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THE NUMBERS ARE IN: CORN AND SOYBEAN YIELDS IN THE DROUGHT YEAR OF 2012

The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service recently released annual crop production statistics for 2012. The damaging effects of the drought were evident.

Corn grain yields in 2012 were 20.3 to 33.1% lower than the last year across five states in IPNI's Northcentral region (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, South Dakota, and Wisconsin). The average regional corn grain yield was 124.1 bu/A, representing a 21.1% yield decrease from last year, which was more than the national average reduction of 16.2%. Only one state in the region, Minnesota, showed a corn grain yield increase, which was 5.8% greater than 2011. Average yield in this state was 165 bu/A—by far the highest in the region.

Similarly, corn silage yields were also reduced for all states except Minnesota. Reductions ranged from 25.6 to 57.1% for the five states. Yields in these states ranged from 8 to 15 tons/A. The average yield for the region was 13.1 tons/A, which was a 31.1% reduction from last year. This percent decrease was almost twice the U.S. average reduction of 16.3%. Minnesota's average corn silage yield of 19 tons/A was a 5.6% increase from last year.

Soybean production generally fared better than corn. Soybean yields in Minnesota were 10.3% higher than they were in 2011 and reached a state average 43 bu/A. The rest of the states in IPNI's Northcentral region saw yield reductions ranging from 4.4 to 18.9%. Yields in these states ranged from 30 to 44.5 bu/A. The regional average yield was 41.7 bu/A, which was 7.9% lower than last year. Like corn, soybean yield reductions in this region were greater than the national average.

Average yields for 2012 and their percent change compared to 2011.						
Political boundary	Corn grain		Corn silage		Soybean grain	
	Yield, bu/A	Change from 2011, %	Yield, tons/A	Change from 2011, %	Yield, bu/A	Change from 2011, %
Illinois	105	-33.1	9.0	-57.1	43.0	-9.5
Indiana	99	-32.2	12.5	-37.5	43.5	-4.4
Iowa	137	-20.3	15.0	-26.8	44.5	-13.6
Minnesota	165	5.8	19.0	5.6	43.0	10.3
South Dakota	101	-23.5	8.0	-48.4	30.0	-18.9
Wisconsin	121	-22.4	14.5	-25.6	41.5	-10.8
Regional Average	124.1	-21.1	13.1	-31.1	41.7	-7.9
U.S. Average	123.4	-16.2	15.4	-16.3	39.6	-5.5

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2013. Crop production - ann. Released 12:00 pm ET. 11 Jan. 2013 [online]. Available at <http://nass.usda.gov> (verified 13 Jan. 2013).

Percent yield reductions translate fairly directly to nutrient removal reductions. Previous P and K applications are expected to have greater residual effects since lower amounts of these nutrients were removed. In Minnesota, higher removal of nutrients occurred. Farmers and advisers will need to account for these changes in yield as they re-evaluate their nutrient applications rates for the coming season.

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Abbreviations: P = phosphorus; K = potassium.

Note: *Plant Nutrition TODAY* articles are available online at the IPNI website: www.ipni.net/pnt