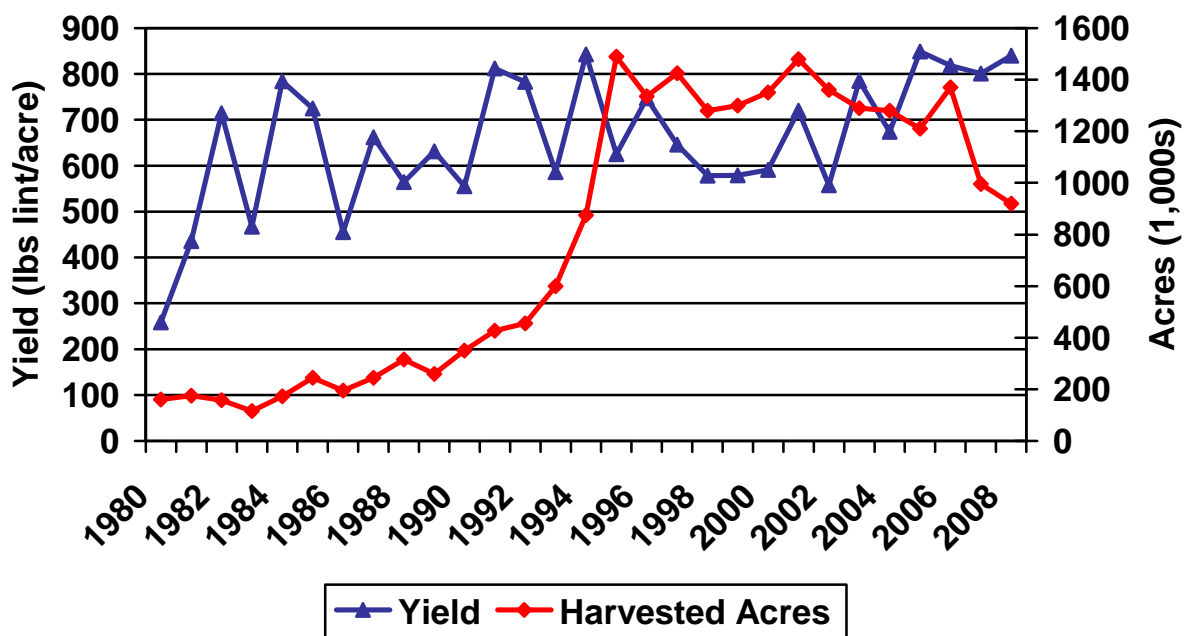


## THE 2008 CROP YEAR IN REVIEW

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The 2008 production season was highly variable depending primarily on rainfall. In spite of droughty conditions in some areas and excessive rainfall in others, the 2008 season was another in which we made more cotton than we thought we would or should. Droughty conditions occurred in many areas during June, but scattered showers returned during July and early August and sustained the crop in many areas. Tropical storm Fay brought heavy rainfall in the southernmost and southwest counties, causing considerable damage in some fields. In excess of 15 inches of rain was reported in some southwest counties. In central and east Georgia, Tropical Storm Fay brought much needed rains which helped finish those crops. Unlike previous years, we had a relatively cool fall and an early frost which limited yield potential in later maturing fields. Harvest conditions were generally good. Although yields were highly variable, average yield was estimated at 840 lbs per harvested acre on 920,000 acres. This is the fourth consecutive year that the statewide yield has averaged over 800 lbs per harvested acre.



**Figure 1.** Average lint yield per harvested acre and acres harvested, Georgia 1980-2008. Source: [http://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Reports\\_By\\_Date/index.asp](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Reports_By_Date/index.asp)

Quality of the 2008 crop was similar to slightly better compared with previous years. Short staple and high mic were observed in some dryland fields. Of bales classed, 17 percent were short staple (<34) and 10 percent were high mic (>4.9). Georgia still ranks near the bottom of the national averages in uniformity (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Fiber quality of bales classed at the Macon USDA Classing Office, 2006-2008.

	Color Grade 31/41 or better (% of crop)	Bark/ Grass/ Prep (% of crop)	Staple (32nds)	Strength (g/tex)	Mic	Uniformity
2006	49 / 97	all < 1.0	34.4	28.4	47	80.4
2007	39 / 97	all < 1.0	34.3	28.6	47	80.0
2008	22 / 89	2/<1/<1	34.5	28.6	45	80.2
Bales classed short staple (< 34) and high mic (>4.9) 2006: 20% and 21%    2007: 22% and 20%    2008: 18% and 11% Source: <a href="http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/">http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/</a>						

DP 555 BG/RR again dominated the state's acreage, with almost 86 percent of crop planted to that variety (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/>). The USDA Survey estimated that about 90 percent of the Georgia crop was planted in single-gene Bt transgenic varieties (Bollgard) and 4.4 percent planted in 2-gene Bt transgenic varieties (Bollgard II and WideStrike). Producers are encouraged to gain experience with non-Bollgard varieties to prepare for the impending loss of the Bollgard registration and transition to new varieties. Herbicide resistant Palmer amaranth (pigweed) loomed large as a production challenge across much of the state.