

Washington 2004 Crop Weather Season Review

January: Snow blanketed the State during the first part of January, and warmer temperatures near the end of the month created a large amount of snowmelt. Livestock owners were busy feeding hay to sustain cattle during the cold temperatures. Asotin County had some calving losses, while in Yakima County damage was reported to nectarine and peach flower bud tissue. Cherry and apple growers in Benton County were catching up on pruning. Most grape growers suspected damage as a result of late December and early January frosts and planned on pruning after assessing the damage. Most winter wheat fields were protected from the earlier snowfalls.

February: February arrived with warmer, milder temperatures throughout the State. In the western part of the State, some livestock producers were able to begin preparing pastures and hay fields. Precipitation was reported lower than normal in most counties. In Eastern Washington the warmer temperatures created minimal runoff. In Benton County, growers continued to assess winter damage to grapes and soft fruit. Wheat fields continued in fair condition with little damage. Cattle and sheep producers began concentrating on feeding and calving.

March: Mild temperatures and below normal rainfall were predominant throughout March. In the West, most fields were still too wet, with standing water in low lying areas. Shellfish growers were busy preparing culch for seed set and transplanting oysters for fattening. Christmas tree growers were finishing up planting and getting ready to apply herbicides and fertilizers. Tulip fields bloomed a few days earlier than normal. Fieldwork began in Eastern Washington. Cattle were moved to spring pastures, and calving and lambing were underway. Most winter wheat fields came through the winter in good condition and remained in fair condition throughout the month.

April: Some planting was finished ahead of schedule due to the warmer than normal temperatures during April. Barley and wheat fields were seeded two weeks ahead of normal. Some counties reported reseeded winter wheat due to a lack of precipitation. Livestock

were moved onto spring pastures. Frost protection was needed for some fruit crops due to the cooler nighttime temperatures. Franklin County estimated a loss of 80-85 percent of their stone fruit. Winter damage to cherries and pears in Douglas and Chelan Counties was also reported. Vegetable planting began for potatoes, sweet corn and asparagus. Overall, April brought very little precipitation and producers were concerned about the drought-like conditions and the upcoming summer months.

May: Warm temperatures, below normal precipitation, and damaging wind and hail storms occurred during May. High winds damaged asparagus harvests, while an end-of-the-month hail storm hit tree fruit growers. Strawberry harvest started a couple of weeks earlier than normal and much needed rainfall, at the end of the month, caused sweet corn and other vegetables to emerge rapidly. Winter wheat and spring cereals remained in fair to good condition. Dairymen continued to apply liquid manure to forage fields.

June: June began with below average temperatures. However, temperatures rose about mid-month, allowing winter wheat and spring cereals to rapidly headout. A hail storm in northern Douglas County damaged some winter wheat, while heavy thunderstorms in areas of Whitman County caused mudslides and downed some winter wheat and barley. Grant County growers reported some stripe rust in susceptible wheat varieties, along with reports of wireworm in field corn and potato fields. Significant amounts of first cutting hay were ruined by rains early in the month. By month's end, however, temperatures reached triple digits in some areas, causing ideal conditions for harvesting hay. Christmas tree growers reported minor heat scorch damage to Noble and Grand fir plantations. Livestock sought refuge from the hot summer sun. Oyster and clam seeding operations continued in Pacific County, along with transplanting of oysters to fattening grounds. Strawberry and cherry harvests began in early areas although heavy rains created severe damage to cherries from split culls. Sweet corn planting, green pea and sugar snap pea harvests were other activities.

Washington 2004 Crop Weather Season Review (continued)

July: July was an extremely hot month. Winter wheat started turning the first week of the month and harvest began a week later in the southeast corner of the State and Grant County. By month's end winter wheat, spring cereals, and hay were actively being harvested. Rising temperatures in Thurston County created an estimated 25 percent heat scorch damage to new growth Noble firs, and some poultry producers reported greater than normal fatalities. Pacific County oyster growers continued Spartina and shrimp burrowing control operations and transferring old oysters to fattening grounds. Cranberry growers completed early season weed control efforts and had to continually irrigate bogs. Blueberry fruit was ripening rapidly and causing a strain on both pickers and berry processing facilities. Apricot harvest started in Yakima County and mint harvest began in Benton County. Raspberry picking was in full swing throughout most of the month.

August: August proved to be wetter than in past years. However, most grain producers were able to keep ahead of the showers and get the fields cut. Standing and recently swathed lentils did not fair quite as well and were scattered from fields. Losses from 30 to 50 percent were reported in both lentil and pea fields. Small amounts of blight were appearing in some Franklin County potato fields. Third cutting alfalfa hay that remained in fields suffered rain damage in Grant County, as well as other parts of the State. Yakima County started harvesting early apple varieties. Pear harvest was also underway. Strong winds knocked down hops in Benton County late in the month. Wine grape harvest began the last week of August, ten days ahead of schedule.

September: Early fall showers were typical in September. Winter wheat seeding was underway in the same areas where harvesting of wheat, peas, lentils and barley was progressing. Heavy mid-month rain stopped harvest in several locations. Some growers were concerned over tuber rot in unharvested potatoes, while others were concerned with quality problems in cereals and corn silage. When the skies cleared, operations resumed. Dairy producers pastured cows on rapidly growing forage fields, while cattle were beginning to be moved to fall pastures. Oyster growers finished cord grass control efforts and prepared for increasing fall harvests. Cranberry growers finished final bog and irrigation system preparations for

harvest. Apple and sweet corn harvests continued rapidly. Pumpkin fields were ripening early and there were concerns over premature decay. Bunch rot was reported in some vineyards in Benton County as well as other losses to Concord and Niagara vines. Onion digging was also slowed due to the showers.

