



Wisconsin Crop Weather

Compiled by the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service

December 10, 2003

Annual Crop Weather Issue

REVIEW OF THE 2003 CROP YEAR

2003 - Dry August Challenges Crops

One of the driest August's in Wisconsin's history had a major impact on fall crops. Corn and soybean yields fell due to lack of moisture during pollination and grain fill stages. Hay and pastures suffered, and late season regrowth was minimal. Additionally, severe winterkill of hay crops in northern Wisconsin caused many fields to be reseeded or planted to other crops.

On the other hand, small grains and irrigated vegetables had excellent yields in 2003. Low moisture levels came too late in the season to have much effect on these crops.

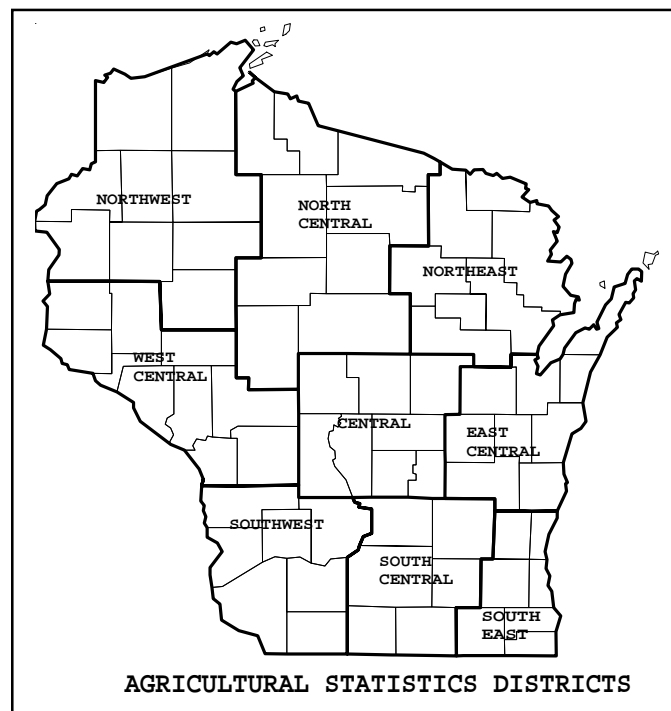
This crop year also had cooler than normal weather from April through June, which delayed the planting season and slowed the vegetative growth of most crops. Warmer than normal temperatures during August and September speeded up maturation and the harvesting of crops. Moisture levels were mostly adequate from spring until late July. Harvest weather was generally favorable.

December 2002 was warmer than usual, as temperatures averaged 6 degrees above normal. El Nino conditions kept temperatures warm and held precipitation below normal. Large areas of Wisconsin were without snow cover for the holidays. **January** continued the El Nino trend. Temperatures were near normal, but precipitation for the month was under 0.5 inch. Average temperatures were in the 4 to 27 degree range, with short periods when lows were in the minus teens and others when highs reached the low 50's. Lack of significant snow cover continued statewide. Dry conditions continued through **February**. Monthly precipitation was under 0.5 inch for most of the state. February turned mostly colder than normal as daily low temperatures fell below January numbers. Concerns about low moisture levels for spring and winterkill for alfalfa began to surface. **March** remained cooler than normal. The cold temperatures mixed with low amounts of snow cover pushed frost levels deeper across the northern two-thirds of the state. Northwestern Wisconsin was hit with a late season snowstorm, while most of the state remained without snow cover.

April began with mostly cooler than normal temperatures. Temperatures had the usual wide range, with readings from 17 to 74 degrees for the first week of April. Snow covered the northern half of the state, and frost depths in the far north were reported as deep as 7 feet. Precipitation in the form of rain, sleet, and snow hit most parts of the state. Early April soil moisture

conditions were rated as 1 percent very short, 29 percent short, 54 percent adequate, and 16 percent surplus. The third week of April brought warmer than normal temperatures, with some areas reaching the high 80's. Rains were common in the north, but the southern counties missed most of the heavier rains. The end of April brought tractors out in force in the south with good fieldwork conditions, though temperatures fell back to below normal. Wet fields continued to slow fieldwork progress in the north.

The first two weeks of **May** brought normal temperature ranges to most of the state. Dry weather conditions allowed for fieldwork to advance rapidly in all but the far north. Fieldwork and planting in the south were pushed forward and finally slowed with well-appreciated rains. The north saw dry



