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Michigan Corn Crop Outlook is Favorable

LANSING, MICH. – Michigan corn growers are looking towards a potential bin-buster for the 2009 corn crop, despite the late start to spring planting. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, Michigan's corn crop is projected to reach 305 million bushels this fall, the largest harvest on record. However, a strong harvest will require that Michigan has favorable weather conditions through the fall. Growers planted 2.4 million acres of corn in 2009, which is about the same number of acres planted as last year. The 20-year range for corn acreage planted is between 2.1 million and 2.7 million acres.

Acres harvested and average yield are used to determine total production. The average yield per bushel has increased dramatically from 70 bushels per acre in 1988 to a high of 147 bushels per acre in 2006. Even though Michigan weather has not fully cooperated with farmers this year, yield is predicted to be 146 bushels per acre this season, which is approaching our record yield set in 2006. With the higher yield, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has projected production to increase in Michigan by about 10 million bushels this year.

“Nationally, corn production is projected to be up from more than 10.5 billion bushels in 2006 to nearly 13 billion bushels in 2009,” said Jody Pollok-Newsom, Corn Marketing Program of Michigan (CMPM) executive director. “As a result of the weather across the country, corn yields have been affected. What was originally called a potentially record-breaking crop is now being predicted to be just 100 million bushels under that mark, but will still be the second largest crop on record.”

One aspect of the corn crop that has gained a lot of attention recently is the availability of enough corn. “The important thing to remember about the production of corn in Michigan and across the United States is that we have an abundant supply. For example, the valuable co-products from the ethanol process will help displace some of the corn that has been fed to livestock in the past,” said Pollok-Newsom. “A bushel of corn is about 56 pounds, and you can process that bushel into nearly three gallons of ethanol and 17 pounds of a high-protein livestock feed called dried distillers grains (DDG). That DDG is then fed to livestock which replaces some of the need for corn. In fact, about one third of the corn that goes into the ethanol process comes back to the market as DDG.” Michigan produced about 671,000 tons of DDG in 2008 which displaced about 11 million bushels of corn.

Even with the larger amount of Michigan corn going to ethanol production there was still an 11 percent carry over from last year's crop, which means that after all market needs were met, 38 million bushels were left over. On a national level, 1.8 billion bushels were left over from 2008. In Michigan, ethanol production used about 28 percent of the crop, while 36 percent was used to feed livestock in-state and 25 percent was shipped out of state.

Headquartered in Lansing, the CMPM is a legislatively-established statewide program that utilizes one-cent per bushel of Michigan corn sold. Investments are made in the areas of research, education, market development, and new uses in an effort to enhance the economic position of Michigan corn growers. The CMPM works cooperatively with the Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA), a grassroots-membership association representing the state's corn grower's political interests. For more information on the CMPM and the MCGA, visit the web site at www.micorn.org.

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