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Crop and Weather Information for the Month of February 2004

WESTERN

Clallam/Jefferson: Jefferson County continued to be drier than normal. Clallam County weather was mostly normal for the month. There were a few signs that spring is almost here--early spring color in the flower beds and at local nurseries. Pastures were showing a little new growth.

Grays Harbor: The increased daylight and warmer temperatures of February brought an early spring to the Harbor. The gray, dark winter landscape was rapidly being transformed into a tapestry of multiple shades of green, as peach plum and other native plants leafed out against a background of emerald green conifer. Christmas tree growers were busy planting a new crop of Noble firs trees scheduled for harvest in 2015. Several livestock producers took advantage of dry days to apply glyphosate to pastures and hayfields scheduled for spring renovation. Greenhouse tomato growers were transplanting germinated seedlings into gallon containers. Home gardeners took advantage of several days of good weather to give their lawns the first mowing of the season and apply dormant sprays to fruit trees.

Snohomish/N. King: Most fields continued to have standing water. Fruit tree pruning was underway. The first bumblebees of the year were observed on February 24.

Snohomish/N. King (2nd Report): The temperatures were normal most of the month. North Snohomish County had below normal precipitation. Several early spring flowers began to bloom. Berries and fruit trees were starting to show signs of new growth as the days got longer and warmer.

Thurston: Persistent rainfall throughout the month continued to delay forest tree seedling harvest. Christmas tree growers also reported that planting schedules have been slightly delayed due to the rain. The longer days and warmer temperatures resulted in visible forage growth in pastures. Even well drained soils remained too wet to work. A number of ag producers expressed relief that another winter has passed with no major flooding or devastating weather events. Home gardeners took advantage of several dry days during the month to prune orchard trees and apply dormant sprays.

CENTRAL

Benton: Pruning and orchard clean up continued. Growers were assessing winter damage in grapes and soft fruit. Rain was improving the soil moisture.

Kittitas: Snow was slowly receding from fields in the valley. Some producers were getting started on installation of new irrigation systems. Snow pack levels were normal for this time of year. It is anticipated that there will be adequate irrigation water for the 2004 crop year.

Yakima: Average temperatures ranged from 9 degrees below normal to 5 degrees above normal for the month of February, with 1.39 inches of precipitation. No new crop damage due to weather conditions were reported.

EASTERN

Adams/Lincoln: Crop conditions remained relatively unchanged here in Adams and Lincoln Counties, with winter wheat remaining in mostly fair condition. Precipitation was good during the last month, but additional above average precipitation and growing conditions are needed to improve the winter wheat crop. If current weather patterns persist, farmers will be getting in the dry area fields within the next week to 10 days.

Asotin/Garfield: Normal precipitation was received in most areas of the two counties during February. Most of the precipitation was in the form of rain, and there was little runoff. Winter wheat was still smaller than normal and was just breaking dormancy at the end of the month. Farmers were ready to begin preparations for planting spring crops as soon as the weather will allow. Rangeland and pastures were just starting to green up in the lower elevations. Snow pack in the mountains was normal. Normal to above normal rainfall is needed this spring to make up for drought conditions last year.

Grant: Growers were fertilizing fields. Field tillage was underway. Grass seed was being planted.

Stevens: Accumulated snowfall began melting during the latter half of February. Very little runoff occurred indicating that conditions were right for moisture infiltration. Reports indicated that the snow pack in the mountains was close to normal. Cattle producers concentrated on feeding and calving with the weather generally cooperating. The last week of the month rain showers moved through the area.

Walla Walla: Crops conditions were good overall; however, there was some concern over deep furrow winter wheat. Preliminary indications were that the late October freeze may have damaged the deep furrow wheat more than originally thought. Spring conditions continued to be very good. Some spring tillage operations were underway. Area pastures and fields need some warmer days to stimulate more spring growth.

Whitman: Mild winter temperatures and very good precipitation during the month continued to improve soil moisture and the overall condition of winter wheat. The mild winter temperatures were helpful to calving and lambing operations on many farms and ranches.

Whitman (2nd Report): Spring seemed to get an early start as weather conditions remained mild throughout February. Precipitation was about average. The lack of frozen soil helped precipitation soak into the soil profile. Area producers were already thinking spring and preparing to begin spring work in the next few weeks.



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