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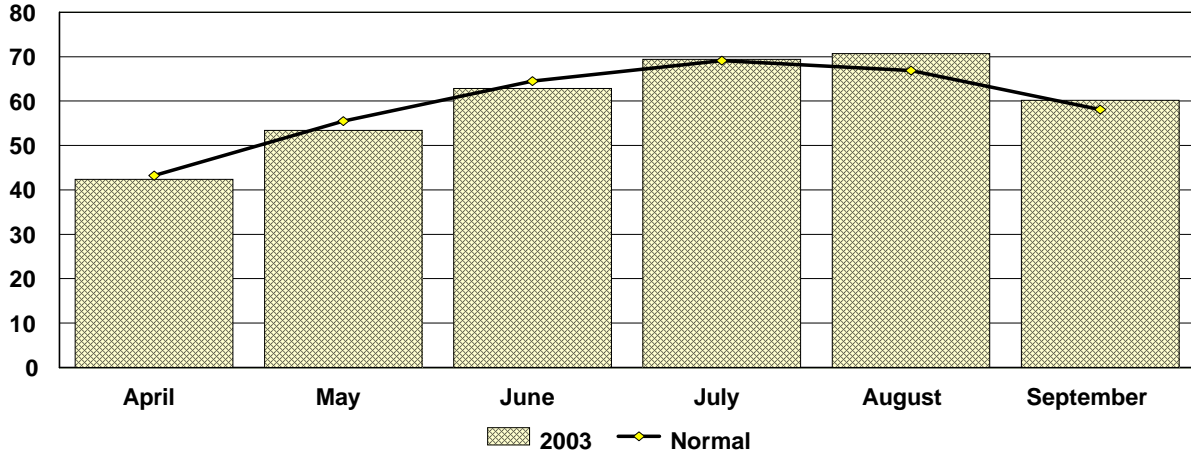
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This report has been made possible through the cooperative efforts of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the National Weather Service.

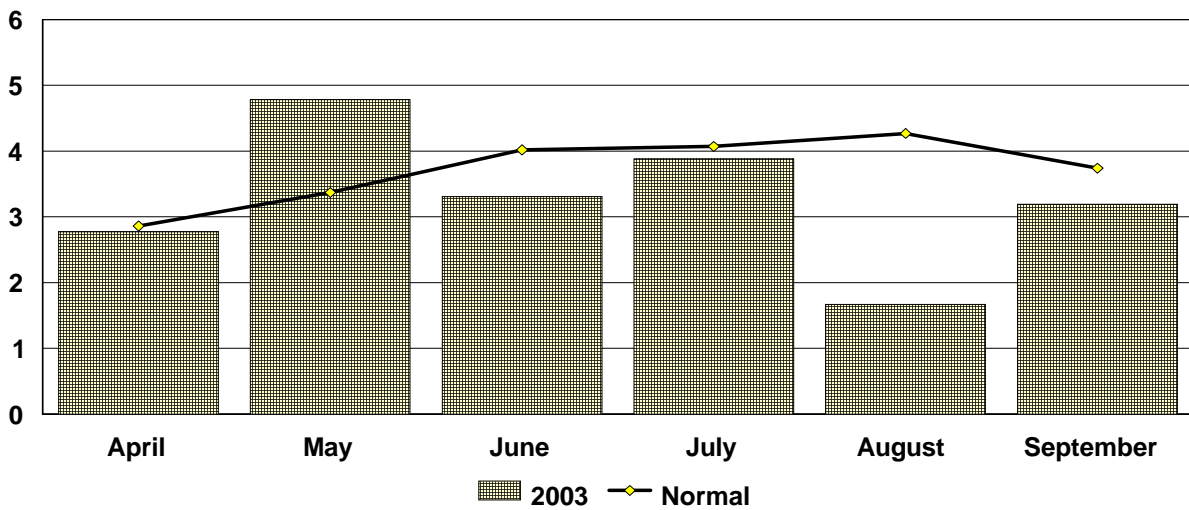
AVERAGE MONTHLY TEMPERATURE, WISCONSIN, 2003

Deg F



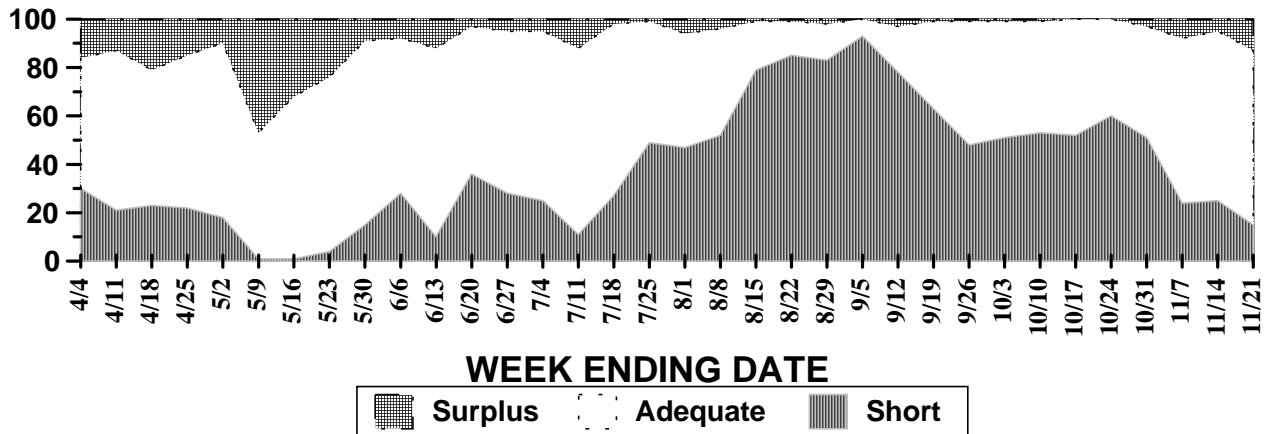
AVERAGE MONTHLY RAINFALL, WISCONSIN, 2003

