



National Agricultural
Statistics Service

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United States Department of Agriculture



Illinois Department
of Agriculture

Weather and Crops Survey Reporting Guidelines

The following guidelines relate to the Weather and Crops questionnaire that we will be asking you to complete during the upcoming growing season. Retain these guidelines for future reference as you complete each week's questionnaire. This should make it easier for you to respond and will help develop better uniformity between all reporters across the State. These instructions are not intended to change the way you determine your response--only to clarify what we want to be included in your response. If you have questions, feel free to call Mark Schleusener or Mike Clark at (800) 622-9865.

A. General

1. Your report should reflect the crop progress and condition in your county. If you cannot report for the county as a whole, please provide your best estimates, even if it is only for a portion of the county. We need your help to put together as accurate a picture of the state as possible.
2. For topsoil moisture supply and crop conditions, enter the percent in each of the categories that best represents moisture supply or the crop's condition. The total of the 4 categories for topsoil moisture should sum to 100 percent. The same is true for the 5 categories for crop conditions (very poor, poor, fair, good, and excellent).
3. When reporting growth stages of crop development, please be aware that the sum of the percentages you report for a crop do not have to equal 100. Your report should represent the percent of the acreage currently in or past the stage listed on the questionnaire. **Example: Oats headed 81, filled 42, turning yellow 13, ripe 1.**
4. If a question does not apply to your area, leave it blank. Do not enter a zero. If the question does apply to your area but the crop has not reached that growth stage, enter a zero.
5. For days suitable for fieldwork report the number of days during the week that weather and field conditions would have allowed farmers to work in the fields a major portion of the day. Always round to the nearest WHOLE days.
6. Percent of acreage planted relates to the amount that would be planted under normal conditions. For instance, on wheat seeding you may be reporting less than 100% seeded when lateness or weather prohibits further seeding. Your reported seeding could then jump to 100% the next week although no additional wheat was seeded, if you feel that no further planting will occur.
7. All references to corn refer to field corn only, not sweet corn. Any development in the sweet corn crop should be discussed in comments.

B. Topsoil Moisture Supply:

Topsoil is defined as the top six inches.

Very Short - Soil moisture supplies are significantly less than what is required for normal plant development. Growth has been stopped or nearly so and plants are showing visible signs of moisture stress. Under these conditions, plants will quickly suffer irreparable damage.

Short - Soil dry. Seed germination and/or normal crop growth and development would be curtailed.

Adequate - Soil moist. Seed germination and/or crop growth and development would be normal or unhindered.

Surplus - Soil wet. Fields may be muddy and will generally be unable to absorb additional moisture. Young developing crops may be yellowing from excess moisture.

C. Pasture Condition:

Very Poor - Pastures provide very little or no feed considering the time of year. Supplemental feeding is required to maintain livestock condition.

Poor - Pastures are providing only marginal feed for the current time of year. Some supplemental feeding is required to maintain livestock condition.

Fair - Pastures are providing adequate feed but still less than normal for the time of year.

Good - Pastures are supplying adequate feed supplies for the current time of year.

Excellent - Pastures are supplying feed in excess of what is normally expected at the current time of year.

D. Crop Conditions:

Very Poor - Extreme degree of loss to yield potential, complete or near crop failure.

Poor - Heavy degree of loss of yield potential which can be caused by excess soil moisture, drought, disease, etc.

Fair - Less than normal crop condition. Yield loss is a possibility but the extent is unknown.

Good - Yield prospects are normal or above. Moisture levels are adequate with only light disease and insect damage.

Excellent - Yield prospects are above normal and crops are experiencing little or no stress.

E. Corn Phenological Stages:

Silking - Consider ears in a field to be silking when the majority of the ears show silk. Occurs approximately 10 days after the tassel first begins to emerge from the sheath OR 2-4 days after the tassel has emerged.

Dough - Consider fields to be in this stage when a majority of the ears have kernels that contain a thick milky or dough-like substance. The kernels will be fully grown. Normally half of the kernels are showing dent.

Dent - Consider fields to be in this stage when the majority of the ears have all kernels fully dented and no milk present.

Mature - Fields are in this stage when dry matter accumulation in the kernels has ceased and the field is safe from frost. The "black layer" has formed in the kernels. Kernels will shell off the cob fairly easily and have a moisture level of 30-35%. Corn is about ready to harvest with shucks opening and there is no green foliage present. Include acreage already harvested for grain.

Harvested - Include both grain and seed acreage but exclude silage.

F. Soybean Phenological Stages:

Blooming - Consider fields to be blooming when the majority of the plants show at least one bloom.

Setting Pods - Consider fields to be setting pods when the majority of the plants have pods developing. These same plants may also still be blooming on the upper nodes.

Turning Yellow - Consider fields to be turning yellow when the majority of the plants have leaves near the bottom of the plant turning yellow.

Shedding Leaves - Consider fields to be in this stage when the majority of the plants are shedding leaves. Leaves near the bottom of the plant are yellow and dropping while leaves at the very top may still be green. At this stage, the plants are physically mature and the pods will have their full size. Pods will be changing color from green to brown. Include acreage already harvested.

G. Sorghum Phenological Stages:

Headed - Consider fields to be in this stage when the majority of the plants have a head fully emerged.

Coloring - Consider fields to be in this stage when the majority of the heads are turning color from green to reddish brown or white. Leaves are also turning yellow or brown.

Mature - Consider fields to be in this stage when a majority of the plants are nearly ready for harvest. Grains readily part from the head and are tough and not easily crushed by the thumbnail. Include acreage already harvested.

H. Wheat and Oats Phenological Stages:

Headed - Consider fields to be in this stage when the majority of the plants have a head emerged.

Filled - Consider fields to be in this stage when a majority of the heads have kernels that are filled with a milky substance.

Turning Yellow - Consider fields to be in this stage when a majority of the plants are starting to turn yellow.

Ripe - Consider fields to be in this stage when the plants have turned yellow and the grain is hard. The field will almost be ready for harvest. Include fields already harvested.