Value Of Principal Crop In State In '64 Is $315 Million

The value of principal crops grown in Louisiana in 1964 totaled $315 million, about 17 percent to $64 million dollars less than in 1963, the Louisiana Crop Reporting Service in Alexandria announced.

The lower value is attributed partly to decreased production of some major crops, including cotton and sugarcane. Prices received by farmers for many crops were also lower than in 1963, with sharply lower prices for sugarcane and wheat.

Cotton was again the state's most valuable crop, with rice replacing sugarcane as second in value. These three crops account for three-fourths of the total crop value in 1964. Soybeans, hay, sweet potatoes, corn, pecans, strawberries, commercial vegetables, and wheat follow in order of value.

Total crop production was 7 percent below last year but was 24 percent above the 1958-62 average. While production of some major crops was less than last year, production of wheat, oats, soybeans, strawberries, tung nuts, and white clover seed notably increased. Crops were harvested from 2,65 million acres in 1964 — up 167,000 acres from 1963. Soybean and sugarcane acreages were up sharply but these increases were partially offset by reductions in acreages of corn for grain and sweet potatoes.

Cotton production is estimated at 595,000 bales of 500 pounds gross weight, 13 percent less than last year, but except for last year, the largest since 1953. Yield of lint per harvested acre is indicated at 549 pounds, the second highest yield of record. The record yield was 628 pounds per acre, produced in 1963. Value of the crop, including seed, is $100 million, compared with $125 million in 1963.

Production of rough rice in 1964 is indicated at 16,929,000 hundredweight dry weight, just slightly more than the previous record production of last year. Yields per acre, at 3,500 pounds (264.4 barrels), is the second highest of record, being exceeded only by the record yield of 3,525 pounds per acre produced last year. The 513,000 acres harvested this year is 1 percent more than last year. The crop is valued at $82 million, about $1.5 million or 2 percent below last year.

Production of sugarcane for sugar and seed is estimated at 7,590,000 tons, 17 percent less than the record production of 1963. Yield per acre is indicated at 1,070 tons, 6.5 tons less than the record yield of last year. Lodged cane from Hurricane Hilda has made harvesting difficult and expensive, but practically all acreage will be harvested. Total cane value, including seed and syrup, is estimated at $55 million, 46 percent less than last year. Syrup production is indicated at 2.0 million gallons compared with 1.9 million in 1963.

A record large crop of soybeans was produced again this year and production of this crop has more than doubled since 1953. Production in 1964 of 8,037,000 bushels is valued at $20.1 million, compared with 6,312,000 bushels and $16.0 million, respectively, in 1963. The 423,000 acres harvested for beans this year is 127,000 acres or 23 percent more than last year.

Production of all hay is estimated at 626,000 tons, 4 percent more than last year and a record high. Of the 400,000 acres cut for hay in 1964, alfalfa accounted for 14,000 acres, lespezea 39,000 acres, soybeans 8,000 acres, small grains 30,000 acres, and other hay 318,000 acres. The value of all hay totaled $4.4 million, compared with $1.4 million in 1963.

Soybean production is indicated at 3,570,000 hundredweight, 5 percent more than last year, revised production at 8 percent less than average. The yield per acre of 70 hundredweight is the highest of record, exceeding the previous record in 1961 by 2 hundredweight. This year's production is valued at $3.2 million, compared with $3.9 million last year. The crop is estimated at 6,034,000 bushels, 10 percent less than last year and 33 percent less than average. Except for 1962, 1964 production is the smallest of record. Yield per acre averaged 31 bushels, the same as last year. Value of production is placed at $8.3 million, compared with $9.1 million in 1963.

The 1964 pecan crop, indicated at 30 million pounds, is the third largest of record, having been exceeded only in 1963 and 1961. However, this year's crop is 39 percent smaller than the record production of 49.2 million pounds obtained in 1963. Wild and seedling pecans comprise four-fifths of the total production, or 24 million pounds, with the remainder of 6 million pounds being improved varieties. Total crop value is placed at $67 million compared with $93 million in 1963.

Value of production for other important crops in 1964 and 1963, respectively, is as follows: strawberries, $5.2 and $2.7 million; commercial vegetables, $3.3 and $3.0 million; wheat, $2.3 and $2.8 million; tung nuts, $1.5 million and $121 thousand; oats, $991 thousand and $851 thousand; peaches, $500 and $649 thousand; Irish potatoes, $821 and $421 thousand; and white clover seed, $1 thousand.

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