



United States Department  
of Agriculture

National Agricultural  
Statistics Service

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# Washington Crop Weather

Released: May 5, 2008  
Week Ending: May 4, 2008  
CWP WA-CW1608

## Spring Seeding Moves Ahead Rapidly as Dry Conditions Prevail, Frost Damage Still Being Assessed Field Crops

Days suitable for field work were 5.9. Temperatures were more moderate in the grain growing counties. Acreage seeded advanced quickly as counties warmed up. Whitman County reported spraying activities were ongoing. Grains continued to look good, but emergence and development were delayed due to the cool spring. Very dry conditions persisted in Asotin and Garfield Counties. Dry land grain growers in these counties reported moisture was 50% of normal since December 2007. Walla Walla County reported alfalfa was coming along but set back by the cold. Christmas tree growers had finished herbicide applications and were setting out midge traps in Douglas fir plantations.

### Fruits and Vegetables

In the upper Yakima Valley, apples were in various stages of bloom. Pears were beyond full bloom, and cherries were at petal fall throughout the Valley. Fruit growers experienced near to below freezing early morning temperatures and utilized frost control measures. Temperatures warmed up towards the end of the week providing some warm days, which were conducive to bee activity. Damage from spring frosts continued to be noted, but reliable figures were not yet known.

### Livestock

Range and pasture conditions were 3% very poor, 14% poor, 45% fair, 37% good and 1% excellent. On the west side of the Cascades, the first cutting of grass for silage was reported. On the eastern side of the State, range and pasture were reported to be very late in coming on. Some cattle growers turned cattle out on pasture but were still supplementing with last year's hay. Shellfish growers continued harvest and seeding operations.

#### Days Suitable for Fieldwork

Week	Days
This Week	5.9
Last Week	5.2

#### Moisture and Supply

Item	Percent			
	VS	SH	AD	S
Topsoil	0	11	69	20
Topsoil 5 Yr Avg	2	15	78	5
Subsoil	5	21	71	3
Subsoil 5 Yr Avg	6	21	70	2
Irrigation Water	0	0	96	4
Irrigation Water 5 Yr Avg	3	6	90	1
Hay & Roughage	34	26	40	0

VS=Very Short SH=Short AD=Adequate S=Surplus

#### Crop Progress

Crop/Activity	Percent Completed			
	This Week	Last Week	2007	5 Yr. Avg.
Spring Wheat Planted	75	59	92	94
Spring Wheat Emerged	45	34	58	68
Winter Wheat Headed	NA	NA	1	5
Barley Planted	57	43	94	90
Barley Emerged	28	17	49	61
Field Corn Planted	40	20	45	54
Field Corn Emerged	15	3	24	17
Potatoes Planted	70	50	70	83
Potatoes Emerged	21	10	37	39
Dry Edible Beans Planted	31	16	68	60
Proc. Green Peas Planted	60	40	61	84
Dry Peas Planted	46	21	78	76
Alfalfa Hay 1st Cutting	NA	NA	1	5

#### Crop Condition\*

Crop	% Acreage				
	VP	P	F	G	EX
Winter Wheat Dryland	2	6	33	51	8
Winter Wheat Irrigated	0	3	12	73	12
Spring Wheat Dryland	0	4	49	46	1
Spring Wheat Irrigated	0	5	38	48	9
Barley Dryland	0	2	54	44	0
Barley Irrigated	0	3	21	64	12
Potatoes	0	2	25	73	0
Dry Edible Beans	0	19	81	0	0

VP=Very Poor P=Poor F=Fair G=Good EX=Excellent

\* Crop conditions are a measurement of the growing conditions and are not indicative of the quality of the crop produced.

# COUNTY COMMENTS

## Western

**Clallam/Jefferson:** The weather was pretty much the same as last week, with lots of rain. Temperatures ranged in the low 50s with nights in the high 30s. Planting and pastures were behind schedule and growth.

**Grays Harbor:** A tapestry of spring color continued to unfurl across the rural landscape, as native trees and shrubs produced brilliant chartreuse foliage. The color was enhanced with brown-colored ribbons of newly tilled soil across the valley floor, as ag producers plowed and cultivated fields for cannery peas and sweet corn. The cut flower daffodil harvest was beginning to dwindle just in time for the harvest to begin. Christmas tree growers were finishing up on herbicide applications and beginning to set out midge traps in Douglas fir plantations. Retail nurseries and garden stores reported slow sales of annual bedding plants due to the unseasonably cool weather. Home gardeners were reluctant to set out vegetable transplants due to the cold temperatures. Livestock producers were making the first cutting on forage fields for haylage.