October: Weather throughout the month was favorable for seeding winter wheat. Emerged winter wheat was aided by sporadic rain showers which kept the wheat in fair to good condition. Corn silage harvest ended on the westside with good quality yields. Harvest of the 2004 potato crop continued as soil fumigation for the 2005 crop was underway. Christmas tree growers were grooming fields for harvest. Calves were being moved to market, while cattle were on fall pastures. Oyster growers finished seed transplants and continued harvest activities. Cranberry producers prepared equipment and dikes. Benton County's Concord grape harvest ended, while processing carrot, wine grape, apple and sweet corn harvests continued.

November: Christmas tree harvest began early in the month. Winter wheat planting ended, while potato, corn silage and grain harvests followed close behind. The 2005 winter wheat crop was looking good in most areas and growth was slowing due to winter temperatures. A few producers were spraying bluegrass seed fields to control grassy weeds. Cattle were being moved to market and supplemental feeding continued. Other ranchers were able to put cattle on fall pastures due to rains received mid-month. Oyster harvests continued. Orchard and vineyard cleanups were ongoing. Processing carrot harvest continued, while raspberry fields were being pruned field. Commercial blueberry growers mowed cover crops. Nurseries moved cold sensitive plants into covered houses. Apple picking ended mid-month.

December: Generally, December was fairly mild with some areas of heavy rainfall on the westside, resulted in flooding. Significant accumulations of snow were confined to the northeast corner of the state. The above normal temperatures and lack of precipitation found pruning active in the orchards. However, the mild conditions resulted in wheat growers concerned about the lack of snow cover as the few snow storms were quickly absorbed. Christmas tree growers reported increased sales.

Weather Summary for Washington from January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004

	Air Temperature				Precipitation			HDD Tot	HDD Tot	Days of 32 Cold	Days of 28 Cold
	HI	LO	Avg	DFN	Tot	DFN	Days				
WEST											
Bellingham_Intl	89	13	51	2	36.85	0.53	163	5,033	-582	42	15
Everett	90	17	53	3	29.44	-7.24	171	4,636	-675	20	6
Hoquiam	93	20	52	2	55.04	-12.82	187	4,678	-264	16	3
Kelso	100	19	54	4	25.50	-20.80	112	4,166	-952	26	10
Olympia	99	10	52	3	37.66	-13.19	158	4,878	-759	57	19
Seattle-Tacoma	96	20	54	2	29.28	-8.09	139	4,375	-503	18	4
Shelton	100	8	52	1	48.44	-16.77	149	4,790	-261	47	19
Tacoma_WA_AP	97	12	53	2	25.48	-14.34	128	4,542	-535	43	17
Vancouver_WA	103	18	55	4	28.00	-13.51	149	4,069	-1,114	35	13
CENTRAL											
Ellensburg	102	-5	52	6	9.15	0.17	93	5,277	-1,512	112	59
Omak_AP	103	-4	51	6	10.97	-4.14	80	5,847	-1,543	130	82
Stampede_Pass	93	-4	44	6	65.05	-16.42	174	7,742	-2,034	138	68
Wenatchee	99	-8	53	3	8.49	0.14	83	5,340	-635	107	55
Yakima_AP	99	-14	51	2	8.52	0.52	77	5,533	-442	138	86
NORTHEAST											
Colville	99	-11	50	5	16.06	-5.14	95	5,965	-1,232	130	82
Deer_Park	100	-28	48	1	20.32	1.82	135	6,641	-384	153	95
Republic	101	-24	47	4	15.06	-0.48	102	6,732	-1,387	168	105
Spokane_AP	97	-22	49	3	14.27	-2.29	110	6,241	-600	116	67
EAST CENTRAL											
Ephrata	103	-11	53	2	6.52	-0.73	68	5,338	-509	117	59
Moses_Lake	103	-17	52	1	5.56	-1.69	60	5,423	-424	126	69
Quincy	99	-11	52	3	6.22	-1.54	57	5,296	-803	122	75
Ritzville	102	-13	50	2	10.17	-1.20	71	6,074	-463	135	72
SOUTHEAST											
Hanford	105	-13	54	-2	6.70	0.34	69	4,737	22	109	58
Pasco	103	-19	54	1	7.86	0.34	80	4,708	-217	107	58
Pullman	98	-17	49	3	11.57	-9.61	100	6,063	-766	104	49
Walla_Walla_Rgn	104	-12	55	2	18.60	-0.96	111	4,570	-362	55	27
Whitman_Mission	104	-21	52	2	15.73	1.92	118	5,216	-384	118	65
IDAHO:											
WESTERN											
IDAHO											
PANHANDLE											
Coeur_D'Alene	99	-24	49	-1	16.61	-9.46	112	6,275	68	110	68
Lewiston_ID	105	-2	55	3	13.41	0.94	108	4,468	-780	48	20

Summary based on NWS data. DFN=Departure From Normal (Using 1961-90 Normals Period). Precipitation (rain or melted snow/ice) in inches. Precipitation Days = Days with precipitation of 0.01 inch or more. Air Temperatures in Degrees Fahrenheit HDD = Heating Degree Days (Base 65) Copyright 2005: AWIS, Inc. All Rights Reserved. For detailed ag weather forecasts and data visit AWIS homepage at www.awis.com or call 334-826-2149. Information prepared by AWIS, Inc.