Most of La.'s farmers plan to plant fewer acres in '93

By DICK WRIGHT
Advocate staff writer

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The mandatory cotton acreage reduction is 7.5 percent this year compared to a 10 percent acreage reduction last year, he said.

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Farmers must abide by acreage limits if they take advantage of government price support programs. Cotton, corn, grain sorghum and rice are major "program crops" grown in Louisiana.

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Price and acreage reduction cut into rice outlook this year.
Louisiana farmers indicate they will plant more cotton this year.

**Acres**

CONTINUED FROM 1H

Walter Morrison, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service specialist, said many Louisiana corn and grain sorghum growers bypass the government program because they don't feel the benefits are sufficient.

Soybeans and sweet potatoes do not have government price support programs. The estimated drop in rice acreage probably reflects both a mandated acreage reduction of 5 percent and a depressed price, said Paul Seilhan, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service rice specialist.

Louisiana rice acreage is forecast now to be 570,000 acres, or 10 percent under the 1992 acreage of 630,000 acres.

Seilhan said the price has dropped by $1.20 per hundredweight in the past year. The average 1991 price was $7.64 per hundredweight, and the 1992 price was $6.44, he said. He said the world price of rice has continued to fall.

The rice market starts this year with 38.1 million hundredweight carried over from last season, some 12 million more than was carried over in the previous year, he said. The rice trade uses hundredweight, or 100 pounds, as a standard measurement.

Morrison said soybean acreage may be a little higher than early intentions show if weather interferes with corn planting. But he said a continued depressed price for soybeans also plays a part in the indicated acreage drop.

Farmers in the survey indicated they will plant 1,150,000 acres of soybeans this year, down 6 percent from 1992.

Both corn and grain sorghum are government program crops and both have mandated acreage reductions this year if they are planted under the program.

Farmers indicated they will plant 500,000 acres of corn, down 25,000 acres from last year. They indicated they will plant 180,000 acres of grain sorghum, down 22 percent from 1992.

Sweet potato acreage will rise by 1,000 acres, to 18,000 acres, this year if farmers follow through on their stated intentions, the service found.

In St. Landry Parish, home of the Yambilee, Louisiana's sweet potato festival, acreage will be down this year, said Lee Hampton, county agent. He said the parish has lost two major growers and some smaller growers are not planting this year. However, the Agricultural Statistics Service found sizable acreage increases planned for some other parishes.

The statistics service also reports wheat acreage for harvest this spring is 150,000 acres, down 25 percent from the previous year. "This will be the smallest acreage since 1980 when 100,000 acres were planted," the service said.

Estimates for sugarcane are not issued until June 30, the statistics service said.

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*Indicated, based on farmer intentions
**Actual

Source: Agricultural Statistics Service