Inches



SOIL MOISTURE RATINGS, WISCONSIN, 2003

Percent



MONTHLY TEMPERATURES: 2003 GROWING SEASON AND NORMAL*

District	April 1/		May 1/		June 1/		July 1/		August 1/		September 1/	
	2003	Normal	2003	Normal	2003	Normal	2003	Normal	2003	Normal	2003	Normal
	Degrees Fahrenheit											
NW	40.8	41.7	52.4	54.4	61.5	63.1	68.9	68.1	70.4	65.9	58.8	56.6
NC	39.0	40.4	51.2	53.2	60.7	61.8	66.8	66.4	68.3	64.2	57.7	55.3
NE	39.3	41.3	51.4	53.6	60.9	62.5	69.0	67.0	68.0	64.8	58.9	56.0
WC	45.5	45.2	55.7	57.4	65.3	66.4	71.3	70.8	72.7	68.3	61.2	59.3
C	43.8	44.5	55.0	56.7	64.2	65.8	69.6	70.2	71.2	67.7	61.0	59.0
EC	41.5	42.8	52.0	54.6	62.0	64.1	68.8	69.5	71.2	67.9	62.1	59.8
SW	46.1	46.1	56.0	57.9	65.2	67.2	71.2	71.4	73.0	69.0	61.4	60.5
SC	45.6	45.8	55.5	57.8	65.0	67.2	71.4	71.3	72.3	68.9	62.5	60.6
SE	44.6	45.0	53.8	56.3	63.4	66.0	71.1	71.2	73.1	69.4	63.2	61.4
STATE	42.4	43.2	53.4	55.5	62.8	64.5	69.4	69.1	70.7	66.9	60.2	58.1

1/Preliminary estimates, 2003. * Normal is defined as the 30-year average for the years 1971-2000. Source: State Climatologist.

MONTHLY RAINFALL: 2003 GROWING SEASON AND NORMAL*

District	April 1/		May 1/		June 1/		July 1/		August 1/		September 1/	
	2003	Normal	2003	Normal	2003	Normal	2003	Normal	2003	Normal	2003	Normal
	Inches											
NW	2.53	2.39	5.02	3.29	4.34	4.19	4.08	4.29	1.14	4.44	3.12	3.89
NC	3.77	2.40	4.73	3.31	3.12	4.01	3.35	4.06	1.82	4.36	2.88	4.03
NE	3.76	2.65	3.16	3.29	3.14	3.69	4.09	3.70	2.78	3.81	4.42	3.74
WC	3.08	3.05	5.23	3.69	3.34	4.24	3.12	4.45	1.58	4.54	2.57	3.82
C	2.12	3.02	4.84	3.52	3.55	3.88	3.85	4.13	1.49	4.22	3.25	3.72
EC	2.38	2.81	4.08	2.95	2.83	3.51	5.27	3.38	1.86	3.86	3.36	3.42
SW	2.08	3.55	5.19	3.60	3.32	4.35	3.56	4.33	1.33	4.46	3.23	3.42
SC	1.92	3.47	5.66	3.40	2.69	4.19	4.09	4.07	1.57	4.24	3.48	3.51
SE	1.81	3.48	5.25	3.13	1.98	3.76	4.48	3.82	1.70	4.22	2.29	3.48
STATE	2.77	2.86	4.78	3.37	3.31	4.02	3.88	4.07	1.67	4.27	3.19	3.74

1/Preliminary estimates, 2003. * Normal is defined as the 30-year average for the years 1971-2000. Source: State Climatologist.

COMPARATIVE TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION DATA

District	Average Temperature						Total Precipitation					
	June - September						April - September					
	Normal*	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003/1/	Normal*	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003 1/
	Degrees Fahrenheit						Inches					
NW	63.6	64.0	61.6	64.6	65.8	64.3	22.3	29.2	21.5	25.6	28.6	20.3
NC	62.3	61.5	61.3	63.5	65.2	63.6	22.1	25.6	24.1	24.0	28.0	19.9
NE	63.0	64.1	61.6	63.6	65.3	63.6	20.9	22.8	23.0	21.3	26.9	21.3
WC	66.7	67.2	64.9	67.2	68.8	67.3	23.5	27.5	25.4	27.6	29.3	18.6
C	66.1	66.3	64.7	66.6	68.4	66.4	22.3	25.7	27.1	25.8	24.0	19.5
EC	66.0	66.6	64.7	66.7	68.3	65.8	20.0	22.4	24.5	22.4	20.1	20.3
SW	67.5	67.7	66.0	67.4	69.4	67.8	23.5	30.3	30.6	28.7	24.0	19.4
SC	67.6	68.2	66.5	67.8	70.0	67.8	22.7	28.1	30.6	27.6	20.6	19.0
SE	67.6	68.6	66.6	68.0	70.0	67.4	22.0	27.4	31.8	25.5	21.7	17.9
STATE	65.1	65.6	63.6	65.7	67.4	65.6	22.2	26.7	25.6	25.3	25.8	19.7

1/Preliminary estimates, 2003. * Normal is defined as the 30-year average for the years 1971-2000. Source: State Climatologist

conditions for a few extra days; farmers were able to take advantage of good weather to work on spring crop duties. Widespread rains of 2 inches or more hit Wisconsin during the second week of May. These timely rains helped to ensure moisture for germination of newly-planted crops and to boost winter wheat and alfalfa growth. The cool nights held pasture conditions slightly behind normal. Mid-May saw soil moisture ratings at 1 percent short, 52 percent adequate, and 47 percent surplus. Precipitation for the period of March 1 to May 11 was above normal for most of the state, with the Milwaukee area at less than 1 inch below normal for the period. With topsoil moisture levels adequate for new growth, farmers began to hope for warmer temperatures. Unfortunately, temperatures remained below normal through the end of the month. The cool nights kept pastures and alfalfa behind schedule around the state.

