Rainy weather douses 1991 farm income

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The most dramatic news about this year's crop was excess moisture. Weather dominated this year's agricultural picture, and the resulting crop and its yield are a direct reflection of the suffering crops sustained in 1991.

It will probably be remembered as one of the worst agricultural years in Evangeline Parish history. Total estimated farm income of $60,449,159, in Evangeline Parish in 1991 dropped by $5,531,541 from last year. Income from rice head steady at $26,694,310. We had an increase in acreage of 2,250 acres and a two barrel decrease in yield from 1990. Average parish yields are estimated at 33 barrels per acre of 53.46 hundred weight (cwt).

Severe weather related problems caused the soybean crop to be reduced by some 41,273 acres. Farmers planted only 17,414 acres of soybeans this year. This, in addition to plummeting prices, represented a loss to parish farmers of $8,116,755. Soybean income in 1991 checked in at $1,786,676. The contrast between 1990 and 1991 is almost unbelievable.

Soybeans had been ranked for a number of years as the second largest income producing crop for parish farmers, however, this year's weather problems have pushed it into seventh place, just ahead of wheat which also had severe problems with excess moisture prior to harvest.

This year's farm spotlight was definitely on beef cattle as our producers took advantage of good prices at the market place. For the fifth year in a row, income from beef cattle has maintained an upward trend. Income from beef cattle totaled $9,310,898 for an increase of $420,755 over 1990.

Income from sweet potatoes was only slightly better than last season. Total estimated income from sweet potatoes tallied in at $7,994,250, which is $292,950 better than last season.

Income from forestry remains in fifth place and held steady with a gross estimated value of $4,890,801.

Wheat acreage held steady at 9,332 acres, however, yield reduction due to excess moisture and lower prices ganged up to reduce income from wheat to $1,001,324—a difference of $789,220 below last season.

The same scenario can be said for corn as it yielded $1,094,874 from its 4,695 acres.

Crawfish income spiraled to $3,028,125 on its 4,750 acres, showing an increase of $1,246,876 over last year. Income from other crops, such as grain sorghum, hay, horses, cotton, dairy, sheep, nurseries, oats, poultry, swine, wool and commercial vegetables accounted for an estimated $2,802,901, a decrease of $4,902,111 from 1990.

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