



United States Department  
of Agriculture

National Agricultural  
Statistics Service

USDA/NASS  
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# Washington Crop Weather

Released: March 30, 2009  
Week Ending: March 29, 2009  
CWP WA-CW0409

## More Rain and Snow to the Palouse and Fruit Trees Break Bud

### Field Crops

Days suitable for fieldwork were 2.8. In Whitman County, fresh drifted snow banks remained on many fields. Welcome rains continued to slow progress for field work in most of the grain growing counties. Spring seeding throughout the region was kept to a minimum. Adams County reported Crop Adjustors were trying to assess general winter wheat losses. Due to the moisture and inability of farmers to get out into the fields, the winter wheat crop condition generally remains uncertain.

### Fruits and Vegetables

Yakima County reports most fruit growers have completed tree pruning and the fruit trees were breaking dormancy. Snohomish County reported raspberry caning was finished. Whatcom County reported raspberry and blueberry growers were busy with new plantings.

### Livestock

Range and pasture conditions were 10 percent very poor, 21 percent poor, 51 percent fair and 18 percent good. On the Eastern side, soil temperatures were still cold and early pasture growth was delayed. Many producers still had cattle on feed, and hay was reported to still be available.

### Days Suitable for Fieldwork

Week	Days
This Week	2.8
Last Week	3.3

### Moisture and Supply

Item	Percent			
	VS	SH	AD	S
Topsoil	0	6	73	21
Subsoil	11	34	49	6
Irrigation Water	0	0	93	7
Hay & Roughage	1	6	90	3

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

### Crop Progress

Crop/Activity	Percent Completed			
	This Week	Last Week	2008	5 Yr. Avg.
Barley Planted	3	1	11	21
Potatoes Planted	1	NA	9	1
Proc. Green Peas Planted	3	2	9	9

### Crop Condition\*

Crop	% Acreage				
	VP	P	F	G	EX
Winter Wheat Dryland	12	15	22	38	13
Winter Wheat Irrigated	0	0	31	50	19

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.

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# COUNTY COMMENTS

## Western

**Clark:** Weather was cold and wet limiting farm work. Farmer's Markets were opened for cut flower sales.

**Clark/Skamania/Cowlitz/Wahkiakum:** Woodland Bottoms, Clark and Cowlitz Counties along I-5 corridor were wet and everything was behind. Carrots were generally planted by now, but soil conditions were very wet. Berries were being pruned and chemicals were being applied to them. The Ridgefield area soil conditions were very wet and equipment was getting stuck in wet, clay soils. Cover crops were tilled under. Clark County east of I-5, planted hay crops were 25-30 percent short due to sequence of freeze, thaw, warm up, and wet. Castle Rock area conditions were very rainy and muddy. Wahkiakum County, Puget Island area was two to three weeks behind due to cold and wet weather. All areas reported that rainfall and water levels were normal.

**Grays Harbor/Lewis/Pacific:** Cool temperatures and rainfall continued to hamper farmer's efforts to do spring field work.

**Mason:** Field conditions were too wet to put cattle on pasture.

**Snohomish/ King:** Fields were too wet for field work. Some parts of the area received over three inches of rain during the past week. Planting schedules were behind by two weeks. Hay supplies were mostly adequate but prices remained elevated. Raspberry caning and fruit tree pruning had finished. Dairies were struggling with extremely low milk prices.

**Whatcom:** Temperatures continued to drop below 32 degrees with some hail on Saturday. Multiple days of rain prevented field work in river bottom soils. Drier fields in the area were being cultivated. Raspberry and blueberry growers were busy with new plantings.

## Central

**Klickitat:** The area received rain on Saturday. The weather started to warm up and was sunny for the past week, but was still cold in the mornings.

