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USDA/NASS/Virginia Field Office
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WEATHER & CROPS



Month: February 2009

Number: 2

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WEATHER CONDITIONS AND CROP SUMMARY FOR FEBRUARY, 2009

Small grain and winter grazing crops 4% very poor, 11% poor, 42% fair, 38% good, 5% excellent. Precipitation throughout most of February remained relatively low. At the end of the month, a significant rain/snow event brought welcomed precipitation across the state. Temperatures were normal to slightly above normal during most of the month, but became well below normal at month's end. Producers in some areas of the state have started fertilizing small grains, while others were preparing to fertilize their small grains. Farmers were making plans for the spring planting season, and were buying seed and fertilizer. Other farm activities included attending meetings, doing taxes, and repairing machinery.

TOPSOIL MOISTURE PERCENT

Month	Very Short	Short	Adequate	Surplus
February, 2009	4	38	54	4

SUBSOIL MOISTURE PERCENT

Month	Very Short	Short	Adequate	Surplus
February, 2009	5	40	53	2

CROP CONDITION PERCENT

Crop	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Pasture	10	21	43	25	1
Livestock	2	5	28	58	7
Small Grain and Winter Grazing Crops	4	11	42	38	5

FORAGE PERCENT OBTAINED FROM PASTURES

Crop	This Month	Last Year
Beef Cattle Forage % Obtained from Pastures	8	12
Milk Cow Forage % Obtained from Pastures	3	12
Sheep Forage % Obtained from Pastures	6	23

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VIRGINIA WEEKLY WEATHER SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 1, 2009

City	Temperature						Precipitation				
	Avg. max.	Avg. min.	High max.	Low min.	Avg.	Avg. dep. from normal *	Last Week	Since Dec. 1	Dec. 1 dep. from normal *	Year to date	Year dep. from normal *
Lynchburg	50	26	66	14	38	-2	0.37	7.80	-2.07	04.28	-2.40
Norfolk	53	31	70	22	42	-2	0.93	6.75	-3.47	02.92	-4.38
Richmond	53	30	69	19	41	0	0.39	6.30	-3.39	02.24	-4.34
Roanoke	52	31	67	19	41	0	0.50	6.20	-2.91	03.94	-2.41
Wash/Dulles	48	28	62	15	38	1	0.11	5.66	-3.18	03.03	-2.79

* Normal based on 1971-2000 data. Source: NCEP/NOAA Climate Prediction Center <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov>. Source: USDA, NASS, Virginia Field Office.

REPORTER COMMENTS BY COUNTY

Comments are based on comments reported by extension agents, farmers, commodity specialists, and other knowledgeable individuals.

NORTHERN

CULPEPER (Carl Stafford)

Small grains and perennial forages are greening up, spring seedings are active, and soil fertility adjustments have been taking place.

WESTERN

HIGHLAND (Rodney Leech)

Maple production is normal to slightly below normal.

ROCKBRIDGE (Jon Repair)

Lack of soil moisture continues to be a major concern as we enter March and closer to the 2009 growing season. We have not replenished moisture losses that have occurred due to the past several years of drought. Some cattle are beginning to find their way to markets as spring approaches. Price levels have rebounded marginally and there is optimism that they will continue to climb upward. Feed supplies are in reasonable supply; however, most are hoping for an early spring with plenty of moisture during March, so as to make it through without having to purchase feed from other sources.

CENTRAL

CAROLINE (McGann Saphir)

Conditions have been very dry until the winter storm of Sunday March first and Monday March second. Pastures and small grains have suffered. A good blanket of snow will be very beneficial. Farmers have been attending winter meetings and buying seed and fertilizer for spring-planted crops. Many are gearing up to fertilize small grain crops after the snow melts.

SPOTSYLVANIA (John Howe)

The month of February was very dry. The shortage of moisture has been very bad for small grains and forages.

EASTERN

ACCOMACK (Jim Belote)

The wheat crop is average or better. Field work for potatoes is underway. Farmers have been attending meetings, planning for spring, doing taxes, trimming hedgerows, working on equipment and taking vacations when possible.

MIDDLESEX (David Moore)

Activities have include: soil sampling, spreading lime, corn fertilizer applications, Nitrogen topdressing of small grains, pasture renovation, grass planting, and supply purchases.

SOUTHEASTERN

CHESAPEAKE CITY (Watson Lawrence)

Small grain crops could use some rain. Tiller counts are below average. Many acres will be abandoned this spring due to poor stands from too much wet weather late in planting season. Dry fields are allowing farmers to apply lime, mow ditch banks or do corrective tillage from fall harvest ruts. Farmers are attending winter meetings and visiting with bankers and seed and fertilizer dealers this month.

REPORTER COMMENTS BY COUNTY (continued)

Comments are based on comments reported by extension agents, farmers, commodity specialists, and other knowledgeable individuals.

SOUTHWESTERN

CARROLL (Webb Flowers)

There has been more snow in Carroll County than typical for February than in recent years.

MONTGOMERY (Barry Robinson)

Most of the month was dry and windy. Last week has seen rainfall and significant snow, so forage and grain crops should perk up soon, but this soil moisture will make it difficult to apply a last shot of fertilizer. Orchards and vineyards are finalizing pruning and dormant sprays.

SCOTT (Scott Jerrell)

Rain and snowfall have helped with the immediate water concerns. Springs and streams are flowing at normal capacities. Cattle producers are still concerned over cattle prices and input costs. Talk among the crop producers are about when to book fertilizer. Dairies are evaluating their costs closely and hoping for better news on milk prices, with one dairy opting to go out of business already. Strawberries look extremely good for this time of year, frost protection has been set up as crowns are erupting and a few blooms have been found.

TAZEWELL (John Blankenship)

We are getting an abundance of rain but the weather is too cold to grow forages.