

# WASHINGTON CROP WEATHER

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## Crop and Weather Information for the Month of December 2003

### WESTERN

**Grays Harbor:** Heavy rainfall during the latter part of December was welcomed by most agricultural producers. Most major rivers and streams were at record low levels which prevented any major flooding. A major windstorm on Friday, December 27, resulted in some minor damage to farms. Several ag producers reported that shingles and roofing material blew off farm buildings, trees were uprooted, and fences were blown over. A series of storms after the 27<sup>th</sup> prevented cleanup efforts. Swelling buds on native Indian peach and red and blue elderberries validated that another growing season is on the way!

**Pierce/Southern King:** Heavy rains the past two weeks, plus high winds at times, have made fieldwork almost impossible. There have been no reports of crop damage.

**Thurston:** An unseasonably long dry spell finally came to an end, as copious amounts of rain fell during the month of December. Fortunately, rivers and streams were so low from the extended dry period that no major flooding occurred. Ag producers were relieved to see water tables rise to normal levels by the end of the month. Christmas tree growers reported sales appeared to be about the same as last year in both numbers of trees sold and price received.

### CENTRAL

**Benton:** Much needed rain improved soil moisture. Tree and vine pruning were the major activities. Temperatures were fairly mild since the October freeze.

**Benton (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** For the past month we received about 2 inches of rain which was much needed. We hope it continues.

**Kittitas:** The county received much needed precipitation in the last couple of weeks. The snow pack was gradually gaining toward normal levels.

**Yakima:** Average temperatures in December varied from 4 degrees below normal to 17 degrees above normal, with 3.49 inches of precipitation. No crop damage due to weather conditions were reported in December.

## EASTERN

**Adams:** Precipitation along with an open winter toward the end of December should help maintain the winter wheat crop conditions. More precipitation is needed to advance the crop into good to excellent condition.

**Asotin/Garfield:** Mild temperatures dominated the weather patterns in December. Many storms passed through the area providing some moisture--average amounts in some areas and below normal in other areas. Above normal rainfall is needed to catch up from the drought this past year. The cumulative affects of the drought over the past several years can only be accomplished with above average precipitation during the next few months. Snow pack in the mountains is very low, with much of the area having no snow at this time. This is causing concern for water supplies for next summer. Rangeland was in poor condition due to the drought last summer and fall. CRP grazing helped keep livestock off some pastures during November and December and was very beneficial. Winter wheat condition ranges from good to poor. Some wheat actually emerged during December due to the warm temperatures. However, this left much of the crop vulnerable to winter damage if the weather gets colder.

**Lincoln:** Precipitation during the latter half of December, along with the open winter helped maintain the winter wheat crop in mostly fair condition. More precipitation is needed to reach good to excellent condition, but nevertheless the crop looked better at the end of December that it was at the end of November.

**Stevens:** The county experienced a return to near normal conditions during December with a significant accumulation of rain and snowfall. Producers were hoping that the pattern continues until spring.

**Whitman:** December brought some welcome relief from the dry conditions that plagued the county throughout the past few months. Although precipitation accumulation for the crop year still trails normal levels, the mild temperatures and moisture have been very beneficial. Winter wheat was mostly fair to good in terms of crop condition. Livestock were doing well in what has started off as a mild winter.



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