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WEATHER & CROPS

Month: December 2007

Number: 40

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WEATHER CONDITIONS AND CROP SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER, 2007

The Commonwealth experienced a mild and relatively dry December. Topsoil moisture was adequate but producers have concerns about low subsoil moisture. Small grains look good; they are a few weeks less mature than in previous years due to farmers waiting for adequate moisture before planting. Hay is still in short supply with elevated prices. Other activities this month included repairing fences and equipment, hunting, soil sampling and making planting decisions for 2008.

CROP CONDITION PERCENT

Crop	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Livestock	8	12	27	41	12
Small Grain and Winter Grazing Crops	0	5	31	45	19

FORAGE PERCENT OBTAINED FROM PASTURES

Crop	This Month	Last Year
Beef Cattle Forage % Obtained from Pastures	10	39
Milk Cow Forage % Obtained from Pastures	8	10
Sheep Forage % Obtained from Pastures	17	45



YOUR VOICE

The 2007 Census of Agriculture is your chance to share your voice. Your response provides vital information that impacts decisions about community development, funding availability, farm policy and other key issues. By actively participating in the Census, you join with other voices to make positive changes.

Look for the Census in your mailbox in early January 2008. Complete and return it by February 4, 2008. Remember, when you lend your voice, you help ensure a better future for your operation, your family and your community.

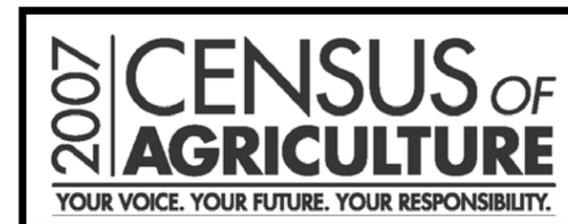
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IN THIS REPORT:

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

REPORTER COMMENTS BY COUNTY (continued)

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

VIRGINIA WEEKLY WEATHER SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK ENDING JANUARY 1, 2008

City	Temperature						Precipitation				
	Avg. max.	Avg. min.	High max.	Low min.	Avg.	Avg. dep. from normal *	Dec.	Since Dec. 1	Dec. 1 dep. from normal *	Year to date	Year dep. from normal *
Lynchburg	50	31	76	17	41	3	2.66	2.66	-0.57	36.79	-6.49
Norfolk	56	40	78	26	48	4	3.50	3.50	0.47	33.83	-11.88
Richmond	53	35	79	20	44	4	3.25	3.25	0.13	37.76	-6.14
Roanoke	51	35	73	22	43	4	2.77	2.77	-0.09	29.96	-12.23
Wash/Dulles	46	31	61	13	38	2	4.57	4.57	1.50	28.64	-12.86

* 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

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EASTERN

ESSEX (Keith Balderson)

Rainfall in late December continued to help restore topsoil and subsoil moisture levels, but more is needed to fully restore subsoil moisture levels. Small grains look good, and many producers applied fertilizer and pesticides to the crop during the month. Livestock feed supplies remain a concern. Producers spent the month attending pesticide recertification classes, soil sampling, tax planning, and making seed purchases for 2008.

MIDDLESEX (Moore)

Mild weather so far has given small grains and winter grasses a chance to get a good start on growing. Early planted small grains are tillering well. Field work such as liming, and deep tillage continues in areas of the middle peninsula. Producers are busy making planting decisions and purchases for 2008. They also are paying close attention to the current market activity.

WESTMORELAND (Sam Johnson)

Farmers were soil sampling, lining up fertilizers and supplies for next year and making field preparations on some fields. Small grains look mostly good at this point with decent tillering. Had some good rains in the area the last week of December. Just received the annual rainfall amounts from the Research Station which showed a shortfall of 10.3 inches for the year. While we have decent topsoil moisture at this time there is little reserve in the subsoil. Dry weather will have an effect quickly. Feed supplies for livestock are tight but I have not heard of critical concerns at this point.

SOUTHEASTERN

BRUNSWICK (Cynthia L. Gregg)

Hay is still in short supply, some grazing with a few rains and warm weather has helped a little. Small grains are coming along. Water levels in ponds are still very low. Some wells for livestock are being worked on at this time. Hunting season is still going strong. Producers are getting ready for winter meetings and getting prepared for maintenance on machinery.

SURRY (Glenn Slade)

Growers have finished harvesting 98 percent of their crops and are repairing fences and equipment, deer hunting, taking care of bills, and planning for 08. Hopefully it will be profitable if expenses don't rise too fast.

CHESAPEAKE CITY (Watson Lawrence)

Winter has been mild thus far. Most field work is caught up because of recent good field conditions. Topsoil moisture is adequate but producers have concerns about low subsoil moisture. Small grains are in good to excellent condition. Hay is in short supply with prices elevated some this winter. The strawberry crop is progressing nicely, more than usual top growth for this time of year, but cold temperatures this week will slow growth. Grazing livestock conditions are generally good.

VIRGINIA BEACH (Cal Schiemann)

Winter wheat is small due to late planting and dry weather. Plants emerged from the soil but did not grow. Late December rains have helped the crop some.

NORTHERN

CULPEPER (Carl Stafford)

The dry trend does not help prospects for the 2008 growing season and important groundwater reserves. Stored feed is being depleted and will be non-existent come spring with prospects for refilling these supplies in question. Farmers struggle with the shift in economics coming from skyrocketing values for hay and fertilizer.

CENTRAL

CAROLINE (McGann Saphir)

Small grain crops are looking good, having received adequate moisture. They are about 2-3 weeks less mature than in many years due mainly to farmers waiting for adequate moisture before planting. Fields are being scouted for aphids and greenbugs. Producers are hunting, reconditioning equipment, ordering supplies for next year and fixing fences and roads.

SOUTHWESTERN

WASHINGTON (Phil Blevins)

We are still fairly dry with many streams low and springs dry. Recent rains have been a blessing.

WESTERN

HIGHLAND (Rodney Leech)

Snow and ice early in December had nearly all livestock producers suspend pasture grazing their livestock for about a week. Hay supplies are marginal and very much non-existing in terms of availability to purchase at any price. Weather is normal with some colder temperatures early on and rather mild temperatures with some rain the last week of the month. Activities include feeding, machinery maintenance and repair, fence mending, Christmas activities and bear and deer hunting.