Cool weather would not seem to leave the Badger State, as temperatures during the first two weeks of **June** remained below normal. Drier weather allowed Wisconsin farmers to complete large portions of grain planting. With most of the crop in the ground, farmers waited for the warm-up to kick start the growing season. Mid-June brought welcome rains over the upper two-thirds of the state, while the lower third of the state missed the rains. Year-to-date precipitation totals in the southern counties were 4 to 5 inches below normal. Topsoil moisture conditions, statewide, were reported at 1 percent very short, 9 percent short, 78 percent adequate, and 12 percent surplus. The last week of June finally recorded the first at or above normal temperatures since early May. This first week of summer also brought significant rains across the state. Weekly totals ranged from 0.75 to 1.50 inches. Although southern areas of the state still had low year-to-date precipitation levels, the rains at least arrived at appropriate times for good crop development. Pasture conditions were reported as 1 percent very poor, 7 percent poor, 35 percent fair, 50 percent good, and 7 percent excellent.

During the first week of **July**, temperatures ranged from the mid 50's at night to slightly above 90 degrees. These slightly above normal temperatures, combined with scattered rains, helped to push crop development and allow corn to reach "knee-high by the 4th of July." Mid-July temperatures were slightly below normal, but were sufficient for crop development. Scattered rains helped to boost growth in the areas that received precipitation. Rainfall amounts through the end of the month were described as hit or miss. Some areas received adequate amounts of rain, while others continued to be on the low side. Reports of moisture stress in some areas began to be heard. By the last week of July, soil moisture conditions were reported at 10 percent very short, 39 percent short, 50 percent adequate, and 1 percent surplus. Areas reporting short to very short moisture levels increased by 20 percent compared to the previous week. Year-to-date moisture levels in the southern half of the state were 3.5 to 7.0 inches behind normal. Pasture conditions were rated at 2 percent very poor, 9 percent poor, 37 percent fair, 46 percent good, and 6 percent excellent.

The first week of **August** brought some rain to relieve the dry conditions from the previous month. These rains were scattered and amounts were mostly under 0.5 inches. The northeast received heavy downpours that totaled over 5 inches in localized areas. Precipitation remained stingy in the middle of August, and crops in most areas of the state began to show moisture stress. Southern and western Wisconsin were the furthest behind in rain for the

season. Soil moisture ratings for August 22 were 85 percent very short or short. Temperatures for the month were mostly above normal. The heat raised growing degree day units to above normal for the first time this season. The above average heat and lack of significant widespread rain continued through the end of the month. Pastures, as well as crops, were showing poor condition by month's end.

The weather for early **September** was a continuation of the dry, hot August. Warm temperatures kept growing degree days above normal, but parched crops could barely take advantage of the heat units. Topsoil moisture conditions for September 5 were 68 percent very short, 25 percent short, and 7 percent adequate. This peak in the very short and short category (at 93 percent) was reflected in lower corn and soybean crop condition ratings. Crops were in normal chronological development stages, but had no moisture reserves to set and fill the corn and soybean plants. Pastures were mostly dormant at this point. Rain finally began to fall by mid-September. Widespread rains continued over most of the state during the middle of the month. The exception was the far southeast that was mostly missed again. These rains helped to raise topsoil moisture levels, aid dry alfalfa fields, and boost pastures, but were too late to improve the corn and soybean crops. The last week of September and the first week of autumn brought slightly cooler than normal temperatures. Year-to-date precipitation levels continued to be far behind normal.

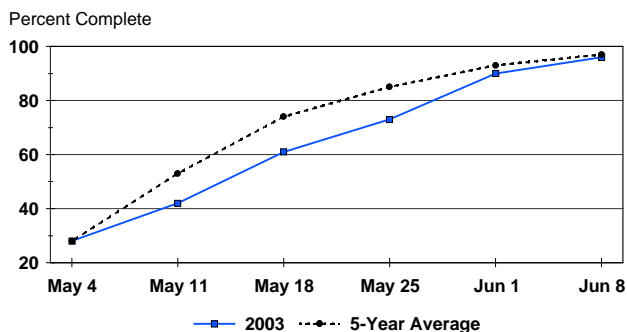
Unusually cold weather arrived in early **October**. The first week's average was at least 10 degrees below normal, with record lows set in some areas. Lows in the 20's statewide ushered in a hard killing frost that effectively ended the 2003 growing season. The second week brought a return to above normal temperatures, and farmers worked long hours to harvest the corn and soybean crops. Rainfall was scattered and mostly light during the month. This allowed producers to take advantage of the dry conditions and harvest crops at a rapid pace. Each week the days available for fieldwork ranged from 5.5 to 6.7 days per week. By month's end, soybeans harvested, at 92 percent, were well ahead of both last year's 68 percent and the 5-year average of 80 percent. Harvest of corn for grain moved at a rapid pace also, but many producers were waiting for lower grain moisture. By the end of October, topsoil moisture levels were rated at 18 percent very short, 42 percent short, and 40 percent adequate.