**Klickitat (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** The temperatures warmed up with highs consistently in the 40s except for Friday which reached the 50s. Lows were in the 20s-30s with some light rain and hail early in the week. A real soaker moved through on Saturday accumulating more than .5 of an inch, which increased ponding and run-off in places that had been drying out. Wind continued most days with gusts over 30 mph. Conditions remained too wet for field work. Hay supplies appeared adequate for feeders at this time. Perennial pastures and hay fields showed growth. Most orchardists had finished with pruning and area vineyards had grape pruning and tying underway. In the Roosevelt and Maryhill orchard districts with more moderate temperatures along the Columbia River, buds were swelling and earliest stone fruit varieties were beginning bloom. In home gardens, garlic and rhubarb were up. There was still significant snow accumulation at elevation in the Simcoes which by rule of thumb means garden planting will wait another month or more.

**Yakima:** Average temperatures were generally cooler than normal, varying from one to six degrees below normal. There was .05 of an inch of precipitation received during the week. No crop losses due to weather conditions were reported.

**Yakima (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** For the month of March, Yakima County received about .6 to .7 inch of precipitation with most of that coming between March 11 and 12 and close to .1 inch on March 28. Nighttime temperatures dropped to the mid to upper teens during the second week of March prompting some tree fruit growers, particularly stone fruit producers, to utilize frost management strategies to prevent tree injury. Daytime temperatures warmed up throughout the month with a couple days above 60 degrees later in the month. Most fruit growers had completed tree pruning and the fruit trees were breaking dormancy. The area had breezy conditions over the past weekend with frequent gusts approaching 10 to 20 mph.

## Eastern

**Adams:** Crop adjusters scurried to finish assessing the effects of last fall's dry winter wheat seeding conditions and the cold weather of early December. Many winter wheat stands were determined in need of reseeding or interseeding. Rangeland started spring growth and benefited from recent general rains, as did the cropland.

**Asotin:** Cool, wet weather continued. Some spring work started in the very lowest elevations. Intermittent rain and snow continued in the higher elevations.

**Asotin/Garfield:** Continued wet weather kept farmers out of the fields for another week. In addition, a major storm with heavy rain, followed by up to a foot of snow hit the area on Saturday. Windy conditions caused drifting snow. Most of the lower elevations were now two to three weeks behind normal in preparation and planting of spring crops. Rangelands needed warmer weather for normal spring growth of perennial and annual grasses. Many producers were feeding their cattle longer than normal, waiting for grass to grow before spring turnout.

**Ferry:** Overall the area was down in moisture. The snow was hanging on for a long time with many fields just starting to bare up. Higher elevation fields were still covered with up to one foot of snow. Cattle feed was a little short for some operations. Prices remained dismal.

**Garfield:** The area received snow and temperatures were very cold.

**Lincoln:** Winter wheat started to green up but there were many bare patches.

**Lincoln (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Most of the snow had melted off fields except for north slopes. Some winter wheat will need to be reseeded due to dry planting conditions last fall. Rain showers improved field conditions, but more moisture was needed. Farmers were in the fields in drier areas of the county. Spring calving continued.

**Stevens:** March was cold with frequent snow events. Recent temperatures above freezing started to melt accumulated snowfall. Most field work will be several weeks later than normal. Cattle producers reported calving was about done.

**Walla Walla:** Scattered rain kept spring seeding to a minimum. Heavy rain received on Saturday had turned to snow overnight and melted early. Soil temperatures were still below 40 degrees. Early pastures were slow in growth. Some livestock were being fed hay. Hay was still available for sale.

**Whitman:** Rains continued to slow progress for field work even in the west portion of the county. The wet weather was welcomed and should help crop conditions. Field work will not start in all but the far western end of the county until conditions dry out.

