

Weather Effects on Arizona Agriculture in 2001

With Arizona's diverse topography, the state's temperatures range from the wintertime cold in the higher mountain areas to the searing summertime heat of the desert areas. The highest recorded temperatures for the year were 122 degrees at Bullhead City and Laveen on July 2 and at Willow Beach on July 3. Flagstaff recorded the lowest temperature of -15 degrees on December 13. In general, temperatures were above normal during May, June, September, and November. Temperatures were below average during December and mixed during the remaining months.

The first quarter of 2001 brought moderate precipitation throughout the state. Most reporting stations were near or above normal levels. Additional rainfall during April and May left most areas with well above average amounts. The monsoon season arrived later than normal and continued for nearly three months. During the last quarter of the year, rainfall was below normal. The year ended with most areas in the State being near or slightly below normal precipitation.

Planting of the small grain acreage was complete by early February. Cotton planting commenced in late March, about the same as the previous year. Cotton planting finished in late May, slightly ahead of the previous year.

Range and pasture conditions during the beginning of the year were mostly fair to good. Cattle were reported to be in mostly

good condition. In April and May, cotton progress was ahead of normal and small grain crops continued to progress normally. The State's citrus groves harvested grapefruit, tangerines, and tangelos. The lemon season came to a close, while the Valencia orange harvest gained momentum.

The harvest of small grain crops was completed in early July. The monsoon rains brought slightly improved range and pasture conditions during August and into September. Cotton condition was mostly good and progress was ahead of normal. By the beginning of September, cotton harvest was underway in southern portions of the State. Harvest throughout the State was active by the end of the month. Cotton harvest continued through the end of the year at near normal rates.

The fourth quarter brought mixed temperatures compared to normal throughout the State. Rainfall during this time was slightly below normal. Range and cattle conditions improved slightly, with the lower temperatures and additional moisture. By late November, small grain seeding had begun in western and central areas; the lemon harvest was well under way in the west; and the Navel orange and grapefruit harvests were gaining momentum. Small grain plantings were nearly one-third complete at the end of the year. The vegetable harvest remained active as the year came to a close.