November began with temperatures 4 to 9 degrees below normal. Harvest activities came to a standstill, as most of the state was covered by rain during the first full week of November. Most of the state received 1.0 to 2.5 inches of rain, with some areas receiving as much as 5 inches. Although it did slow down harvest, farmers were thankful for the added moisture. Normal temperatures returned for the second week, and then temperatures climbed 10 degrees above normal for the third week. Days suitable for fieldwork ranged from 3.7 to 5.0 days per week. Producers were able to advance corn harvest to 94 percent by November 23. Moisture levels for corn remained above 20 percent in some instances, but farmers felt that crops could be dried in the bins, rather than risk not being able to harvest them. High winds during the middle of the month caused concerns about lodging in some areas. The above normal precipitation for November allowed soil moisture to return to mostly adequate levels and bring fall-seeded wheat into good condition for the winter.

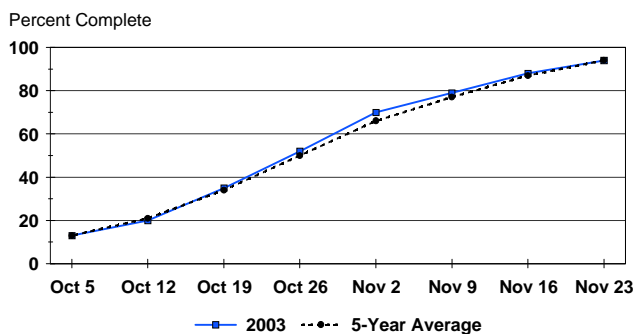
CORN

The 2003 corn growing season began in late April in southern Wisconsin. As of April 27, farmers reported 8 percent of the crop planted. Soil moisture levels were adequate for the new crop, but soil temperatures were still below optimum planting conditions for most of the state. Wet fields held producers back in the northern areas of the state. Late May had more days suitable for fieldwork, and the crop was quickly put in the ground. By the end of the month, the state average for corn planted reached 90 percent, slightly behind the 5-year average of 93 percent. At the same time, corn emerged was at 56 percent, compared to 72 percent for the 5-year average. The cool spring temperatures were blamed for the slow start of vegetative growth. Summer arrived with most of the state running behind normal year-to-date precipitation levels. Farmers in the south had sufficient moisture for crop development, but were worried about soil moisture reserves. Temperatures for July were near normal and provided enough heat units to move the crop along normally. As of July 25, the crop condition was rated 2 percent very poor, 4 percent poor, 22 percent fair, 50 percent good, and 22 percent excellent. Farmers were very optimistic about the future of the corn crop. Early August brought light, scattered rains to relieve some producers' worries about soil moisture. The spotty rains left many fields with little extra moisture for the start of tasseling and pollination of the crop. The state average for corn silked on August 3 was 60 percent, compared to a 5-year average of 79 percent silked. This confirmed that the crop was still running behind normal in development for the year. Temperatures for August averaged above normal, but rain was a scarce commodity. On August 8, soil moisture conditions were rated 15 percent very short, 37 percent short, 44 percent adequate, and 4 percent surplus. This was the first week when the very short and short ratings combined to over 50 percent. August was a very trying time for farmers hoping for rain. There were incidences of rain, but they

Corn Planted
2003 Wisconsin State Average



Corn Harvest
2003 Wisconsin State Average



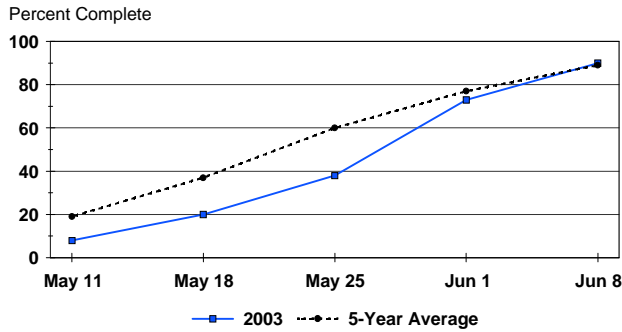
were very scattered and light. By the end of August, corn crop condition reports were worsening. Farmers reported fields that had looked excellent a few weeks earlier, were now showing significant stress.

The first reports of silage harvest came in mid-August. The crop was ranked as 57 percent in dough stage or beyond, but many fields had ears that were filling poorly due to lack of moisture. On September 5, soil moisture conditions were at 68 percent very short, 25 percent short, and 7 percent adequate. Warm weather had allowed the crop to catch up in stage of development, but many areas now had plants that were drying out. Corn harvested for silage was at 49 percent, compared to the 5-year average of 27 percent. In the dry areas of the state, more corn than usual was harvested as silage to salvage a crop that had small ear development. The first widespread rains did not occur until mid-September. This was, unfortunately, too late to help most of the crop. Harvest of corn for grain began in late September. The first week of October brought a statewide killing frost that ended the growing season. Corn rated as mature was at 85 percent, compared to the 5-year average of 78 percent. October was again a mostly dry month, and farmers were able to harvest the corn crop at a good pace when plant moisture levels were low enough. Producers reported yields were extremely variable. Fields with heavier soils had very good yields, while those with lighter soils had very low yields. Overall, farmers were pleasantly surprised at the yields, considering the dry conditions that summer had brought.

