



USDA, NASS, MINNESOTA FIELD OFFICE, IN COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE - CHANHASSEN MN,
UNIV. OF MINN. EXTENSION SERVICE, DNR STATE CLIMATOLOGY OFFICE, USDA-FSA, AND USDA-NRCS

The following comments are from Minnesota's County Extension Educators, FSA (USDA - Farm Service Agency), and NRCS (USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service) Offices

BENTON: Things are quite normal for the end of March in terms of snow cover and general conditions. The common theme is higher costs for livestock and crop inputs.

BIG STONE: Snowfall on March 20-21 amounted to 16 inches but has been melting ever since, with 90% ground cover remaining. Livestock are in good condition. Frost level is quite deep due to the limited winter snow cover and colder than normal temps. With good fall moisture and the snow just received we should get a good start this spring.

BLUE EARTH: By months end, snow cover should be completely gone. There is plenty of soil moisture. Feed is available, and some hay is costly.

BROWN: Colder than usual. Temperatures have caused livestock producers to use more feed. Snow cover is gone as of March 26, 2008. Depth of frost is about 2 feet and holding steady. Moisture supplies seem to be better than last year. Ground is beginning to thaw. Farm places are very muddy. Lots of frost damage on roads. Livestock condition good. Moisture supplies are adequate.

CASS: Surplus hay is nonexistent. Snow is thawing slowly. Still too much snow in woods for 4-wheelers to access places for tapping maple trees.

FARIBAULT: Snow cover is pretty much gone. Frost station is still showing 19 inches of frost as of March 28, 2008. Moisture supplies may be short so far but spring rains could quickly improve levels. Area roads are showing the effects of deep frost.

FILLMORE: Snow cover is gone and the ground remains wet.

GOODHUE: Looking toward the end of March, we are experiencing warm enough temperatures that each snowfall we have had lately is melting. The only snow left is where it was piled up or drifted. The melting snow has mainly run off to the creeks or streams on the surface, with frost still preventing it from soaking in. Spring conservation projects are being looked at in the field as the snow recedes and the bare ground is examined after plans drawn up from this winter. Producers are sharing some uncertainty with news of tight supplies (inputs) in planting the new crop. Producers are also weighing the future with livestock because of the high feed costs and their operations profitability.

HUBBARD: Generally the cropland fields are about 50% covered with snow and the forested areas are 100% snow covered. The depth ranges from a few inches in cropland to more than 8 inches in the woods. The frost depth ranges from 2 to 3 feet. Livestock condition is fair to good with hay supplies short. The beef cattle are starting to calve and the grain farmers are continuing to contract their seed, fertilizer and fuel needs for spring planting.

JACKSON: Two late season snows brought about 3/4 inch of precipitation. No snow cover on the ground. Ground is starting to thaw, but frost is still present. Temperatures have been cooler than normal for March. Alfalfa is still dormant. Livestock are in good condition. Calving season has started.

KANABEC: With the slow snow melting there is very little run off. Hay is in short supply. Moisture is good for now.

KANDIYOHI: Still some snow in the field. There are reports of very deep frost as we have had a real open winter. Some tiles are running a little from last week's snow melt. In this area we froze up very dry so last week's heavy wet snow was welcome for the topsoil and the cracks from the frost.

KITTSOON: Majority of fields remain under snow cover. Flood projections anticipate minimal flooding. The calving season is well underway. No problems reported thus far. Adequate feed stocks exist. Producers are preparing for planting season. Soil moisture levels reported to be normal/average.

LAC QUI PARLE: We have had relatively little moisture over the winter. Frost is pretty deep, but starting to loosen. No apparent flooding danger with current conditions. The weather has been rather seasonable for the month of March, with a wide variety of weather conditions that have occurred. For the month we have received about 12" of snow, of which most has melted away. There has been some concern about how the winter wheat and alfalfa has survived the winter with the lack of snow cover for most of the winter.

LINCOLN: About 3 feet of frost and 3-6 inches of snow. Days are getting longer and warmer. Hay is available for those needing to buy it.

MEEKER: Eight plus inches of snow in the last week. Moisture is short and weather is unseasonably cool.

MORRISON: As of the end of March, the frost is starting to thaw as water begins to go down. Moisture supplies should be adequate for the start of the planting season. There is still a shortage of good hay available as farmers have been buying hay all winter. Livestock conditions have been fairly good. Seed, fertilizer, and herbicides have already been purchased by most farmers.

MOWER: No snow cover after 2 inches of snowfall this week. Top of soil is beginning to dry, with frost underneath. Farmers are busy trucking grain.

NICOLLET: Snow on March 31, 2008. Feed supplies good. Prices are high for all inputs including fertilizers, seed, fuel, etc. There is some apprehension for this year.

NOBLES: Cold this year. Snow is about gone; livestock had a hard time growing this year. Farmers are about ready to go to the field. Fuel price is terribly high.

OTTER TAIL: Calving is taking place. Moisture supplies are short or very short in parts of the county.

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PINE: Snow cover spotty. Depth of frost is minimal. Tractors and spreaders are stuck in the fields. Feed availability is sparse. Livestock conditions are fair to good depending on if hay was obtained. Topsoil moisture is fair at this point.

POLK: Snow cover was minimal, but recent snow provided minor cover. Feed supplies are somewhat low. Livestock are in good condition. Calving is well underway. Beef stock rental rates have dropped significantly.

ROCK: Good feed availability. Livestock operators are spreading manure. Two to four inches of wet snow accumulated March 27-28, 2008.

ROSEAU: Temperatures are rising back to normal and the snow cover is melting at an increasing rate. Spring flooding should be minimal unless heavy precipitation falls during or soon after snow melt. Livestock are in good condition but cattlemen are extremely despondent about the Bovine TB in this county.

SIBLEY: Most of the snow is gone. Some snow is still left in the farmstead grove. Surface of ground is starting to dry in places. Last weeks snow missed the county. Feed and livestock conditions are good. Price of feed is having some economical effect.

STEARNS: Snow gone from most fields in central MN; only a few snow banks remain. Recent snows have added to the moisture balance; which is needed. Looks like no flooding this spring to be concerned about. Feed supplies adequate; commodity prices remain high! Reportedly, cash rents are the highest ever.

WABASHA: Snow cover has melted completely. Moisture levels are adequate to surplus. Feed availability is good. Livestock conditions are good. Snow melted at a slow pace to prevent flooding. Frost depth still a factor. Temperature did not get above 45 degrees in March. Mississippi river is open in all areas except Pepin Lake, which is still covered by ice.

WADENA: Hay in short supply, and much is being trucked in. Other feeds are in good supply. Calves are coming and people are maintaining machinery. Optimism is high for the new crop year but rising input costs are becoming very real. There is still 3-4" of snow cover.

WATONWAN: Subsoil moisture should be increasing for the month.

WINONA: Snow cover is depleting. We are forecasted to have 6 inches again into Friday March 28th. Feed availability is good. Livestock condition is good. Some calving has started. Moisture supplies are very good in SE Minnesota. Most farmers are tired of winter. The snow banks are starting to melt. It appears that some of the frost is starting to thaw as well. Looks like most growers with cattle would like their pastures to green up. The hay pile is getting quite low. We are starting to get our crop inputs delivered to the farm. The equipment is mostly ready to go.

YELLOW MEDICINE: No snow cover at this time. Moisture will be low going into spring. No snow pretty much all winter, which caused the frost to go down 5 to 6 feet. Last week we got a good 6 inches of snow plus rain.

Thank you for your comments.

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