

## Farm Cropland Acres

Overall, there was a slight increase of 10,585 cropland acres (+0.2 percent) in Virginia during 1992-97. Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest Extension Districts showed small increases in cropland acres, while Central, Northeast, and Northern Districts showed small decreases in acreage.

Central District cropland acres decreased by 12,513 acres (-1.3 percent), the second largest absolute and relative decline among extension districts (Tables 9 and 10). Piedmont Planning District acres grew by 12 thousand acres, canceling half of all other district losses. A particularly large decrease in cropland acres occurred in Pittsylvania (-7,877 acres). A large increase in cropland acreage occurred in Buckingham (+6,546 acres).

Table 9. Cropland Acreage by Extension District and Percent Change 1992-97		
Extension District	1997 (Acres)	Change 1992-97 (%)
Central	934,993	-1.3
Northeast	413,040	-1.1
Northern	777,746	-1.3
Northwest	740,115	3.8
Southeast	603,484	-2.3
Southwest	827,323	2.6
Virginia	4,322,425	0.2

Table 10. Cropland Acreage by Planning District and Percent Change 1992-97		
Planning District	1997 (Acres)	Change 1992-97 (%)
Central Virginia	237,368	-3.3
West Piedmont	265,040	-3.0
Southside	208,036	-2.7
Piedmont	260,633	4.9
Richmond Regional	141,645	-1.6
Northern Neck	112,228	-1.6
Middle Peninsula	152,802	-0.3
Peninsula	6,365	0.4
Northern Virginia	146,397	-3.6
Rappahanock-Rapidan	341,170	0.6
Thomas Jefferson	195,632	-3.1
Radco	94,547	-0.2
Fifth	85,163	6.7
Central Shenandoah	411,832	3.0
Lord Fairfax	243,120	4.1
Crater	182,343	-0.3
Southeastern Virginia	296,303	-6.8
Accomack-Northampton	124,838	6.7
Lenowisco	124,058	1.0
Cumberland Plateau	113,539	10.9
Mount Rogers	381,202	1.3
New River Valley	172,440	0.8

Northeast District lost 4,613 cropland acres (-1.1 percent). Most planning districts within Northeast District lost relatively small acreages. Among the principal agriculture counties of the district, Essex and King and Queen stand out, the former gaining 4,042 acres and the latter losing 3,399 acres.

Northern District lost cropland acres at about the same rate as Northeast and Central Districts (-1.3 percent). Northern Virginia and Thomas Jefferson Planning Districts exhibited the highest cropland losses. Very high cropland losses were experienced in Loudon (-7,860 acres) and Albemarle (-12,799 acres). Other counties with large relative changes were Fairfax, Prince William, and King George.

Northwest District shows the largest increase in cropland acres (+27,003 acres, +3.8 percent), and the increase is consistent across the district's planning districts. Only three counties in the extension district lost cropland acres, and only Rockingham County lost more than 3,000 acres. Large increases in cropland acreage occurred in Bath (+5,808 acres), Augusta (+4,559 acres), and Clarke (+4,578 acres).

Southeast District had the state's largest decrease in cropland acres (-14,245 acres, -2.3 percent). Half of its counties or cities gained cropland acres, while the other half lost. The Southeast Planning District experienced large losses in Suffolk (-6,833 acres) and Virginia Beach (-14,384 acres). Counties on the Eastern Shore increased acreage, particularly Northampton (+5,347 acres). Prince George County (-6,889 acres) and Sussex (-5,050 acres) were big losers of cropland, while Greensville (+7,273 acres) was a big gainer.

Southwest District was second behind Northwest District in gaining cropland acres (+21,029, +2.6 percent) acres. Russell (+5,895 acres), Tazewell (+5,774 acres), and Pulaski (+4,487 acres) stand out with large increases in cropland acres. Washington (-3,495 acres) and Montgomery (-3,138 acres) had relatively large losses.