

A glance at planted acres in Idaho in 2023

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POCATELLO – Idaho farmers planted significantly more corn and chickpeas this year, a good amount more potatoes, a little more barley and about the same amount of wheat, hay and sugar beets.

According to USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service, Idaho farmers planted 390,000 acres of corn for grain in 2023, a 22 percent increase over the 2022 total of 320,000 acres.

The NASS forecast for planted acres was released June 30 and is based on grower surveys.

NASS forecasts that Idaho growers planted 73,000 acres of chickpeas, also known as garbanzo beans, this year, up 20 percent from 61,000 last year. NASS puts large chickpea acres in Idaho at 53,000 this year, up from 46,000 last year, and small chickpea acres at 20,000, up from 15,000.

Most of the state’s chickpeas are grown in North Idaho, as are other pulse crops such as lentils and dry edible peas.

NASS forecasts dry edible pea acres in Idaho at 14,000 in 2023, down from 28,000 last year, and it expects lentil acres to be down slightly, from 15,000 last year to 13,000 this year.

Farm-level chickpea prices are up about 10 percent compared with last fall, lentil prices are a bit higher and pea prices are down a bit, said Dirk Hammond, administrative services manager for George F. Brocke and Sons, a processor of peas, lentils and garbanzo beans in Kendrick.

Those pulse crops saw some stiff competition from canola acres in North Idaho this year, Hammond said.

“We’ve seen a huge increase in canola acres in northcentral Idaho and that has competed with garb, lentil and green pea acres,” he said.

NASS does not track canola acres in Idaho but that might change soon if they keep growing.

“It has not been a significant crop in our area up until last year,” Hammond said.

He said unusually high temperatures this growing season in North Idaho have posed a challenge to pulse crops and how total production for pulses in Idaho will look in 2023 is a big unknown right now.

“We’ll have to wait and see how they do,” he said. “The heat is going to affect some of the crops in our area and eastern Washington.”

Total planted barley acres in Idaho are estimated at 590,000 this year, up 5 percent from 560,000 last year. Idaho is the nation's No. 1 barley-producing state and most of that barley is used in the malting process during beer production.

NASS projects 550,000 acres of that planted barley will be harvested this year, up from 540,000 last year.

Idaho farmers produced 59.9 million bushels of barley last year, the state's second-biggest barley crop in at least a decade, and growers had an average of 111 bushels per acre in 2022, a state record.

"USDA's projection that Idaho's 2023 harvested barley acres will be up to 550,000, 2 percent over 2022, is on track with what we're seeing across the state," said Laura Wilder, executive director for the Idaho Barley Commission. "Contracting and prices were strong again this season, and demand for Idaho barley is high due to its superior quality and consistency. The 2023 crop looks good overall with expected average yields for Idaho a little below 2022's record yields of 111 bushels per acre."

Idaho's total planted potato acres this year are projected at 330,000 by NASS, a 12 percent increase over 295,000 in 2022. Idaho also leads the nation in potato production.

A separate estimate by United Potato Growers of Idaho projects spud acres in the state at just shy of 329,000 this year.

[See page 36 for a story on Idaho potato acres.]

Total planted wheat acres in Idaho are estimated at 1.17 million this year, up slightly from 1.16 million last year, and total harvested hay acres in the state are projected at 1.44 million acres this year, up slightly from 1.41 million last year.

Idaho dry bean acres are estimated at 40,000 in 2023, down from 45,000 in 2022, and oat acres are projected at 45,000 this year, down from 50,000 last year.

NASS estimates Idaho sugar beet acres at 177,000 this year, up from 173,000 last year.

25 Jul 2023