**Grays Harbor/Lewis/Pacific:** The weather was beginning to cooperate with farmers in all three counties. More and more fieldwork was done, though it was still too wet to plow in most areas. Farmers were turning their animals out on pastures.

**Mason:** There was a trace of precipitation during the week. Grass was beginning to grow.

**Pierce/South King:** Crop conditions remained good for the South Puget Sound area. There were no unusual situations to report and no reports of crop damage due to a weather event.

**Skagit/San Juan/Island:** The weather was overcast with periodic rainfall, and temperatures were unseasonably cool. Fields dried out enough to cultivate. Producers began to plant in most areas. Reports of damaged fall planted crops were minimal. There was some concern that Skagit County will not receive enough heat units for berry maturation until late summer.

**Snohomish/North King:** Plowing continued as weather permitted. Many fields were finally dry enough to work.

The lowest fields still had standing water in them. Some areas received a little snow during the week as well as a few showers. Stone fruit bloom continued. Early apples and pears were in bloom, as were some blueberries and strawberries. Area plant sales were underway, and gardeners were busy buying and planting.

**Snohomish/North King (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** The weather continued to be cool, with some nights in the high 30s and daytime temperatures in the 40s. Producers were still a month behind on planting, and pasture grass was still behind due to the cooler temperatures.

**Thurston:** Despite unseasonably cool temperatures and sporadic rain showers, ag producers embraced several sunny days to complete a myriad of farm activities. Livestock producers worked feverishly to take advantage of nearly ideal conditions for making haylage from the first cutting from forage fields. Christmas tree growers began setting out traps for Douglas fir needle midge, as trees were just beginning to break bud. Turfgrass growers continued to complain about weed germination in established fields. The weed seed floated in with the December flood waters from the Chehalis river. Commercial blueberry growers reported Weymouth cultivars had reached full bloom. Although longer daylight and warmer temperatures expedited plant development, producers continued to report most plants were a minimum of two to three weeks behind normal development for this time of the year. Retail nursery and garden stores were promoting geraniums, fuchsias, and other flowering plants for the Mother's Day weekend. Home gardeners began planting potatoes, carrots, and beets in hopes that warmer temperatures will soon arrive.

**Thurston (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Despite the cold spring, tulips and daffodils have lasted longer than normal.

**Whatcom:** The weather was unseasonably cool for the first time this year. Older raspberries seemed to have been affected from the cooler temperatures and were not showing the expected growth. The first cuttings of grass for silage began.

## Central

**Benton:** Below freezing temperatures continued intermittently in the county. Conditions were still being accessed, but it appeared that producers may be facing a 50 percent loss of cherries, apples, nectarines, plums, pears, and apricots. Figures may be much higher. The lack of spring rain was beginning to stress spring seeded crops as well as late winter seeded CRP grasses. In addition, the cold temperatures slowed down the growth of winter and spring seeded crops. This was probably a blessing for the annual crops, as high temperatures would surely take their toll due to the lack of moisture. Ranges were beginning to dry up, and many livestock producers were calling for emergency grazing of CRP acreage.

**Kittitas:** Spring finally arrived! The trees were putting out leaves, and crop growth was steadily increasing. Farmers conducted weed control and irrigation, and some prepared fields for sweet corn planting. Rangeland forage was still behind, and pastures were very late.

**Klickitat:** The week began cool and windy, but nearly 0.2 inch of light rain came in on Saturday. Sunday finished up sunny and warm. Despite slight frosts a couple of nights, soil temperatures were well over 50 degrees, and crops were finally taking off. All spring farm activities were in full swing throughout the county, including cultivation, seeding, and weed control. South Klickitat County fruit growers reported minimal damage from last month's heavy freezes. Loss was spotty depending on location but not as widespread where orchardists relied on natural drainage for protection.

In less than ideal orchard block locations, there was 50-75 percent kill of cherry, peach, and nectarine bloom. But growers still say they will get a crop. Orchard activities included setting up for irrigation, thinning peaches, mowing, and fertilizing. Nurseries were seeing increased sales of vegetable starts.

