



“Prairie Gold” is a term frequently given to the state’s only major food grain crop. Wheat is produced in all regions of the state and is grown in more than 40 of the 64 counties. Prior to the impact of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) implemented in 1986, the Colorado all-wheat crop was valued at more than \$380 million and was the largest valued crop commodity in the state. With CRP removing approximately one million acres of wheat base from production and increased usage of crop rotations with the “Freedom to Farm” Act implemented in 1996, corn and hay crops have outranked wheat in terms of value of production in some years.

Nevertheless, Colorado is a major wheat producing state, sixth in 2009, fifth in 2010, and seventh in 2011. The 2010 all-wheat crop was valued at approximately \$600,600,000, based upon 2,377,000 acres being harvested with an record average yield of 45.5 bushels per acre, resulting in total production of 108,234,000 bushels. Colorado is a major winter wheat producing state, eleventh in 2008, second in 2009, and fifth in 2010. Hard Winter (red and white) wheat is the dominant class of wheat produced in the state, accounting for more than 95 percent of the total. The 2010 Hard Winter wheat crop was valued at approximately \$586,913,000, based upon 2,450,000 acres being harvested with a record average yield of 45.0 bushels per acre, resulting in total production of 105,750,000 bushels. Hard Winter wheat is used for yeast breads and hard rolls since it is high in protein and strong in gluten. Colorado is also a minor spring wheat producing state, ranking eighth in 2004-2010. Hard Red Spring (HRS) wheat and White wheat are the major classes of wheat produced in the San Luis Valley. The 2010 HRS and White wheat crop was valued at approximately \$13,687,000, based upon 27,000 acres being harvested with an average yield of 92 bushels per acre, resulting in total production of 2,484,000 bushels. HRS wheat is also used for yeast breads and hard rolls since it is high in protein. White wheat is used for cookies and crackers.

When records began in 1869, Colorado wheat producers harvested just 11,000 acres of all-wheat and produced only 275,000 bushels of grain. By 1890, the acreage had grown to over 300,000 acres and more than 5.5 million bushels of production. More than one million acres were harvested each year from 1918 through 1931, but the acreage was sharply reduced during the “Dust Bowl” years from 1932 through 1936. Total production of 139,302,000 bushels in 1985 was the largest all-wheat crop ever produced in the state, based upon 3,522,000 acres being harvested with a then record average yield of 39.6 bushels per acre. Since implementation of the CRP in 1986, all-wheat acreage planted has averaged 2,661,731, all-wheat acreage harvested has averaged 2,340,077 acres, yield per harvested acre has averaged 33.7 bushels, total all-wheat production has averaged 79,667,423 bushels, price per bushel for all-wheat has averaged \$3.74, and the total value of all-wheat production has averaged \$296,356,030.

More than 80 percent of Colorado’s wheat production is typically exported and is generally one of Colorado’s top ranked exports by dollar volume. During the 2010-11 marketing year, an estimated 86,587,200 bushels of wheat valued at approximately \$479,693,080 were exported to 60 different countries. During the past decade, Colorado wheat production has created approximately 15,717 jobs annually. Approximately 7,020 (45%) of these jobs can be directly attributed to wheat exports.

For more information

There are three significant organizations representing Colorado wheat producers: Colorado Wheat Administrative Committee (CWAC); Colorado Association of Wheat Growers (CAWG); Colorado Wheat Research Foundation (CWRF). All three organizations have the same staff. For more information please visit www.coloradowheat.org or contact:

Darrell Hanavan
 CWAC/CAWG/CWRF Executive Director
 4026 S. Timberline Rd., Suite 100
 Fort Collins, CO 80525
 970-449-6994