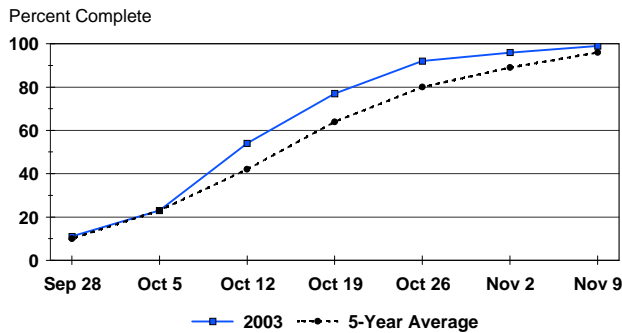
SOYBEANS

Seeding of soybeans began the second week of May. Wet soil conditions kept many producers out of the fields. By the beginning of June, soybeans planted had reached 73 percent complete, compared to the 5-year average of 77 percent. Soybeans emerged, at 20 percent, were behind schedule with the cool weather. This compared to a 5-year average of 48 percent emerged. The cool nights and cloudy days in May were blamed for the slow start. By the end of spring, soybeans emerged was at 91 percent, nearly equal to the 5-year average of 92 percent. Soybean condition at this time was rated 1 percent very poor, 3 percent poor, 16 percent fair, 68 percent good, and 12 percent excellent. Warmer weather and adequate moisture allowed soybeans blooming to be at 14 percent by July 13, equal to the 5-year average. Soybean condition was ranked at 80 percent good to excellent at this time. The end of July brought dry, hot conditions, and soybeans began to show stress from lack of moisture. Growers began to report large populations of aphids. Plant height was also reported to be shorter than normal in some areas. The start of August brought scattered rains as a relief in a few dry areas. Soybeans setting pods were at 29 percent, compared to the 5-year average of 38 percent. By mid-August, hot weather had dried fields out, and soybeans were showing obvious stress during the pod development and seed-filling period. Soybean condition ratings began to slip out of good to excellent and into poor and fair categories. After a month of very little precipitation, soybeans turning color on August 31 was reported at 22 percent, compared to 14 percent for the 5-year average. Many producers were questioning whether the early color change was from maturity or moisture stress. Early September had reports of soybeans being harvested for silage to

Soybean Planted 2003 Wisconsin State Average



Soybean Harvested 2003 Wisconsin State Average

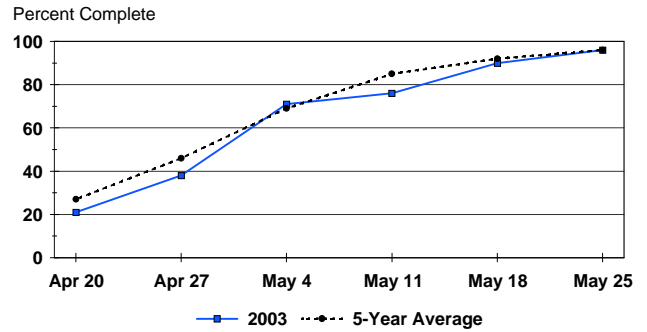


supplement low forage supplies and to utilize marginal fields. When rains finally arrived in mid-September, soybeans dropping leaves were at 39 percent, ahead of the 5-year average of 28 percent. The rains were mostly too late to help the crop. Soybean condition was rated at 24 percent very poor, 27 percent poor, 28 percent fair, 17 percent good, and 4 percent excellent. Soybean harvest began in late September. Early yields were disappointing. Bean size was small, and there were fewer beans per plant. The hot, dry weather during seed filling proved to be hard on the stressed plants. Favorable harvest weather in October allowed for soybean harvest to reach 92 percent complete by October 26. This compared to 68 percent last year and a 5-year average of 80 percent. Soybean yields were drastically affected by the summer temperatures and lack of moisture. Average yields were reported to be in the 20's in many areas.

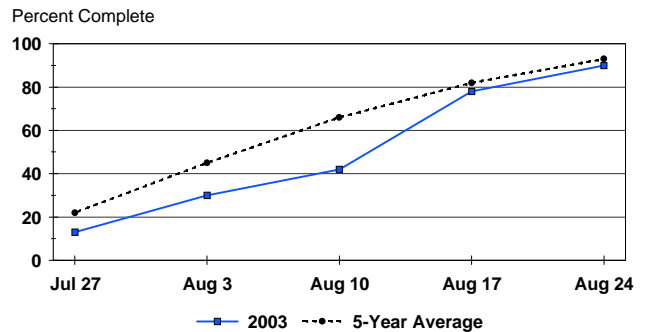
OATS

A cool, wet spring delayed seeding of oats in southern Wisconsin. Planting began a week later than normal. Farmers were caught up in planting progress by early May. Oats planted on May 4 were at 71 percent, compared to the 5-year average of 69 percent. Oats emerged were at 22 percent, compared to 25 percent for the 5-year average. The cool weather kept oats emerged behind normal, but by early June, 97 percent of the crop had emerged. The oat crop began to head out by mid-June. The crop condition was rated at 77 percent good to excellent. At the end of June, the crop had caught up to the 5-year average for oats headed at 68 percent. Early July saw harvesting of oatlage with good silage yields. Oats harvested for grain began in late