**Klickitat (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Only a small amount of precipitation was received during the week. More rain was needed to save the remaining pastures. The warm weather was helpful to plant growth.

**Yakima:** Apples were in various stages of bloom in the upper Yakima Valley. Pears were beyond full bloom, and cherries were at petal fall throughout the Valley. Fruit growers experienced near below freezing early morning temperatures and utilized frost control. Temperatures warmed up towards the end of the week, providing some good warm days highly conducive to honey bee activities. Scattered precipitation was received over the weekend, with some areas receiving 0.1 inches.

**Yakima (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Average temperatures varied from 8 degrees below normal to four degrees above normal, with 0.6 inch of precipitation. Low temperatures caused growers to use frost control measures on several nights.

## Eastern

**Adams:** All crops responded well to the warmer weather and favorable growing conditions. Topsoil was drying out. Rainfall would be welcomed.

**Douglas/Chelan:** Wheat producers were replanting areas within wheat fields that did not survive the winter. Conditions were dry. Fruit growers were still determining the amount of loss suffered in the April 27-28 freeze. Cherry growers in higher elevations seemed to be hit the hardest. Areas along the river in Douglas County fared well; however, some orchards around Bridgeport were hit hard. Pear and apple growers in the Wenatchee River Valley were still assessing the damage. Temperatures were warming up, which will help the bee activity. Spring pastures were beginning to green up. Livestock producers were branding and moving livestock from winter sites into early spring pastures. Pasture growth was not significant, but producers were out of winter feed.

**Lincoln:** Dry, cold conditions continued with 20 degrees reported on May 1. Significant rainfall will be needed to salvage an average dryland winter wheat crop. The winter wheat has a long way to go before heading begins at the end of May.

**Lincoln (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Warmer temperatures near the end of the week were welcomed for crop development and pasture growth. Producers were busy fertilizing and spraying, as well as doing other fieldwork. Rain was really needed for increasingly dry conditions.

**Pend Oreille:** The high temperature for the week was 68 degrees and the low was 20 degrees, with snow and hail. Most farmers and ranchers began doing fieldwork such as harrowing or disking. The weather was too cold to plant crops. Existing hay field and pasture grass began to emerge. Livestock began to graze on pastures, but they continued to eat some hay.

**Pend Oreille/Spokane:** Tractors were finally able to get into fields. Spring grains began to be planted in some areas. Some fields still had snow banks on the north side of the hills. Frost received during the early part of the week continued to slow down the growth of grass and alfalfa in the pastures and hay fields. Another good week of weather would really get fieldwork on the downhill side.

**Stevens:** Hay and grain producers continued fieldwork for spring seeding. Warmer temperatures spurred plant growth. Cold temperatures in April delayed crop development two to three weeks.

**Walla Walla:** The winter wheat crop looked great, but farmers were worried that it will run out of moisture if temperatures turn hot. Spring seeded crops looked good, but will need some rain to make a good crop. Cheat grass pastures dried up. The first cutting of alfalfa was still at least a week off. Asparagus harvest began to improve slightly after the cold temperatures hurt it. There was some damage to cherries from the cold.

**Walla Walla (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Temperatures were more in line for this time of the year. However, the area was in great need of precipitation. Winter crops were still looking very good. Spring crops were growing slowly. The first cutting of alfalfa will probably be two weeks behind normal due to the cool temperatures. Pastures were not showing normal amount of growth due to the cold weather.

**Whitman:** Temperatures remained cool, but fieldwork continued. More operations out west completed spring work, while those in the east were making more progress as conditions improved. Winter wheat acreage was being sprayed, and acreage seeded to spring crops increased tremendously each day as operators raced to get crops in the ground. Emergence has remained slow. Warmer temperatures were needed to improve crop development.

