

Issue NE-CW0105, released January 3, 2005, by the Nebraska Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA. For more information contact us at: 100 Centennial Mall North, Suite 298, Lincoln, NE 68508, 402-437-5541, e-mail at [nass-ne@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass-ne@nass.usda.gov), Internet at <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>.

**Agricultural Summary:** For the month of December 2004, temperatures averaged above normal while precipitation was limited. Snow cover was non-existent as winter arrived with exposed wheat a concern in western counties. However, the open conditions did allow extended grazing of stalk fields, limiting livestock forage needs. Corn harvest is not yet complete in portions of the Panhandle. The western half of the state continues to be rated in moderate or severe drought.

This release is based on reports and data from FSA county directors, county extension educators, NOAA, and the High Plains Climate Center. Current county specific comments plus current and historic PDF files of Weather and Crop reports can be found at: [http://www.nass.usda.gov/ne/cropwthr/cmts\\_cur.htm](http://www.nass.usda.gov/ne/cropwthr/cmts_cur.htm)

**Weather Summary:** Depth of snow at the end of December was zero for all areas but the Panhandle, which averaged less than one-tenth of an inch. Precipitation during December was light and limited to the Panhandle and the eastern third of the state. Temperatures were well above normal the first and second full weeks and at the end of the month. During the last week of the month, soil temperatures averaged just below freezing in most portions of the state.

**Field Crops Report:** **Wheat** condition remained near month ago levels and rated 1 percent very poor, 2 poor, 33 percent fair, 53 good and 11 excellent. This continues well above last year and two years ago. **Hay and forage** supplies rated as adequate except in portions of the west and north central areas of the state.

**Livestock, Pasture, and Range Report:** **Cattle and Calves** condition rated 12 percent fair, 69 good and 19 excellent, near year ago levels.

**The following are comments from Nebraska's FSA County Executive Directors and County Extension Educators:**

#### ***NORTHWEST***

**BOX BUTTE:** Corn harvest is dragging on. Corn is wet and no place to sell or store.

**SCOTTSBLUFF/MORRILL:** Corn harvest still continues. Corn dry down this fall was very unusual, with some moisture still in the upper teens.

#### ***NORTH CENTRAL***

**HOLT/BOYD:** So far, we are having a mild, open winter which will be good for livestock producers short of forage. Forage supplies are available for reasonable prices. Movement of hay has been slow. Sellers would like more money and buyers are unwilling to buy until they have to.

**KNOX:** Main activities are care for livestock, tax work, FSA work. Many fall projects were completed due to exceptional weather.

#### ***NORTHEAST***

**ANTELOPE:** No snow cover has been on the ground for over a month. Cattle are able to make good use of the stalks. A lot of the hay has been purchased by large feedlot operations in the area, but producers that have livestock still have a good supply.

**DAKOTA:** With high yields we have quite a bit of corn left in the fields, so the cattle are in good shape. Hay is abundant, although low quality. With no snow cattle are still on corn stalk fields.

**DIXON:** Producers are focusing on livestock care and end of the year business. Some chemical application, well drilling and other farm maintenance projects are being done with the unseasonably mild weather. Conditions for livestock remain good to excellent.

**THURSTON:** Livestock producers have had a very good winter so far. No snow to speak of and temperatures have been ideal for feeding. Most producers have been able to move grain piled on the ground before it spoiled. Frost in ground has stopped most conservation work.

#### ***CENTRAL***

**DAWSON:** December weather has been fairly moderate as harvest is finally coming to a conclusion with just a few acres left. On average, yields were below last year but still above average. Farmers are busy with meetings, tax preparation and visiting with their banker. Most supplies are in good supply although nitrogen costs are high.

#### ***EAST***

**DODGE:** It has been a mild fall and winter except for a few cold days. Regular maintenance and chores are the main activities.

**WASHINGTON:** Unseasonably mild for December. Very dry.

**YORK:** Strong winds, on occasion, were very cold. Field work ceased the third week in December. Very little anhydrous ammonia applied to the fields. Most of the cattle are out of the fields and in fields or pastures close to home. Calves have been worked.

#### ***SOUTHWEST***

**FRONTIER:** Many producers are concerned about the water restrictions for the next growing year, as well as the new Crop Disaster Program. We have been busy with corn loans and LDPs as well as sign up for 2005.

**HAYES/HITCHOCK:** Corn harvest is nearly completed. Cattle are in corn stalks.

**HARLAN:** Gleaning of fields is going on in earnest with no snow cover. Some who were doing fall tillage had to stop after the extreme cold last week. Hay supplies are in good shape. Prices are more favorable for those buying than in the last several years.