Oats Planted 2003 Wisconsin State Average



Oats Harvested 2003 Wisconsin State Average



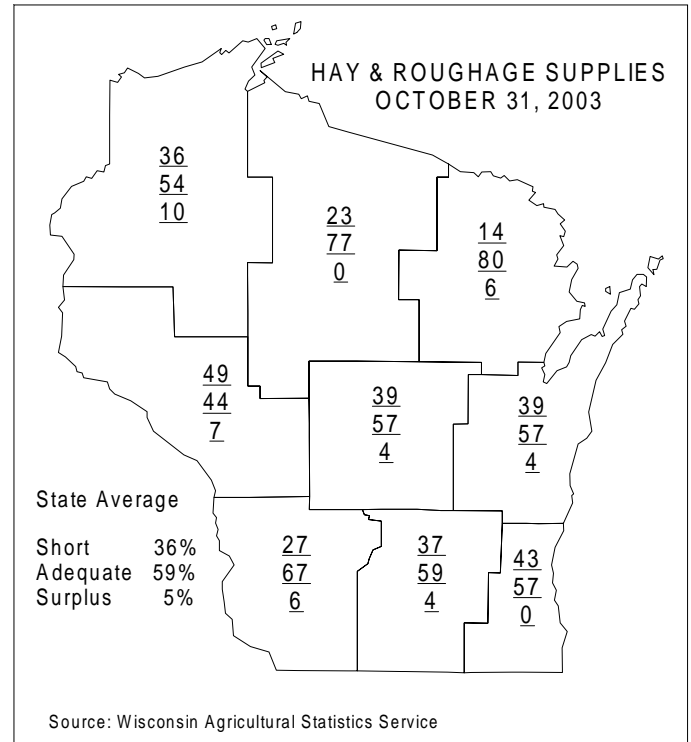
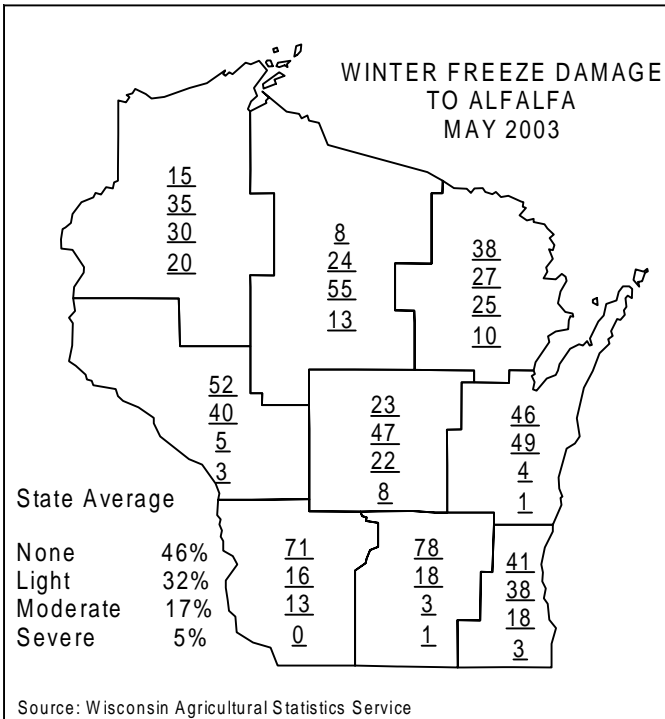
July. Weeds were reported to be a problem in some fields. Oat harvest ran behind schedule due to weeds and reports of slow dry-down of grain. By August 24, oats harvested reached 90 percent, compared to 93 percent for the 5-year average. Yields and quality were said to be above average in most areas.

WINTER WHEAT

Early spring brought discussions of possible winterkill damage to the winter wheat crop. The lack of snow cover and deep frost had many producers looking closely at their wheat crop as it began to green up. By late April, winter freeze damage to wheat was rated at 63 percent none, 26 percent light, 7 percent moderate, and 4 percent severe. In early June, the crop was looking very good, but weeds were beginning to be reported in some light stands. Southern Wisconsin wheat began to head out in mid-June. Crop condition was reported at 1 percent very poor, 3 percent poor, 26 percent fair, 56 percent good, and 14 percent excellent. The cool spring weather delayed the start of harvest until late July. Winter wheat harvested by July 27 was at 16 percent, compared to the 5-year average of 62 percent. Very good yields were reported on early-harvested wheat in southern Wisconsin. By the end of August, winter wheat was 96 percent harvested, compared to the 5-year average of 100 percent. Yields were good to very good for the season.