**Weather Statistics**  
**Week of April 27 - May 4 2008**

STATION	AIR TEMPERATURE				GROWING DEGREE DAYS				LAST WEEK PRECIP			SEASON CUM PRECIP			
	LO	HI	AVG	DFN	BASE-50F		BASE-60F		TOTAL	DFN	DAYS	TOTAL	DFN	PCT	DAYS
	---	---	---	---	TOT	DFN	TOT	DFN	INCHES	---	---	INCHES	---	NORMAL	---
<b>WEST</b>															
Bellingham Intl	37	59	48	-3	3	-11	0	+0	0.89	+0.33	4	21.90	-7.89	74	144
Everett	38	61	49	-4	8	-10	0	+0	0.43	-0.13	4	27.95	-1.82	94	154
Hoquiam	38	64	51	-1	12	-5	0	+0	1.10	+0.26	5	50.82	-9.63	84	166
Kelso	39	72	53	+1	27	+6	0	+0	0.07	-0.57	1	28.66	-11.25	72	117
Olympia	35	65	50	-1	15	+1	0	+0	0.48	-0.09	4	40.38	-4.78	89	146
Seattle-Tacoma	39	64	51	-2	16	-5	0	+0	0.74	+0.32	6	30.56	-1.83	94	142
Shelton	33	66	49	-4	9	-17	0	+0	0.38	-0.29	3	52.72	-6.31	89	145
Tacoma WA AP	33	64	50	-4	14	-9	0	+0	0.51	-0.01	3	28.71	-5.98	83	130
Vancouver WA	38	73	53	+2	27	+6	0	+0	0.39	-0.17	5	32.70	-2.97	92	135
<b>CENTRAL</b>															
Ellensburg	29	74	50	-2	17	-4	0	+0	0.08	-0.04	1	5.49	-1.81	75	57
Omak AP	22	74	51	+0	23	+6	0	+0	0.00	-0.33	0	5.49	-5.18	51	49
Stampede Pass	26	58	38	+1	0	+0	0	+0	1.00	+0.09	5	62.16	-9.67	87	158
Wenatchee	35	73	53	-3	27	-13	0	-2	0.00	-0.14	0	3.95	-2.69	59	40
Yakima AP	26	73	49	-5	12	-19	0	+0	0.06	-0.01	3	5.38	-1.09	83	50
<b>NORTHEAST</b>															
Colville	25	75	50	-1	20	+3	0	+0	0.00	-0.41	0	12.74	-3.33	79	93
Deer Park	20	70	46	-5	4	-13	0	+0	0.04	-0.31	1	17.00	+2.67	119	112
Republic	23	71	49	+2	20	+13	0	+0	0.00	-0.31	0	8.86	-1.90	82	80
Spokane AP	29	69	49	-2	16	+1	0	+0	0.15	-0.13	2	14.04	+1.41	111	100
<b>EAST CENTRAL</b>															
Ephrata	34	75	53	-4	24	-21	0	-6	0.00	-0.09	0	3.86	-1.85	68	59
Moses Lake	31	74	52	-5	17	-28	0	-6	0.00	-0.09	0	3.92	-1.79	69	56
Quincy	33	72	52	-3	20	-19	0	-2	0.00	-0.09	0	5.77	-0.45	93	58
Ritzville	25	70	48	-4	12	-6	0	+0	0.01	-0.20	1	8.10	-0.97	89	76
<b>SOUTHEAST</b>															
Hanford	32	78	53	-6	27	-39	1	-13	0.00	-0.07	0	3.06	-2.28	57	38
Pasco	29	79	54	-5	31	-25	0	-7	0.00	-0.11	0	5.40	-0.65	89	56
Pullman	26	69	48	-2	10	-4	0	+0	0.03	-0.32	1	13.85	-2.86	83	94
Walla Walla Rgn	37	74	54	-2	37	-7	2	-3	0.03	-0.35	2	10.80	-5.01	68	87
Whitman Mission	27	77	52	-3	26	-10	1	+1	0.18	-0.10	3	9.54	-1.35	88	91
<b>WESTERN IDAHO PANHANDLE</b>															
Lewiston ID	35	77	54	-1	37	-2	2	+2	0.33	+0.05	1	5.67	-2.95	66	74

Summary based on NWS data.

Season Cumulative Precip Starts: Friday September 1, 2007

DFN = Departure From Normal (Using 1961-90 Normals Period).

NA = Data Unavailable

Precipitation (rain or melted snow/ice) in inches. Precipitation

Days = Days with precip of 0.01 inch or more.

Air Temperatures in Degrees Fahrenheit.

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National weather summary: <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/reports/waobr/weather/2007/summary/weth1606.pdf>

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