

Idaho crop yields should be up significantly this year

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POCATELLO – Yields and total production for most of Idaho’s major crops are expected to be substantially higher this year compared with last year.

Total production for the state’s wheat and barley crops, in particular, should be way up in 2022 compared with 2021.

In Idaho, the big difference between 2022 and 2021 when it comes to farming is the water situation.

While conditions this year are drier than normal, most of the state faced severe drought conditions last year, which, coupled with a brutal early season heat wave, resulted in yields for almost every crop grown in the state declining significantly.

For example, total wheat production in Idaho last year was down 32 percent compared with 2021 and total barley production was down 21 percent.

But this year looks to be a very different story because of the improved water situation. Although water supplies will be tight this year, the situation is not expected to be nearly as bad as it was last year.

During recent meetings, member of the Idaho Wheat Commission and Idaho Barley Commission said the state’s grain crops are looking good so far in 2022.

Idaho leads the nation in barley production and total barley production in Idaho this year should be up significantly from last year.

Idaho farmers planted an estimated 600,000 acres of barley this year, up from 520,000 acres last year, according to USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Based on current crop conditions, barley yields in Idaho should return to near normal this after falling substantially last year.

“Generally, Idaho’s barley crop is in good shape,” said Jason Boose, who serves as an industry representative on the IBC. “There are little bumps along the road but everything is setting up pretty well. Idaho in general is in better shape than the other barley-growing states in the U.S.”

Compared to some of the other major crops grown in Idaho, barley is a low-input and low-water crop, said IBC Executive Director Laura Wilder. With farm production costs up significantly, she added, that made barley an attractive choice for a lot of Idaho growers this year.

All of the major barley processing companies that purchase from Idaho contracted more barley acres in the state this year, Wilder said.

“Barley supplies are tight and there is a lot of demand for malt barley in particular,” she said.

According to NASS, Idaho farmers planted 1.26 million acres of wheat this year, a tad bit more than last year. Idaho wheat yields should also return to near normal this year, which means the state’s wheat crop should be significantly higher this year compared with the 2021 crop.

“It looks like a big crop coming,” said North Idaho farmer Bill Flory.

Idaho wheat farmers are also reporting that crop looks to be in good shape right now.

“The wheat crop looks good,” said wheat farmer Wayne Hurst, who farms in southcentral Idaho. “I think we’ll see a lot of 160-bushel wheat in our country.”

According to NASS, Idaho farmers planted 1.26 million acres of wheat this year, up slightly from 1.23 million acres last year, and they planted 600,000 acres of barley, up 15 percent from 520,000 acres last year.

Idaho growers expect to harvest 1.29 million acres of hay this year, up from 1.24 million acres last year.

Idaho potato acreage in 2022 is estimated by NASS at 290,000, down 8 percent or 25,000 acres compared with 2021.

NASS estimates sugar beet acreage in Idaho at 172,000 acres, down from 173,000 last year.

Corn for grain acreage in Idaho is estimated at 360,000 in 2022, down from 380,000 in 2021, and total chickpea acreage is estimated at 80,000 acres, up 1,000 acres from last year.

Idaho farmers planted an estimated 56,000 acres of dry beans this year, down from 58,000 last year.

Dry bean prices are near record highs, like they were last year, but unlike last year, dry beans this year faced competition from a lot more crops that are also seeing significantly increased farm-level prices, said Darren Krzesnik, production manager for Treasure Valley Seed Co. in Homedale.

“Beans faced more competition from other crops this year,” he said. “It’s a great problem that farmers had this year.” 07 Jul 2022