



NATIONAL
AGRICULTURAL
STATISTICS
SERVICE

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WEATHER & CROPS



Month: December 2006

Number: 40

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WEATHER CONDITIONS AND CROP SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER, 2006

The Commonwealth experienced a mild, relatively dry December. Soil moisture conditions have been adequate throughout the month. Wet field conditions at the beginning of December continued to hinder harvest progress for some corn and soybean producers. However, fields began to dry out as the month progressed. Unusually warm weather throughout the month extended grazing opportunities and delayed the need for supplemental feeding in many areas. The mild temperatures and some beneficial rains allowed small grains to develop nicely. Overall, winter grain crops are reported to be in good condition as well. Reporters say winter wheat acreage is expected to be up this year due to excellent prices. Other farm activities this month included fall calving, fencing, conditioning equipment, storing harvest equipment, applying lime and fertilizer, and scouting for aphids and weeds.

CROP CONDITION PERCENT

Crop	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Livestock	0	2	16	65	17
Small Grain and Winter Grazing Crops	2	4	23	55	16

FORAGE PERCENT OBTAINED FROM PASTURES

Crop	This Month	Last Month
Beef Cattle Forage % Obtained from Pastures	39	63
Milk Cow Forage % Obtained from Pastures	10	12
Sheep Forage % Obtained from Pastures	45	67

REPORTER COMMENTS BY COUNTY

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

CAROLINE COUNTY (McGann Saphir):

Soil moisture is excellent. Grazing crops and winter grain crops are doing very well. Late-planted winter cover crops are emerging. Farmers are conditioning equipment for winter and cleaning and storing harvesting equipment for next season. Some farmers have applied liquid fertilizer to small grain crops, and are scouting for aphids.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY (David Moore):

Most soybean harvest is over. There are still a few patches around. Yields proved to be average-to-good. Producers are excited about prices and the opportunities that lie ahead. They are busy making seed and fertilizer purchases for next year and also making some marketing plans. They have made some insecticide treatments to small grains for aphids and some winter fertilizer applications to small grains also. Soil sampling and lime applications continue. Farm spruce up and equipment repairs continue as well as deer hunting. Winter production meetings lie ahead.

LEE COUNTY (Harold Jerrell):

To date (12/20/2006), I have only recorded 0.4 inches of rainfall for the month of December. We are predicted to receive rain in the next day or so.

HIGHLAND COUNTY (Rodney Leech):

An unusually dry and warm December has stretched out the grazing season and limited feeding to about 50% of normal. Chief farm activities besides feeding included finishing up fall calving, some fencing, Christmas preparations and bear hunting.

ACCOMACK COUNTY (James N. Belote):

There are still some soybeans and corn to be harvested. It is too wet to run equipment in fields and foggy days have prevented corn and soybeans from drying down on good days so that crop harvest can be finished up. We will probably have

to see some good, clear windy weather and frozen ground to harvest the remainder of the crops. Farmers have been working on equipment, storing equipment, attending meetings, being recertified for pesticides and planning for year-end tax strategies.

ESSEX COUNTY (Keith Balderson):

The month started out very wet, but relatively dry weather throughout much of the month allowed soils to dry out fairly well. Producers finished up corn and soybean harvests, and some late wheat was planted. Wheat acres are up due to good prices. Producers pulled soil samples, applied fertilizer to small grain fields, and attended private pesticide applicator recertification courses. Some lime was also applied. Many producers also made corn and soybean seed purchases during the month. Warm and wet weather during the fall has helped pasture growth, and thus delayed hay feeding.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY (Sam Johnson):

A cold snap finished up the broccoli and greens crops the first week of December. Overall the month was mild and small grains continued to develop. There were some weed problems which also developed because of the mild temps and some spraying for these resulted. Other usual end-of-year activities included soil sampling, tax/records work, and equipment maintenance.

BRUNSWICK COUNTY (Cynthia L. Gregg):

The rains slowed down small grain planting and some have gone in later than usual. Stockpiled tall fescue is really in full swing right now. It looks very good. Some folks are feeding hay but livestock are still grazing. There has been quite a bit of maintenance work performed on equipment when folks were not deer hunting.



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