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TX-CW0806

Texas Crop Weather

Released February 21, 2006 (3:00 PM CST)

For the week of February 13 - 19, 2006

Agricultural Summary: Wintry weather blew down into southern regions during the week as Texans were reminded that spring was still a little ways off. Above normal temperatures gave way by late week to thermometer readings dropping down into the single digits on the High Plains and as low as the mid-30's in the Rio Grande Valley. Traces of snow were recorded across the High Plains and freezing rain and sleet occurred in eastern and central regions. Accumulations of frozen precipitation were light in all locations. Moisture totals were generally under 1/10 of an inch for most areas. Only a handful of locations in East Texas received 1/4 inch of rainfall. The additional moisture did little to ease drought conditions. There was still no snow available to insulate remaining wheat stands. Soil moisture continued to be woefully short in nearly all corners of the state but to a lesser degree in eastern locations that received rain the past few weeks. Hay was becoming more scarce and expensive everyday as supplemental feeding of cattle showed no signs of decreasing. Many ranchers, facing little grazing capacity and high feed costs, were choosing to cull their herd and sold as many head as they could. Planting of summer crops got kicked off on a limited basis in southern regions. Wildfires remained a serious threat throughout the state. New fires were popping up on nearly a daily basis.

Field Crops Report

Small Grains: Wheat remained in bad shape across all areas. Fields on the Plains under irrigation pivots were heavily grazed. There was little or no dry land grazing as many herds were sold off due to lack of adequate forage. Some emergence occurred in remaining wheat fields in Central and East Texas but it was questionable if enough cold degree days remained to make a grain crop. Any possible improvement in the crop was becoming less likely as more days passed by without sufficient moisture. Statewide, wheat condition was rated mostly poor to very poor. Statewide, oat condition was rated mostly very poor.

Cotton: Some gins continued to operate and eventually they planned to complete ginning last year's record crop. Preparations continued as planting dates approached in the Rio Grande Valley. Fertilization and herbicide applications were ongoing. Pre-watering occurred where irrigation was available but many growers were still waiting for rain before beginning land preparation.

Corn: Planting has begun in the Rio Grande Valley, Coastal Bend and portions of the Upper Coast and Central Texas. Many of those early planted fields were no-till. The majority of producers in those regions waited for additional moisture to plant. In other regions, preparations continued. If adequate precipitation is not received in a timely manner, cotton and sorghum could be alternative crops in many locations.

Sorghum: Land preparation, including fertilization and herbicide applications continued. Planting in southern regions was expected to begin in the next few weeks. As with all crops this season, moisture shortages were expected to be a problem.

Fruit, Vegetable and Specialty Crop Report

In the **Rio Grande Valley**, citrus, vegetable and sugarcane harvest continued.

In the **San Antonio-Winter Garden**, cabbage and spinach harvest was active.

In the **Trans Pecos Region**, winter onions were germinating.

In **East Texas**, sweet potato growers began field preparations.

Livestock, Pasture and Range Report

Range and pastures continued to suffer from the drought. Some slight green-up was noted in East Texas but the rest of the state was in bad shape. Native pasture held no grazing opportunities as producers began to liquidate some of their herd. Cattle auctions were very busy. Hay was being imported from other states and that added on to the price. Cattle body conditions continued to be rated at fair to poor. Some calving and kidding was reported. The rapid temperature changes caused respiratory problems in the newborns. Fires were a constant problem and there was no end in sight. Much like all agriculture in Texas, a good rain would improve the situation considerably.

Crop progress data is unavailable for the week ending February 19, 2006.

Top Soil Moisture by District – February 19, 2006 *

Condition	1-N	1-S	2-N	2-S	3	4	5-N	5-S	6	7	8-N	8-S	9	10-N	10-S
	- Percent of Acreage -														
Very Short	95	79	86	96	98	59	9	20	56	75	60	89	10	73	93
Short	5	20	14	4	2	30	55	35	36	24	32	11	27	25	7
Adequate	0	1	0	0	0	11	33	42	8	1	7	0	61	2	0
Surplus	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	1	0	2	0	0

* High Plains: 1-N, 1-S; Low Rolling Plains: 2-N, 2-S; North Central Plains: 3, 4; East Texas: 5-N,5-S. Trans-Pecos: 6; Edwards Plateau: 7; South Central Texas: 8-N, 8-S; Upper Coast: 9; South Texas: 10-N; Lower Valley: 10-S.

Crop Condition Table – February 19, 2006

Crop	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Index ^{1/}	
	Percent					2006	2005
Wheat	0	2	7	32	59	17	82
Oats	0	0	6	21	73	13	--
Range & Pasture	0	3	14	31	52	--	--

^{1/} The formula for the condition index is $I = (5V + 25P + 60F + 90G + 110E)/100$ where I=crop condition Index and V, P, F, G, E = percentage of crop rated very poor, poor, fair, good, excellent.

Weather Information Table ^{1/}

National Weather Service Climatic Divisions	Previous Week (Feb 13 - 19) Accumulation	Month-to-date (Feb 1 - 19) Accumulation	Year-to-date (Jan 1 - Feb 19) Accumulation	1961-90 Annual Normal	Previous Three Months (Nov - Jan) Percent of Normal
High Plains	0.00	0.02	0.03	18.87	7
Low Rolling Plains	0.00	0.04	0.13	23.78	5
North Central Texas	0.00	0.32	1.88	34.00	31
East Texas	0.20	2.42	5.95	45.69	48
Trans Pecos	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.96	8
Edwards Plateau	0.00	0.03	0.59	24.01	23
South Central Texas	0.09	0.44	1.18	34.48	31
Upper Coast	0.14	0.82	2.44	47.63	52
South Texas	0.01	0.01	0.08	23.49	14
Lower Valley	0.00	0.09	0.25	25.34	46

^{1/} Average of all stations reporting precipitation data.

For more weather information, please visit the following web sites:
www.srh.noaa.gov/fcshare/precip_analysis_new.php and www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html

Cooperating Agencies:

Texas Agricultural Extension Service
 Texas Department of Agriculture
 National Weather Service

