

Texas Crop Weather



Released: March 3, 2003 (3:00 P.M. CST)
 For the week of February 24 - March 2, 2003
 TX-CW0903

1-800-626-3142
 www.nass.usda.gov/tx

Crop Progress Table - March 2, 2003

Crop	2003	2002	Average 1998-2002
<i>Percent</i>			
Corn			
Planted	3	15	12
Emerged	2	3	2
Cotton			
Planted	0	0	1
Sorghum			
Planted	3	10	9

Crop Condition Table - March 2, 2003

Item	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor
<i>Percent</i>					
Wheat	13	42	33	9	3
Range & Pasture . . .	4	23	36	24	13

Agricultural Summary: Winter made a comeback during the week as record cold, ice, and snow blanketed the state. A major cold front arrived in early week, lowering temperatures to the single digits and teens on the Plains. Temperatures were in the twenties in Central and East Texas and as low as the thirties in the Rio Grande Valley. Isolated areas of the Plains received up to three inches of snow. More significant moisture fell in North Central, South Central, and East Texas. A sheet of ice covered most areas with accumulations ranging from less than a half inch to almost four inches. Thaw-out took over two days in northern locations. After the thaw, many areas received light drizzle and heavy fog for the remainder of the week. Areas in South Central and East Texas south of the freeze line experienced heavy rain ranging from two to five inches. The Trans-Pecos region received trace amounts of rain with some isolated locations recording over an inch. The Rio Grande Valley received about an inch of rain. Soil moisture levels improved slightly in some locations of the Plains but were generally still lacking. Pre-watering had begun where soil moisture was inadequate for land preparations. More rainfall was needed in areas of the Plains to sustain growth of small grains and for summer row crops. Areas of the state that had been too wet for weeks were still suffering from saturated conditions, and virtually no field work was possible. Producers in some locations of the Plains were listing and deep braking in preparation for summer crops. Insect problems improved somewhat with the onset of freezing weather. Supplemental feeding increased in many areas due to the frozen precipitation. Hay supplies were decreasing across many areas. Livestock sickness and losses were attributed to the extreme conditions.

Field Crops Report

Small Grains: Extremely cold temperatures in the Plains and North Texas could adversely affect the wheat in locations that did not have snow or ice to protect the crop. The cold weather also slowed growth. Lack of soil moisture in the Plains remained a problem and did not improve over the week. Some producers continued to apply

nitrogen top-dressing. Greenbugs were troublesome in wheat that was more mature. Statewide wheat condition was rated at 74 percent of normal compared with 50 percent last year.

Corn: Land preparation in Central Texas was at a standstill due to ice and rain. The Coastal Bend and the Upper Coast were also completely shutdown due to an excess of moisture. The situation was becoming serious in these areas as they have not been able to get into the field for several weeks. Planting in these areas could be delayed an additional couple of weeks. The only region where corn was in the ground was the Rio Grande Valley, where planting continued.

Cotton: Some producers in drier locations of the High Plains were pre-watering fields due to a lack of winter moisture. Land preparations were shutdown in the Coastal Bend due to weather. Planting continued in the Rio Grande Valley.

Sorghum: Planting activity was at a standstill in the Coastal Bend and could be delayed by more than a week. Limited planting continued in parts of the Valley and a few other isolated areas.

Peanuts: Land preparation and field work were active where conditions allowed.

Fruit, Vegetable and Specialty Crop Report

In the **Rio Grande Valley**, producers continued to harvest sugarcane, citrus, greens, and cabbage. Spring melons were progressing well. Preparations for onion harvest continued. Producers were preparing ground for spring planting.

In the **San Antonio-Winter Garden**, spinach and cabbage harvest continued. Producers of carrots in earlier planted field were preparing for harvest. Where conditions allowed, land preparation continued for spring vegetables.

In **Trans Pecos Region**, the fall onion crop was progressing well. Potato planting continued.

In **East Texas**, rain delayed land preparations for early spring vegetables. Producers were inspecting peach trees for freeze damage. Where conditions allowed, watermelon land preparation and planting continued.

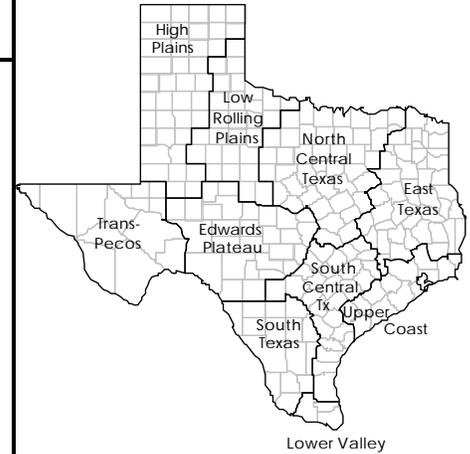
Pecans: General maintenance continued in orchards across the state.

Livestock, Pasture and Range Report

The extreme cold put stress on livestock. Producers on the Plains were breaking ice so their cattle could drink. The weather was especially stressful on cows that were calving and goats that were kidding. Cattle continued to graze on small grains and supplemental feeding increased. Range and pasture conditions on the Plains and Trans Pecos were declining due to lack of moisture. The story was quite different in other parts of the state as a surplus of ice and rain inundated already soaked pastures. From North Texas to The Upper Coast, conditions were extremely wet and supplemental feeding increased as cattle were bogging down in mud. Hay supplies were beginning to run short in areas that have been consistently soaked by rain during the winter. Supplemental feeding of cattle was heavy in the Plains, East Texas and West Texas, but was decreasing in South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley. Spring grasses continued turning green and emerging in some locations. Poultry producers were feeling the pressure of higher natural gas usage due to the cold.

Weather Information Table ¹

National Weather Service Climatic Divisions	Previous week (Feb 24 - Mar 2) Accumulation	Month-to-date (Feb 1 - 28) Accumulation	Year-to-date (Jan 1 - Mar 2) Accumulation	1961-90 Annual Normal	Previous three months (Dec - Feb) Percent of Normal
High Plains	0.00	0.24	0.30	18.87	76
Low Rolling Plains	0.08	0.58	1.07	23.78	109
North Central Texas	0.46	2.46	2.89	34.00	100
East Texas	0.64	3.01	4.01	45.69	62
Trans Pecos	0.01	0.90	1.01	12.96	118
Edwards Plateau	0.07	1.35	1.64	24.01	78
South Central Texas	0.35	1.58	3.07	34.48	92
Upper Coast	0.66	2.76	4.53	47.63	84
South Texas	0.29	1.40	2.35	23.49	91
Lower Valley	0.28	0.70	1.53	25.34	48



¹ Average of all stations reporting precipitation data.

Top Soil Moisture by District* - March 2, 2003

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	30	20	30	30	7	0	0	0	51	18	0	0	0	2	0
Short	44	48	51	44	19	1	0	0	32	26	0	0	0	11	13
Adequate	26	32	19	26	58	25	29	16	17	41	17	45	4	71	87
Surplus	0	0	0	0	16	74	71	84	0	15	83	55	96	16	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.

**Cooperating Agencies:
Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas Department of Agriculture, National Weather Service.**