HAY

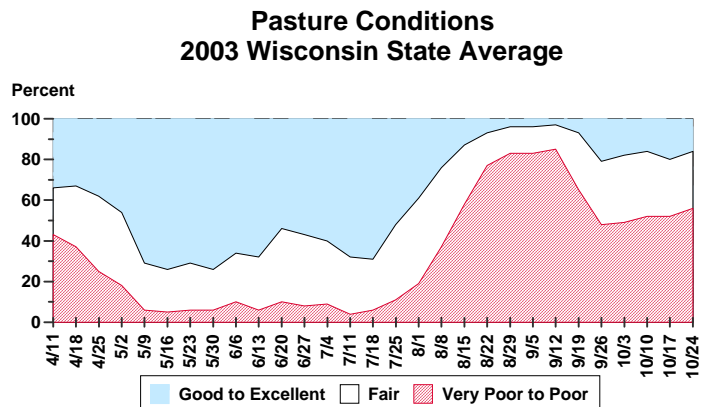
April is when alfalfa fields in Wisconsin come out of dormancy, and there were eager eyes on the crop this season because of fears that winterkill could have severely affected the crop. Over the winter, snow cover was light, and frost levels reached near record levels in some areas of the state. The crop greened-up early, but producers anxiously watched for signs of significant damage as hay began to grow. Older stands in the north were showing damage, and some were reseeded or plowed under to make way for other crops. In early May, winter freeze damage to alfalfa was rated at 46 percent none, 32 percent light, 17 percent moderate, and 5 percent severe. Mid-May brought more reports of damage to northern fields. The end of the month had producers in the north deciding whether to take one crop off older damaged stands and plant another crop or to plow the fields under early. Alfalfa stands in the south were growing well and were near first cutting stage. By the middle of June, the first crop harvest was in full swing. Quality was reported to be good, but quantity was lighter than normal across the state. Some farmers that waited for more growth found that they lost quality in exchange for the yield gain. Late June saw ample precipitation in many parts of the state, and second crop looked to be in good shape for growth. In the southern two-thirds of the state, farmers began to harvest second crop in late June. Second crop brought reports of problem populations of leafhoppers. Fields that were not sprayed showed significant damage. The dry weather in late July helped harvest conditions for hay, but quantity again suffered. Supplies of hay began to look short. Second crop harvest ended in early August. The weather in August remained hot and dry for the entire month. Regrowth of third crop was hampered by these conditions on top of already dry soils. Pastures were going dormant, and livestock needed supplemental feed, which reduced the short supplies. Significant rainfall did not arrive until mid-September. Third cutting hay was 88 percent complete, compared to the 5-year average of 89 percent. The lack of rain made for good quality alfalfa, but yields remained



low. Many areas would not get a fourth crop, and third crop was light. Rains in late September helped to restore soil moisture levels. The first week of October saw a hard killing frost, statewide. There was some harvest activity after the frost, but many did not want to damage the crop for the next season. Overall, forage supplies were light. Hay and roughage supplies for October 31 were rated 36 percent short, 59 percent adequate, and 5 percent surplus.

PASTURES

Pastures started to green up in April. The cool spring slowed growth, and by the end of April conditions were rated at 46 percent good to excellent. Continued cool weather and above average rainfall across the state caused pasture conditions to rise to 74 percent good to excellent by the end of May. June saw slightly below normal temperature and rainfall and pasture conditions dropped slightly. The weather turned warmer during July, causing some stress to pastures. August had temperatures about 4 degrees above normal and less than half the normal rain, and by late August, pastures were rated 83 percent poor to very



poor. The rains returned in mid-September, and conditions improved somewhat. Some pastures were beyond the point of being able to bounce back this year. Pasture conditions remained fairly steady during October and were rated 54 percent poor to very poor at the end of the month.

VEGETABLES

Potato, pea, and sweet corn planting began in late April in central and southern areas of the state. Potato planting got underway by mid-May in northern Wisconsin. At the end of May, peas, sweet corn, and potatoes looked good. In late June, early pea harvest began and potatoes started blooming in Portage County. In early July, the potato condition was very good, and there were many reports of no disease problems. Early sweet corn was starting to show tassels, and later in July, fresh sweet corn was being sold at farmers' markets. Snap bean and pea harvests were going well with good yields. Early potato harvest began at the end of July. Non-irrigated vegetables showed stress from lack of moisture in August, while irrigated crops continued to progress well. Processing sweet corn harvest was in full swing by mid-August. The potato harvest finished in October with record yields.

FRUIT

Apple and cherry trees had a heavy bloom and fruit set in May and June. There were a few reports of frost damage to apple trees in scattered areas. The apple crop looked very good through most of July, but dry weather in August caused some early dropping of apples and small size. Cherries had less disease than normal due to the dry conditions. Since the northern part of Door County was drier than central and southern areas, cherries had reduced fruit size there. The strawberry season was good, but lagged one to two weeks behind schedule. Quality and quantity of strawberries was excellent in most areas of the state. Cranberry marshes had little damage over the 2002-2003 winter season. Cranberries were blooming in late June, and crop prospects looked favorable. Dry weather caused growers to carefully manage water for frost protection and harvest. Cranberry fruit size and set were generally good, and many producers had above average yields.

MAPLE SYRUP

Maple syrup season began in mid-March with too cold weather, followed by a longer bout with too warm weather. Trees began to bud in the mid part of April, due to the warm temperatures. The season was slightly shorter than normal with several runs of less than five days each. Reporters noted that the sugar content was high, and the sap was very sweet and of good quality.