NEW IBERIA, La. — The increased production of crawfish in Iberia Parish farm ponds points optimistically to a bountiful harvest this season, according to County Agent Dr. Charles Miller.

Miller reported a significant rise in the number of farmers participating and an acreage hike, assures market outlets of a substantial crop.

Last year, 50 Iberia farmers harvested approximately a million pounds from an estimated 2,000 acres of crawfish ponds. This year the increase in farmers will be utilized on pond acreage upwards of 2,500.

Miller said the Iberia source crawfish are obtained from ponds constructed in rice fields, swamps or woodland while the bulk of the non-cultivated variety of crawfish originate in the Atchafalaya River Basin and lakes, marshes and swamps scattered about the state.

“The demand for crawfish annually calls for increased output,” Miller said, “as it remains along with crab, shrimp, oysters and fish a feature of creole cooking in South Louisiana for over 200 years.”

Reporting on the cultivation of hot peppers, a major source of Iberia Parish revenue, Miller said 100 farmers grossed over $500,000 from commercial tillage in 1972.

“Most of the hot peppers grown in the state are planted in the parishes of Iberia, St. Martin, Lafayette, Vermilion and Avoyelles on approximately 4,000 acres at a total value close to $2 million,” Miller said.