharply from 202,200 tonnes in 2000 and the 10-year average of 225,530 tonnes. Mustard seed is traditionally grown in the southern part of the Prairies, which saw severe drought conditions. Yields were reported at 599 pounds per acre, well below the 10-year average of 905 pounds per acre. The lower production should keep prices firm throughout the year.

**Comments:**

According to the "Note to Readers" from Statistics Canada, the November Crops Survey of 33,250 farm operators was conducted by telephone interviews from October 26 to November 17. Farmers were asked to report their seeded areas, harvested areas, and yields of major grains, specialty crops, and oilseeds.

The severe lack of precipitation in western Canada has reduced moisture levels to the point that even if normal levels are received for the upcoming growing season, yields will most likely be below average for 2002.

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