

March 3, 2008

**KENTUCKY:** The first week of February proved to be warm and wet in the Bluegrass State with above normal temperatures and rainfall for the second straight week. An unseasonably warm air mass raised temperatures to record levels throughout much of the state. The air mass also set the stage for extreme severe weather on Tuesday and Wednesday in which heavy rain and high winds were accompanied by numerous destructive tornadoes. Temperatures for the period averaged 47 degrees across the state which was 15 degrees above normal and 10 degrees higher than the previous week. Rainfall for the week totaled 1.70 in. statewide which was 0.97 in. above normal.

Below normal temperatures and above normal rainfall were experienced the second week. A widespread winter storm at the beginning of the week was the primary weather maker for the state. The system produced a wintery mix of freezing rain, sleet and snow throughout the Commonwealth. Temperatures remained cold much of the week with below normal temperatures registering for the fourth week of the past seven weeks. Even with this, high temperatures did rebound into the 60's to near 70 at the end of the week. Temperatures for the week averaged 35 degrees across the state which was 1 degree below normal. Rainfall for the period totaled 1.44 in. statewide which was 0.56 in. above normal.

Below normal temperatures and rainfall occurred the third week of February. The majority of precipitation in the Bluegrass State fell as a winter mix of sleet, freezing rain, snow and rain from a winter storm that swept across the Ohio valley on February 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. Even though the state received below normal precipitation for the first time this month, the accumulations of ice and snow still caused significant travel problems. The winter weather system also aided in maintaining a cold air mass over the region which resulted in below normal temperatures for the second straight week. Extreme high temperatures reached the mid 60's at the beginning of the period while extreme lows dropped into the single digits across northern portion of the state on the 21st. Temperatures for the week averaged 32 degrees across the state which was 9.4 degrees below normal and 3 degrees colder than the pervious week. Rainfall for the period totaled .73 in. statewide which was 0.20 in. below normal.

Below normal temperatures and below normal precipitation were the norms for the fourth week of the month. The week was cold with almost daily threats of light, yet measurable precipitation. This was the second week with below normal precipitation and the third week with below normal temperatures. February could be characterized by the frequent precipitation events, severe storms and tornadoes, and mostly cold temperatures. Temperatures for the period averaged 36 degrees across the state which was 5 degrees below normal and 4 degrees warmer than the previous week. Precipitation for the period totaled 0.52 in. statewide which was -0.27 in from normal.

Producers continue to haul some grain and livestock to market. Grain to sell on the farm is in short supply. As many farmers' hay supplies continue to dwindle, they must make difficult decisions whether to purchase hay to feed their cattle if available and/or start to sell cattle due to lack of feed. Farmers continue to attend various commodity meetings. Many farmers continue making planting decisions for the upcoming 2008 crop season. Costs of inputs are being weighed against anticipated selling prices of finished commodities.