Federal crop forecasts predict good harvests, even record harvests in some crops, in Louisiana this year, and generally good harvests in major crops in the nation.

These predictions, issued in early August, were somewhat by fears that drought in some farming areas has hurt Louisiana crops. County agents last week said persistent drought has hurt the cotton that is not irrigated, and soybeans, which generally are not irrigated.

And since Louisiana's major harvest season coincides with hurricane season, some agents said farmers are keeping up with tropical storm reports.

Five years ago, three hurricanes hit Louisiana as crops were maturing, or ready for harvest, causing a disastrous year for the state's farming. Last year, Louisiana farmers had one of the best harvest seasons ever, because the weather was clear and dry when needed.

Despite dry weather hurting some crops, county agents reported some good news: Corn has been harvested and rice is being harvested, and each has good yields. Cotton picking is just getting under way. Most soybeans remain in the field.

Bill Russell, Franklin Parish agent, said Franklin had one of the best corn crops this year — one farmer may average 165 bushels on 1,110 acres of corn there. The statewide average per acre this year is 110 bushels, according to federal reports.

On one test plot, Russell said, the farmer made 185 bushels an acre and he made 200 bushels on another plot. Most of the Franklin Parish corn is irrigated.

Russell said Franklin Parish's 60,000 acres of soybeans have suffered from dry weather and insect damage. But, he said, some late planted beans had rain when they needed it, and, if they get more, they will produce.

Dry weather has been hard on the non-irrigated cotton, he said. Rain was scant in most of the parish this summer so that (non-irrigated) cotton has really suffered and it is going to have a very low yield.

"Of course, we have acres that are burning up. That is part of farming," he said.

Following are acreage and harvest projections compiled early in August by the federal Agricultural Statistics Service:

RICE: Louisiana production is forecast at a record high of 1.2 million bushels, 38 percent over last year. Acreage for harvest is 565,000, 17 percent over last year. A record high 6,650 pounds per acre, 25 more than last year, is projected. U.S. production is forecast to be 30 million bushels, 2 percent over 1986. Area for harvest is expected to be 2.92 million acres, with yield expected to average 5,611 pounds per acre, 138 pounds off last year's average.

CORN: Louisiana production is forecast at 26,273,000 hundredweights (cwt.) is up 3 percent over last year. Acreage for harvest is 5,650,000, 17 percent over last year. A record high 4,650 pounds per acre, 25 more than last year, is projected. U.S. production is forecast to be 56.6 million acres, 5 percent off last year. Expected yields are 59.1 bushels an acre, 5.6 bushels off last year.

SUGARCANE: Louisiana production is forecast at 24.9 million tons, down 15 percent from 1989, reflecting the loss in Louisiana, despite slight increases in Florida, Texas and Hawaii, the other cane-growing states.

No figures are forecast for Louisiana sweet potatoes.

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Severely damaged by a Christmas time freeze, the surviving cane "hasn't really grown the way we hoped it would," Law said.

In the far northeast corner of the Louisiana Delta, Morehouse Parish agent J. Stevens said cotton looks promising but the soybeans outlook is mixed.

Myrl Sistrunk, agent in West Carroll, said the dryland (not irrigated) cotton is "about burned up" from lack of rain and has begun to open. Soybeans could use rain.

Sistrunk also said pastures have dried up. Two to three weeks ago, farmers were really optimistic, but now the attitude is "kind of wait and see.

Stevens said rice in Morehouse looks good this year. The first bale of cotton has been harvested and the cotton crop, especially in irrigated fields, looks good.

"Of course, we have acres that are burned up. That is part of farming," he said.

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