## Weekly Weather Statistics

### March 23 - 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009

STATION	AIR TEMPERATURE				GROWING DEGREE DAYS				LAST WEEK PRECIP			SEASON CUM PRECIP				
	LO	HI	AVG	DFN	BASE-50F		BASE-60F		TOTAL INCHES	DFN	DAYS	TOTAL INCHES	PCT			
					TOT	DFN	TOT	DFN					DFN	NORMAL	DAYS	
<b>WEST</b>																
Bellingham Intl	28	51	42	-3	0	-7	0	+0	0.71	+0.08	6	22.03	-4.60	83	103	
Hoquiam	30	50	42	-5	0	-7	0	+0	1.35	-0.11	6	43.45	-11.74	79	116	
Kelso	36	55	44	-3	0	-7	0	+0	0.89	-0.06	5	27.57	-8.38	77	95	
Olympia	29	54	42	-4	0	-7	0	+0	1.02	+0.01	5	33.33	-8.06	81	108	
Seattle-Tacoma	33	51	43	-5	0	-7	0	+0	0.55	-0.17	5	24.25	-5.44	82	106	
Shelton	27	55	41	-6	0	-7	0	+0	1.11	-0.24	5	44.76	-9.64	82	105	
Tacoma WA AP	27	53	42	-5	0	-7	0	+0	1.41	+0.60	5	25.48	-5.97	81	100	
Vancouver WA	31	60	47	+0	0	-7	0	+0	0.70	-0.12	5	20.10	-12.34	62	103	
<b>CENTRAL</b>																
Ellensburg	25	57	42	-1	0	+0	0	+0	0.01	-0.13	1	5.62	-1.00	85	49	
Omak AP	24	64	43	+4	1	+1	0	+0	0.01	-0.26	1	5.66	-3.65	61	60	
Stampepe Pass	24	48	32	+1	0	+0	0	+0	2.97	+1.44	6	57.31	-8.84	87	107	
Wenatchee AP	32	61	43	-3	0	-6	0	+0	0.00	-0.14	0	2.87	-3.03	49	36	
Yakima AP	24	64	41	-5	0	-5	0	+0	0.05	-0.09	1	4.92	-0.99	83	47	
<b>NORTHEAST</b>																
Colville	22	59	41	-1	0	-4	0	+0	0.16	-0.26	2	10.85	-3.37	76	64	
Deer Park	20	52	37	-5	0	-4	0	+0	0.38	+0.03	6	12.51	-0.06	100	75	
Republic	27	56	41	+4	0	+0	0	+0	0.12	-0.16	2	6.82	-2.51	73	61	
Spokane AP	26	52	38	-3	0	-5	0	+0	0.43	+0.12	5	10.86	-0.35	97	82	
<b>EAST CENTRAL</b>																
Ephrata	30	60	43	-3	0	-6	0	+0	0.07	-0.07	2	3.02	-2.17	58	44	
Moses Lake	30	61	43	-3	0	-6	0	+0	0.10	-0.04	2	3.81	-1.38	73	47	
Quincy	31	62	44	-2	0	-5	0	+0	0.35	+0.21	4	7.00	+1.35	124	47	
Ritzville	28	53	39	-4	0	+0	0	+0	0.68	+0.47	4	7.75	-0.29	96	58	
<b>SOUTHEAST</b>																
Hanford	29	59	44	-6	0	-13	0	+0	0.09	-0.05	2	4.38	-0.49	90	43	
Pasco	30	61	46	-4	0	-12	0	+0	0.31	+0.17	4	5.20	-0.29	95	53	
Pullman	27	50	38	-4	0	+0	0	+0	1.17	+0.73	5	14.61	-0.23	98	84	
Walla Walla Rgn	31	57	44	-5	0	-9	0	+0	1.36	+0.94	4	12.95	-0.82	94	70	
Whitman Mission	27	58	43	-4	0	-7	0	+0	1.27	+0.99	4	11.98	+2.52	127	78	
<b>WESTERN IDAHO PANHANDLE</b>																
Lewiston ID	31	55	44	-3	0	-7	0	+0	0.97	+0.69	3	7.65	+0.43	106	5	

Summary based on NWS data.

Season Cumulative Precip Starts: Friday September 1, 2008

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/2008/summary/weth1606.pdf>

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