

Peanut Blog

An ounce of information



Texas peanut production climbs in 2024

Texas peanut producers increased their acreage this year after back-to-back years of drought, according to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service experts at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Vernon.

Despite early predictions for a third consecutive drought-limited crop, the state saw 236,000 acres planted to peanuts this year, up 14,000 acres from 2023, said Emi Kimura, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension state peanut specialist and associate professor in the [Texas A&M Department of Soil and Crop Sciences](#), Vernon.

Texas grows all four market types of peanuts, Kimura said. This year, the largest majority, 46%, of the acreage was planted to Spanish, followed by runner, Virginia and Valencia. That has shifted from a couple years ago when most of the peanuts were runners.

“The number of acres going to Spanish is increasing because the price is higher,” she said. “The runner peanuts are mostly for peanut butter while Spanish peanuts go into the food market.”

Hurricane damage to peanut-producing regions

The mixed bag of early drought and the hurricanes across some of the major peanut-producing regions of the nation could cause production to settle below expectations and thus prompt better prices for peanut producers next year, said Pancho Abello, AgriLife Extension agricultural economist and assistant professor in the [Department of Agricultural Economics](#).

“Overall, the market was better, and that is why the acres were up,” Abello said. “Low 2023-24 ending stocks supported high prices despite lower prices of cotton and corn.”

Now, there is concern about hurricanes Helene and Milton’s effect on supplies nationally. About 1.8 million acres of peanuts were planted in the U.S. Of that, Georgia, Florida and Alabama are responsible for about 1.2 million acres, with Georgia accounting for 850,000 acres alone.

Texas is the second largest producer of peanuts, followed by Florida with 190,000 acres and Alabama with 170,000 acres.

“We just don’t know the loss of acres or quality reduction that Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton will cause,” Abello said.

In terms of production, he said U.S. peanut growers planted the highest number of acres since 2017, with an expected production of 4.1 million tons of peanuts. That would have given an expected ending stocks of 862,000 tons, compared to last year’s season-ending stocks of 740,000 tons.

Prices could rise next year

If ending stocks are below 1 million tons, Abello said producers should expect prices to stay high. If the hurricanes reduced overall yields by 5%, the ending stocks would be at or below last year’s.

Prices have steadily climbed over the last three years to be higher than average. The [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) prices for 2023-2024 were \$538 per ton on average. USDA is forecasting a price of \$510 per ton on average next season, but depressed yields and production due to hurricanes and drought could push prices higher.

Abello explained that producers won’t realize the price difference until next year because they contract with buyers for their peanuts before they plant.

Next year, another factor in potential prices will be how strong peanut demand remains. In 2023, peanut use was a record high, an increase of 9.6% across all platforms. The U.S. used a total of 3.273 billion tons of peanuts last year.

Hot, dry season limit yield potential

While Texas acreage was up, overall production is still in question, depending on the impact of drought across the production regions, Kimura said.

Texas’ planting season started with better moisture than the last two years, she said, but in August it turned dry and hot. The lack of water during July and August likely affected yields, because those are the critical months for the development of pegs and pods.

“Our growers were continuously running water where possible, but fields without sufficient water supply saw a reduction of the potential yield,” Kimura said.

The largest growing regions in Texas are West Texas around Gaines and Yoakum counties, as well as some in the Rolling Plains and some acres in Central Texas. Growers in South Texas added 10,000 acres to the state’s peanut acres this year.

“Our most challenging issue for Texas peanut production is the water,” she said. “That needs to be solved with more drought-tolerant varieties or different cropping systems.”

Another issue this year was the high weed pressure, particularly nutsedge, which is difficult to control in peanut production because of the limited herbicide options. Growers also saw some leaf spot disease issues in some areas and started to see more pod rot in September, Kimura said.

Some growers started digging their peanut fields in late September. Growers of Spanish and Valencia peanuts dig earlier because they are shorter-maturity peanuts than the runner and Virginia peanuts. Harvest will continue through October and into November.

“We are hoping for better yields this year than the last two years, but the August weather was not ideal for the bumper crop,” Kimura said.

AgriLife Extension district reporters compiled the following summaries:

Central

Hay was either baled or cut for the last crop. The grass and crops were not suffering yet, but stock tanks were dropping, and water quality deteriorated. Corn stunt disease was found in some fields grown for silage. Winter wheat planting and field preparations continued. Armyworms were spotted, prompting treatment efforts, and fly numbers remained an issue for livestock. Livestock diets were being supplemented. Feral hogs continued to cause property damage, leading to trapping efforts in some areas.

Rolling Plains

The district remained dry and unseasonably warm. Wheat planting slowed dramatically, and some dry-sewn areas had to be replanted due to drought conditions. Armyworms were reported in numerous counties. Producers reported increased fly numbers in cattle pastures and continued issues with grasshoppers. Livestock remained in decent condition, but a heavy and prolonged rain was needed to fill drinking water sources going into the fall and winter months.

Coastal Bend

Weather conditions remained hot and dry, with no rain and daily temperatures reaching the 90s. Soil moisture continued to decline, which put fieldwork on hold in some areas. Hay baling continued, but yields were lower due to the ongoing dry spell. Minimal winter pasture was planted, and many producers’ pastures were stressed with deteriorating grasses and lower-quality forage. Despite the lack of green grass, livestock remained in good condition. Cattle prices remained steady, and fall cattle work continued. The pecan harvest was minimal, and some native bottoms went unharvested due to light yields.

