Heavy rain at the wrong time seriously hampered Louisiana cotton and corn farmers last year, but the latest crop forecast indicates large acreages in both crops this year. Farmers indicated they are planting more this year in all the major crops than they did last year.

Rains last spring stunted corn and caused losses at harvest. Cotton farmers were forced to plant late, or not at all, but favorable conditions the rest of the year helped them bring in a bumper crop.

According to Dave Frank, state statistician for the Louisiana Agricultural Statistics Service, the weather was good this spring, and that is reflected in the service's mid-year crop forecasts.

The national forecast in major crops showed increases in the acreage of some crops, some reduction in others. Louisiana corn farmers are expected to have 300,000 acres this year, about 25,000 more than in 1991. "With the exception of 1986, when 400,000 acres were planted, this will be the largest corn acreage since 1961," the statistics service said.

All U.S. corn farmers expect to harvest 72.2 million acres, 5 percent more than last year. Cotton farmers in Louisiana are expected to have 900,000 acres this year, up 3 percent over last year's acreage, and the largest acreage since 1953, when growers planted 1,029,000 acres. Nationally, cotton acreage is expected to be down about 3 percent, at 13.6 million acres.

Louisiana rice acreage is put at 600,000 acres this year, 40,000 acres more than last year. The U.S. rice acreage for harvest is expected to be 2,968,000 acres for harvest, about 200,000 acres more than in 1991.

Soybean farmers in Louisiana indicated in the survey they will plant 1.2 million acres this year, some 17 percent more than last year. Nationally, soybean plantings for harvest will be up slightly, the survey indicates. Farmers indicate they will have 58,038,000 acres, compared with 57,951,000 in 1991.

The statistics service says Louisiana sugarcane acreage may set a record this year. Acreage is estimated at 390,000, up by 45,000 acres over last year's record crop. Favorable weather could mean another record, the service says. All sugarcane acreage for the United States is estimated at 952,000 acres this year. It was 896,900 acres last year.

Grain sorghum acreage will be higher in both Louisiana and the nation, the survey shows. Louisiana acreage is estimated at 230,000, 12 percent over the 1991 acreage. U.S. sorghum acreage will be an estimated 11.2 million acres. The 1991 U.S. acreage was 9.8 million acres.

Sweet potato plantings in Louisiana are expected to be 2,000 acres more this year at 19,000 acres. U.S. sweet potato acreage is also forecast to be higher — 80,700 acres this year, compared to 77,800 in 1991.

Louisiana wheat, which is planted in the fall and harvested the following spring, is down sharply, the statistics service report shows. Farmers planted 200,000 acres last fall, with 160,000 acres harvested this spring. The planted acreage was down 100,000 acres from the previous year, the service says.

Nationwide, the 1992 wheat acreage is put at a little over 63 million acres, compared to 57.7 million acres in 1991.