



United States Department
of Agriculture

National Agricultural
Statistics Service

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Washington Crop Weather

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Crop and Weather Information for the Month of December 2004

Western

Grays Harbor: Seemingly endless rainfall during the month had most ag producers confined to inside chores. Christmas tree growers reported increased sales with prices holding the same as last year. Heavy rainfall early in the month resulted in some minor flooding along the Chehalis and Satsop Rivers with no damage reported. Livestock producers were feeding hay to compensate for the lack of forage growth in pastures. Greenhouse tomato growers were getting a jump start on the 2005 crop by seeding varieties for transplanting later. Commercial dahlia growers continued dividing and packaging tubers for spring sales.

Jefferson: Dry sunny weather with not many drainage or flooding problems. There was increased interest in

purchasing agricultural land as the local farmers market saw 40 percent growth in sales in 2004.

Thurston: Persistent rainfall throughout the month found most ag producers doing inside machinery repairs or year end accounting. The exception was Christmas tree growers who braved the elements to harvest this year's crop. A survey of growers found that most were pleased with both sales volume and prices for this year's crop. However, there continued to be concern, over competition from artificial trees. Livestock growers reported less hay was being consumed due to the lack of cold temperatures. Commercial holly growers reported excellent berry set again on this year's crop.

Central

Benton: Pruning was the major activity. A fairly mild fall and early winter allowed pruners to make good progress. Concern increased for the lack of snow.

Benton (2nd report): For the month of December we had about half an inch of rain with about three inches of snow. We need some of the rain to continue.

Chelan/Douglas: Temperatures were unseasonably warm. Precipitation was well below normal for the month. Most of the winter wheat is usually under snow cover in December. This had not been the case this year, until very recently. All cattle were on full feed. Orchard producers were pruning.

Grant: Some fall field fertilization occurred. All crops were harvested except a small amount of grain corn. Some pruning took place.

Kittitas: Welcomed snow was received over the holiday weekend. Snow pack levels were around 80 percent of normal.

Okanogan/Ferry: Most livestock were on full feed. Temperatures were unseasonably warm. Precipitation was lower than normal. Snowpack in the higher elevations was lower than normal. Orchard producers were pruning.

Yakima: Average temperatures in December varied from six degrees below normal to 20 degrees above normal, with 1.13 inches of precipitation. No suspected crop damage due to weather conditions was reported.

Eastern

Adams: December sailed by with mostly mild weather and below normal precipitation levels. The few snow storms that occurred were quickly absorbed with above normal temperatures, leaving no cover for wheat crops, which is always a concern at this time. Another concern will be subsoil moisture levels going into spring if weather patterns persist.

Asotin/Garfield: December temperatures were mild compared to normal. Winter wheat continued to grow during the first half of December with adequate moisture. Since mid-December, moisture has been minimal, with very little rain or snow. Weather patterns appeared to be following a drought pattern at this time.

Snowpack in the mountains was very low which caused concerns for adequate water in springs and streams next spring and summer.

Spokane: Temperatures were above normal, very little snow cover.

Stevens: The county received good moisture during December with snow fall occurring during the first two weeks.

Walla Walla: Mild, cool conditions. Temperatures were cool but not cold enough to make growing fall crops go dormant, which raised some concern for local growers. There was a trace of snow over last few days. No measurable precipitation in several days.

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