East

Several counties were put under burn bans. Little to no rainfall worsened the drought conditions. Where possible, producers continued hay production. Pasture and rangeland conditions were fair. Subsoil and topsoil conditions were short, and grass was turning brown. Pond, lake and creek water levels dropped. Some producers were holding off on planting winter pastures. Livestock were in fair to good condition, with some feed supplementation occurring. Wild pig damage continued.

Southeast

Drought conditions continued, and burn bans were initiated. Cotton harvest continued and was nearing completion in some counties. Pastures and available forage continued to decline. Soil moisture levels throughout the district were very short to adequate to very short. The first crop rice harvest was wrapping up. A cold front with lower humidity levels was in the forecast, raising concerns for wildfires. Rangeland and pasture ratings varied from poor to fair.

South Plains

Cotton farmers were busy spraying defoliants to prepare for harvest. Those who planted cotton early started stripping. Winter wheat continued to be planted. Armyworms were reported in several wheat fields. Peanuts were in fair to good condition. Pastures and rangeland were in fair to good condition, and cattle were in good condition.

Panhandle

Warm temperatures and dry conditions continued across the district. The harvest of feed grain and forage crops continued. Oilseed crops, particularly cotton, were reaching their final stages of maturity. Many cotton fields received harvest aids. The emergence and establishment of fall-planted small grain crops appeared to be progressing well; however, additional precipitation will be necessary to support their early growth and development. Pasture conditions continued to decline, with overall soil moisture levels that ranged from very short to adequate. Pasture and rangeland conditions varied from very poor to fair, while overall crop conditions ranged from poor to good.

North

Topsoil and subsoil moisture levels were short to adequate for most counties, with a few reporting very short soil moisture. Pasture and rangeland conditions were very poor to good. The lack of rainfall and dwindling stock tanks were a growing concern for producers. Winter wheat fields were ready for planting. Fig harvest was winding down. Winter greens and lettuce production continued in urban farms and hydroponic operations. Farmers were encouraged to closely monitor their water supplies and soil conditions as they prepared for winter. Livestock conditions were good, and many herds were being supplemented with hay.

Far West

Weather was seasonable, with cool mornings and hot evenings and no precipitation. Wheat planting continued. Pecans were close to harvest; however, black pecan aphids were reported at record levels in some counties and damaged orchards within the last few weeks. Cotton harvest continued, but early yields were poor. In the Rio Grande Valley, producers prepared for Pima and upland cotton harvest, with growers defoliating fields and anticipating good yields. Some producers were dealing with a high white fly population, and sticky cotton was anticipated. Pastures were drying down, and cooler morning temperatures were slowing the growth of the grass. Livestock were in fair condition.

West Central

Higher temperatures prevailed, with no precipitation recorded, leading to another hot, dry week with daily highs in the mid-90s. Temperatures remained above normal. Some farmers successfully harvested the second round of hay grazer and third round of coastal hay, achieving good tonnage per acre. While many producers began planting wheat, some opted to wait until November. Others continued to dust in wheat and oats, hoping for rain. Emerged wheat required additional moisture, and while dryland cotton showed some progress with lower bolls starting to open, the overall crop remained poor due to summer drought conditions. Pecan harvest began, but results were inconsistent. Pastures remained in fair condition, providing decent grazing. Range showed limited new growth of warm-season grasses due to cooler nighttime temperatures. Livestock were generally in acceptable condition, but some producers fed hay and supplemental protein as smaller stock tanks rapidly declined. The market for cattle was active, with stocker steers selling at steady to slightly lower prices, while feeder steers and heifers showed modest gains.

Southwest

Dry conditions continued, and it was very dusty. Overnight temperatures dropped to the high 60s to low 70s. No rainfall was reported, and none was in the forecast. Moisture conditions continued to decline, leading to a deterioration in pasture and rangeland conditions. Emerged small grains were holding on, but producers were waiting to plant winter forages until they received some moisture. The cotton harvest concluded, yielding better results than the previous year for both irrigated and dryland fields. Producers sold cattle at lighter weights, and some were destocking their herd. Stock tanks were drying up, necessitating supplemental water for livestock. Livestock markets were steady. Acorn crops matured as deer season began, and livestock grazed and received some supplemental forage. Wildlife were active and seeking water.

South

Conditions remained dry. Mild and moderate temperatures persisted for most of the district, with some counties reporting cool morning and evening temperatures and warm days. Grass and vegetation were turning brown. Topsoil and subsoil moisture conditions remained short. Cooler morning temperatures provided some relief to corn. Cotton harvest was wrapping up. Peanut harvest was under way or nearing. Most sesame fields were close to harvest. Cool-season vegetables looked good. Row crop farmers continued to prepare for the next year’s crops. Soil moisture remained good for cool-season vegetables but decreased with the above-normal temperatures. Strawberry planting was 50% complete. Citrus trees were doing well, with harvest for certain varieties beginning in the following weeks. Producers planted oats, winter wheat and leafy greens. Hay and forage producers made their last cuttings of summer grasses. Rangeland and pasture conditions declined. Hay prices ranged from \$75 to \$100 per round bale. Supplemental feeding continued in areas where rangeland and pasture conditions were unfavorable. Average sale volumes were reported at livestock markets with a slight price increase on feeder cattle, while cull cows, bulls and replacement unfavourable to be in high demand. Ranchers sold the spring calf crop and culled older cows because of the dry conditions. Livestock and wildlife were in good condition. Dove hunting slowed down, and deer and quail season were fast approaching, with deer and quail crops looking to be above average this year.