

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Poland

Post: Warsaw

Polish Producers Bullish on the Winter Crops

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

Grain and Feed

Oilseeds and Products

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Report Highlights:

Poland's winter cereals crops are estimated to be in a very good shape after the mild 2013/14 winter. The Main Statistical Office released its preliminary field survey results which showed the majority of Polish farmers and growers optimistic about good winter crops and orchards. Heavy May rainfall did not damage crops nor lead to lower optimism for a large harvest. However, strawberry plantings are expected to be affected by dry weather in early spring followed by excessively wet conditions in May.

General Information:

The Main Statistical Office just released its initial winter grains and rapeseed crops survey, conducted in late March/early April, which reveal a much healthier 2014 overall crop as compared to the 2013 preliminary survey.

Minor winterkill losses were registered in the regions of Zachodniopomorskie (North West of Poland), Wielkopolska (Greater Poland), Warmia-Mazury and Lower Silesia.

Losses resulted from temperature fluctuations and dry winds. In March and occasionally in April day-night temperature fluctuations - alternating freezing and thawing of the arable soil layer did not result in significant damage to plants. Because of the short winter crop loss caused by game animals was also minimal.

The winter crops vegetation period started in western part of Poland at the end of February and in the rest of the country in early March. With the onset of an early spring farmers were able to start sowing cereal seeds in early March, a month earlier than last year. Warm weather in the second half of March enabled acceleration of field work leading to earlier sowing of spring cereals, sugar beets and potato plants. No field damage has been record across Poland after the country's two weeks of rainfall. The moisture and continuing higher humidity has resulted in plant development above the average for this time of year.

Assessment of winter grains and rapeseed as of November

| Plant | Assessment points | | | |
|--------------|-------------------|------|------|------|
| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
| Winter wheat | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.7 | 3.8 |
| Rye | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.6 | 3.6 |
| Barley | 3.5 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 3.8 |
| Triticale | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.6 | 3.7 |
| Mixed grains | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.5 | 3.6 |
| Rapeseed | 3.4 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 3.8 |

Source: Main Statistical Office, Poland

Assessment points: 1) very bad – disaster level, 2) bad, 3) enough, 4) good, 5) very good.

The Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation in Pulawy (IUNG), Poland, supported the survey assessment noting the overall health condition of winter cereals was good and that crop size can be expected to exceed the multiple year average. However experts from IUNG show less optimism for the rapeseed crop which they assess the 2014 rapeseed crop yield will be 8-10 percent below the multiple year average. They rationalize that assessment on the unfavorable weather conditions in autumn 2013 for rapeseed sprouting.

The Main Statistical Office also released favorable assessments for orchard development with fruit trees

and bushes touted as being in very good condition after the abbreviated winter. The 2013/14 winter was very mild over the majority of Poland's territory which has laid concern for an abundant population of insects. Another concern with the mild winter was early blossoms that appeared prior to temperatures rising sufficient for bees to migrate from hives.

Dry conditions in March and heavy rains in May proved to be very unfavorable for strawberry plantations. The 2014 crop year is expected to remain unfavorable for strawberry growers in Poland.

Generally in the second half of May agro meteorological conditions for growing winter and spring plants are very favorable. Given the warm wet weather received this year Poland's winter crops appear to be very promising.