#### ***SOUTH CENTRAL***

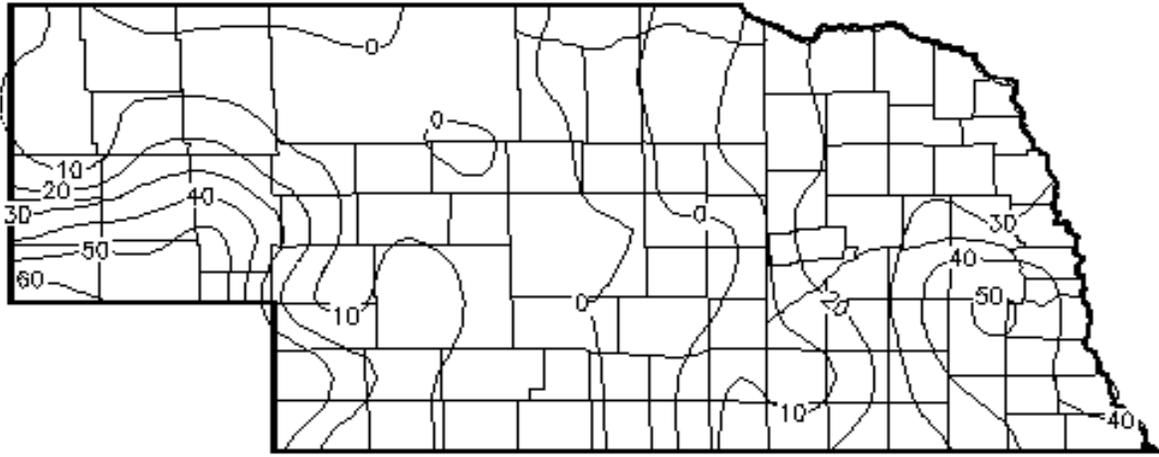
**WEBSTER:** Warm winter temperatures have helped preserve hay stocks. Cattle coming off of grass are starting to rebuild body condition on stocks.

#### ***SOUTHEAST***

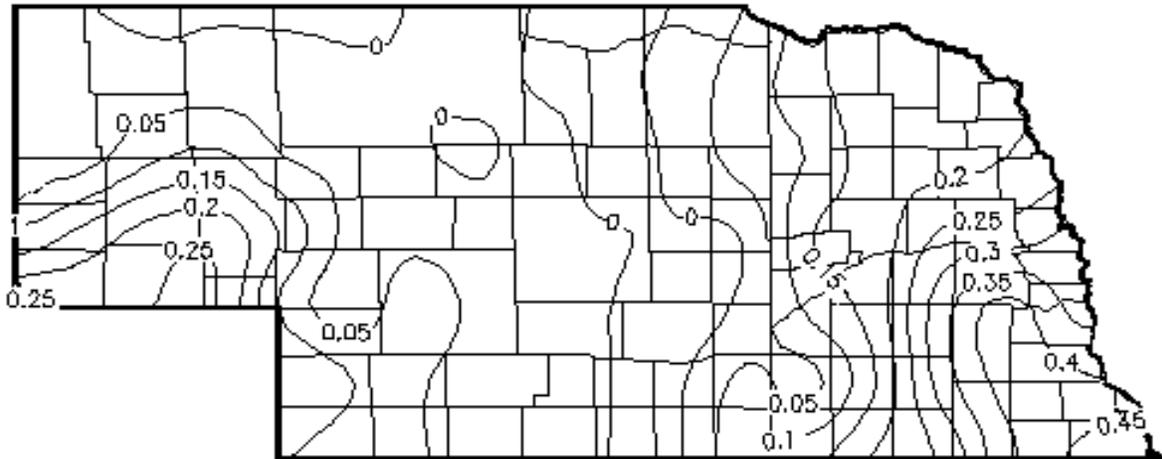
**JEFFERSON:** We have had an open winter to this point in time. The weather conditions have been good. Producers have been applying fertilizer and some fall tillage. Cattle are on stalks which reduces the amount of hay necessary for the winter.

**RICHARDSON:** Soil conditions are very dry.

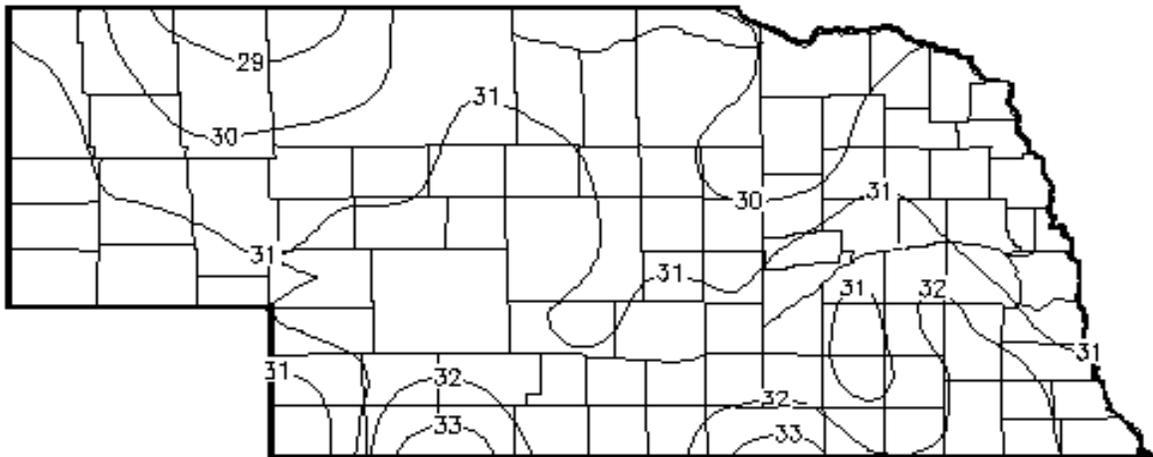
**PRECIPITATION AS PERCENT OF NORMAL FOR DECEMBER 2004<sup>1</sup>**



**PRECIPITATION IN INCHES FOR MONTH OF DECEMBER 2004<sup>1</sup>**



**SEVEN DAY AVERAGE TEMPERATURE AT THE FOUR INCH DEPTH UNDER BARE SOIL  
DECEMBER 27, 2004 - JANUARY 2, 2005<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Source: High Plains Regional Climate Centers Automated Weather Data Network (AWDN).