

Crop Weather - Survey Instructions

Guidelines and definitions for each question or group of questions are given below. Reporters should answer all questions which refer to any crops that are grown in their county(ies).

NOTE: All references to corn refer to field corn only, *not* sweet corn. Any developments in the sweet corn crop should be discussed in vegetable comments on the back page of the questionnaire.

Number of days suitable for fieldwork

A suitable day is defined as "one where weather and field conditions allow producers to work in fields a major portion of that day." A number from 0-7 should be entered for the number of days suitable for field work for the past week (Saturday through Friday).

Hay and other roughage supply

The county's *total livestock being fed* should be assigned a percentage by category, with the total of the categories equal to 100 percent. Categories are defined as follows:

Very Short - Feeders do not have the supplies that are needed to last the remainder of the feeding season, and will not be able to obtain those supplies.

Short - Feeders probably do not have the supplies that are needed for the remainder of the feeding season, and will have trouble obtaining those supplies from either hay growers or hay dealers.

Adequate - Feeders have enough hay to last the remainder of the feeding season, or the feeders will have no problem obtaining the supplies needed.

Surplus - Feeders have more than enough hay on hand to last the remainder of the feeding season, or dealers and growers will have problems disposing of all of the excess hay that they have on hand.

Top and Sub-Soil Moisture (with top-soil defined as the top 6 inches):

The county's *total cropland* should be assigned a percentage by category, with the total of the categories equal to 100 percent. Categories are defined as follows:

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.

Range and pasture condition

The county's *non-irrigated pasture and rangeland* should be assigned a percentage by category, with the total of the categories equal to 100 percent. Categories are defined as follows:

Very Poor - Pastures provide very little or no feed compared to what is normally expected for the current time of the year. Supplemental feeding is required to maintain livestock condition.

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

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

Good - Pastures are providing adequate feed supplies compared with what is normally expected for the current time of the year.

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

General crop conditions

The county's *entire crop* should be assigned a percentage by category, with the total of the categories equal to 100 percent. Categories are defined as follows:

Very Poor - Extreme loss of yield potential; complete or near complete crop failure.

Poor - Heavy loss of yield potential due to excessive soil moisture, drought, disease, etc.

Fair - Less than normal crop conditions. Yield loss is a possibility, but is not severe.

Good - Yield prospects are normal or better. Moisture levels are adequate with minimal disease and insect damage.

Excellent - Yield prospects are above normal and crops are experiencing little, if any, stress.

General crop progress

Percents should indicate the progress of field activities or crop development. For example, if half of the expected total winter wheat acreage is planted, a value of 50 percent would be reported. All progress percentages should relate to acres. In general, an acre can be considered to be in or beyond a stage when 50 percent or more of the plants in that acre are in or beyond that stage. ALL PROGRESS STAGES MUST BE ACCUMULATED TO 100 PERCENT. For example for the question "Corn Silking or Beyond", the reporter should add the percent that is currently silking and the percent that has passed into the dough and later stages (including harvested if greater than zero).

The stages are defined below. These terms and definitions should be used only as guidelines. Individual interpretations may vary from State to State. Only those items included in the National Crop Progress release are discussed.

Definitions:

Planted: If half of the total current year acreage expected is planted, a value of 50 percent should be used. If weather conditions alter plans such that intentions are prevented, a 100 percent should be used when planting stops.

Harvested: Crop harvesting progress covers intended acres, not the current acres. If, for example, half of the total current year soybean acreage is harvested, a value of 50 percent should be used. If weather conditions alter plans such that intentions are prevented, a 100 percent should be used when harvesting stops.

Corn Phenological Stages:

Emerged - As soon as the plants are visible. Normally occurs about a week after planting.

Silking - The emergence of silk like strands from the end of ears. Occurs approximately 10 days after the tassel first begins to emerge from the sheath or 2-4 days after the tassel is emerged.

Dough - Normally half of the kernels are showing dent with some thick or dough-like substance in all kernels.

Dent - Occurs when all kernels are fully dented and the ear is firm and solid. There is no milk present in most kernels.

Mature - Plant is considered safe from frost. Corn is about ready to harvest with shucks opening and there is no green foliage present.

Soybean Phenological Stages:

Emerged - As soon as the plants are visible. Normally occurs about a week after planting.

Blooming - A plant should be considered as blooming as soon as one bloom appears.

Setting Pods - Pods are developing on the lower nodes with some blooming still occurring on the upper nodes.

Dropping Leaves - Leaves near the bottom of the plant are yellow and dropping, while leaves at the very top may still be green. Leaves are 30-50 percent yellow.

Barley, Oats, and Wheat Phenological Stages:

Emerged - As soon as the plants are visible.

Headed - The head is present, visible, and fully emerged.

COMMENTS

Each reporter should include comments with each week's report regarding any situations of agricultural importance. All comments should be typed in the comments section of the questionnaire. Since comments refer to the developments of the past week, they should be written in the past tense. These comments will be reprinted in the weekly crop weather report. NASS may edit comments for length and/or clarity.

Comments should include any progress or condition situations that need further clarification, or any crops important to a county not included on the questionnaire. These should state the cause for abnormal or unusual progress or changes in conditions. Hot, cold, mild, sunny, wet, dry are good adjectives to explain weather related changes. Other factors may be weed, insect, or disease pressures. Also, unusual situations should be explained in such a way as to define the extent of the abnormal condition. If a particular activity or crop progress item is on a normal schedule, this should also be noted.

The comments should be divided into six categories. The categories and commodities to be included in each are:

Field Crops - Includes small grains, potatoes, field corn for grain or silage, dry beans, dry peas, lentils, oilseeds, mint, hops, all types of hay, etc.

Fruits and Berries - Includes all types of tree fruits, grapes, all types of berries, for both fresh and processing markets.

Vegetables - Includes melons, sweet corn, leafy vegetables, carrots, onions, green peas, asparagus, cucumbers, mushrooms, etc., for both fresh and processing markets.

Specialty Crops - Includes Christmas trees, nursery products, turf, flowers, bulbs, aquaculture, forest products, seed crops, etc.

Livestock - Range and Pasture - Includes livestock and poultry conditions, supplies, marketing, movements, etc., as well as range and pasture conditions, feed supplies, etc.

Other Farm Activities - Includes any other farm and ranch activities important to agriculture.