

State Senator Robert Mayer The Mayer Memo

Senator Robert Mayer - Serving Butler, Dunklin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Ripley, Stoddard & Wayne Counties



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Missouri Harvest Season is Here

JEFFERSON CITY — Fall is here and that means harvest season. This year, many southeast Missouri farmers experienced the full range of weather conditions — excessive spring rains and severe flooding, dry conditions during mid-summer, and then a wet, windy unwelcome surprise from Hurricane Ike this fall. Despite later-than-normal plantings of corn, soybeans and rice, our area farmers are hopeful they'll haul in decent harvests, but won't know the full extent of the spring and summer weather conditions until the final harvest numbers are in. For the most part, our fall weather is cooperating beautifully.

The soybean, rice and cotton harvests are in full swing, according to area agronomy specialists, and the corn harvest is nearly complete. According to the National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) Missouri Field Office, the state's corn crop appears to be on track to exceed expectations. Yields for soybeans, rice and cotton are expected to fare average or better, depending on their location in our part of the state.

With our area's various soil types and scattered weather conditions, I know the crop situation can vary widely — sometimes vastly within one county. In addition to the spring flooding that made it necessary for some farmers to replant crops, Hurricane Ike cut a swath through a large part of our area in September — knocking down some of our farmers' rice and corn crops in several areas. And at least one our counties — Dunklin County — experienced drought conditions this summer in its southernmost part. It appears irrigated grain crops will do much better than non-irrigated crops throughout our area.

Overall, the harvest appears to be a little better than anticipated. Let's hope the weather continues to cooperate for the growing and maturing of our late-planted crops and that grain prices make a dramatic turnaround soon.

I also want to share some news from the Missouri Department of Agriculture. The department urges producers to choose state-licensed grain dealers and warehouses when selling and storing grain. A list of licensed dealers and warehouses are available by calling

the Grain Regulatory Services Program at (573) 751-4112 or online at www.mda.mo.gov.

The state agriculture department also recently announced that the 2009 Building Our American Communities (BOAC) Grant Program applications are available and should be completed and postmarked by Dec. 5, 2008. The program offers 18 grants each to Missouri 4-H clubs and FFA chapters up to \$500 for groups or individuals who present proposals benefitting an agricultural community and promoting community development.

Projects may include improvements to existing facilities, grounds, or buildings that are used by various groups or organizations in the applicant's community. Examples of 2008 BOAC grant projects include landscape and beautification projects for historic and public buildings, safety and convenience improvements for local fairgrounds, and replacement and renovations of damaged and aged publicly-used structures. For more information on the BOAC Grant Program, call (573) 751-5618 or visit the Missouri Department of Agriculture's website at www.mda.mo.gov.

As always, if you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at 1-877-291-5584.

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