



2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

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CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE FORMS ARE STILL BEING ACCEPTED



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WEATHER & CROPS



Month: March 2008

Number: 3

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WEATHER CONDITIONS AND CROP SUMMARY FOR MARCH, 2008

March was a relatively dry month across the Commonwealth. Topsoil moisture was adequate throughout the month. Small grains looked good; most farmers are finishing up with nitrogen applications. Soybean and corn producers are preparing land and equipment for the planting season. Maple Syrup production has concluded with average yields for the year. Lambing and calving continues with no major problems. Other activities this month included pasture fertilization, fencing and seed procurement.

TOPSOIL MOISTURE PERCENT				
Crop	Very Short	Short	Adequate	Surplus
January, 2008	4	35	61	0
February, 2008	10	24	66	0
March, 2008	10	36	54	0

SUBSOIL MOISTURE PERCENT				
Crop	Very Short	Short	Adequate	Surplus
January, 2008	15	45	40	0
February, 2008	15	42	43	0
March, 2008	17	44	39	0

CROP CONDITION PERCENT					
Crop	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Livestock	2	11	35	48	4
Small Grain and Winter Grazing Crops	1	3	27	50	19

FORAGE PERCENT OBTAINED FROM PASTURES		
Crop	This Month	Last Year
Beef Cattle Forage % Obtained from Pastures	10	18
Milk Cow Forage % Obtained from Pastures	12	7
Sheep Forage % Obtained from Pastures	22	13



IN THIS REPORT:

Weather Summary Table	pg 2
Reporter Comments by County	pg 2
Reporter Comments by County	pg 3

VIRGINIA WEEKLY WEATHER SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 30, 2008

City	Temperature						Growing degree days (modified base 50) 1/		Precipitation				
	Avg. max.	Avg. min.	High max.	Low min.	Avg.	Avg. dep. from normal *	Mar. 1 to Mar 29	Mar. 1 to Mar 29 Normal	Mar.	Since Mar. 1	Mar. 1 dep. from normal *	Year to date	Year dep. from normal *
Lynchburg	60	36	76	24	48	-1	151	133	0.09	2.89	-0.63	6.11	-4.07
Norfolk	62	45	82	41	53	1	185	148	0.07	2.66	-1.14	7.43	-3.65
Richmond	64	40	81	32	52	1	198	162	0.11	3.32	-0.45	7.69	-2.56
Roanoke	62	42	76	30	52	2	162	NA	0.00	1.77	-1.77	4.59	-5.17
Wash/Dulles	57	35	70	24	46	-1	117	NA	0.06	2.26	-1.01	6.22	-2.92

* 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.

WESTERN

HIGHLAND (Rodney Leech)

Spring is slow to come. The winds are rapidly drying up the moisture that we receive. The Maple Syrup season has concluded with average yields for the year. Main activities include feeding, lambing, calving, pasture fertilization and fencing.

ROCKBRIDGE (Jon Repair)

The grass is trying to grow, however, cool nights, frost and low soil moisture is certainly curtailing any early rapid forage growth. Producers are continuing to stretch feed supplies as they anticipate full grazing in the next week or two. Spring chores have included fertilizer, litter and lime spreading as well as early weed control in small grains, hay fields and pastures. The weather has been great for spring activities, although rain would be welcomed. We are already behind for 2008 and we finished 2007 with a 9-15 inch moisture deficit depending where you are located in the county.

NORTHERN

CULPEPER (Carl Stafford)

The dry trend continues and is impacting the plant growth which seems likely to continue. Fertilizer is imperative for hay production under these short moisture conditions but cost increases have most people retreating away from this more expensive input.

SOUTHEASTERN

PRINCE GEORGE (Scott Reiter)

Farmers have been topdressing small grain and are preparing to plant corn. Soil conditions are dry for this time of year but seed germination should not be a problem at this point. Pastures have greened up but growth is not as fast as it should be due to the lack of moisture.

SOUTHWESTERN

GRAYSON (Kevin Spurlin)

Strong, persistent winds have limited the benefit of March precipitation and caused minor damage to timber and buildings. Spring calving is progressing well. Livestock owners who have not already purchased hay are now nervously

watching inventories and pastures.

MONTGOMERY (Barry Robinson)

Moisture levels were fair early in the month, but have recently become drier. Winter grains and cover crops are progressing fairly well, despite low precipitation.

SCOTT (Scott Jerrell)

Winter precipitation has certainly helped the extreme drought conditions, however even with warmer temperatures approaching, pastures and meadows seem to be taking longer to green up and grow. Most pastures are extremely over grazed and producers are seeking advice on re-seeding. Due to high input costs, especially fertilizer, more soil samples have been sent off this spring for analysis. Cover crops appear weak due to foraging from deer and turkey. Cattle producers are weighing the pros and cons of selling remaining calves this spring or taking the risk of backgrounding these calves for late summer/early fall. Sheep production remains strong and steady.

CENTRAL

CAROLINE (McGann Saphir)

Grain producers are top dressing their wheat and barley with fertilizer. Soybean farmers are preparing areas for planting full-season soybeans. Corn producers are sub-soiling fields and getting their planting equipment renovated and ready for the corn planting season. Many area farmers will start planting corn in the first week of April.

SPOTSYLVANIA (John Howe)

Cropland preparation activities are under way for spring planting.

REPORTER COMMENTS BY COUNTY (continued)

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

EASTERN

KING GEORGE (Regina Prunty)

Conditions are getting dry again.

MIDDLESEX (David Moore)

Now that trees are trying to leaf out, conditions are really drying out. Rain has been scarce for the past couple of weeks and there is no talk of much in the forecast. Small grains look good. Most producers are finishing up with nitrogen applications and will now watch for other major pests and try to escape a freeze. Producers continue to watch the market and get ready to plant corn. Most producers will begin planting corn around the 1st of April. Farm activities include lime spreading, fertilizer spreading, applying nitrogen to small grain, machinery repair and preparation, and seed procurement.

NORTHUMBERLAND (Matt Lewis)

The wheat crop is advancing well; farmers are finishing with the second application of nitrogen fertilizer to wheat and beginning burn down/pre-emergence herbicide programs for corn. Powdery mildew has been a problem in several wheat varieties, and many farmers have applied fungicides as a result.