



Wisconsin Crop Weather

Compiled by the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service

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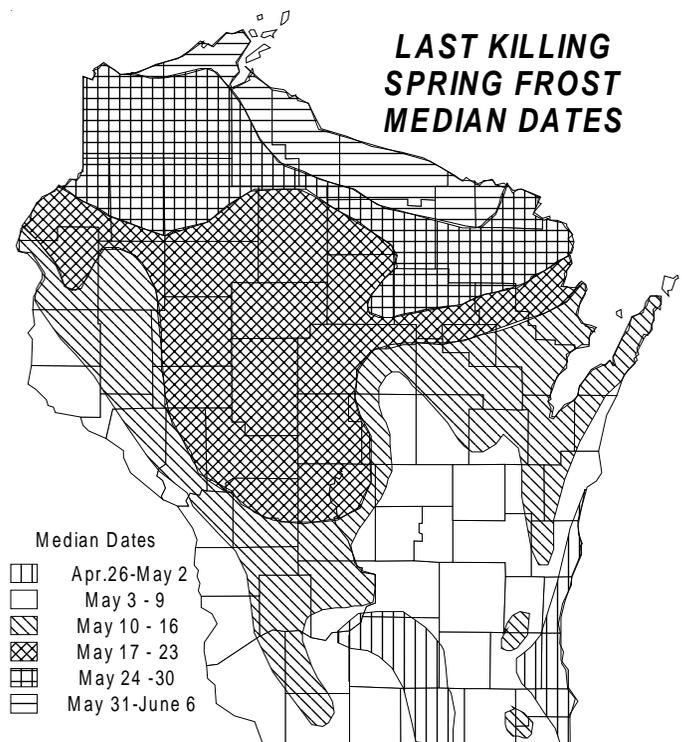
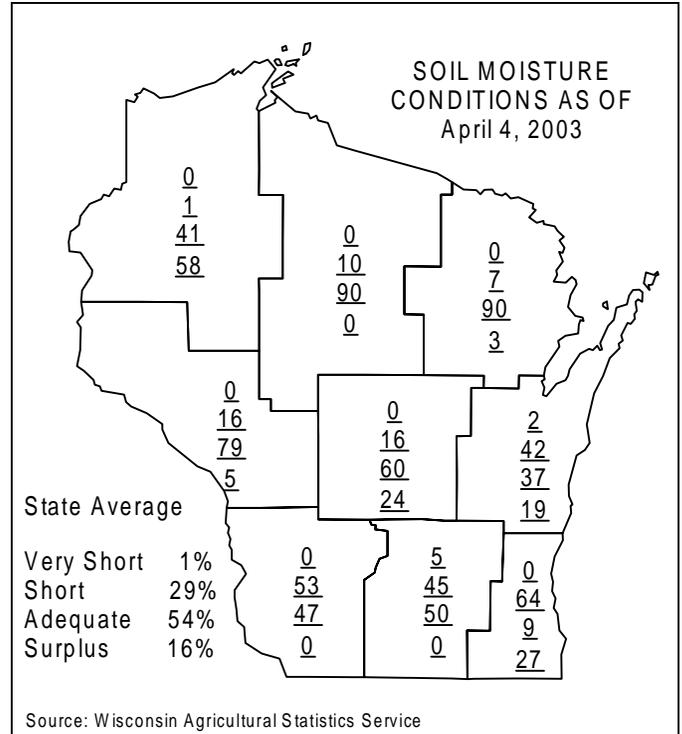
Winter Weather Hangs On

The Wisconsin growing season for 2003 is off to a slow start. Temperatures last week were 4 to 7 degrees below normal. There were wide variations in temperature for the week with readings ranging from 17 degrees to 74 degrees. Late in the week the weather turned wintery and temperatures dropped. There was precipitation in the form of rain, sleet and snow. For the week ending April 6, there was an average of 1.1 days suitable for fieldwork across the state. Soil moisture conditions were reported 1% very short, 29% short, 54% adequate, and 16% surplus. The short and very short moisture reports were mostly in southern Wisconsin.

Many parts of the state continue to have snow on the ground. Northern regions of the state report frost depths up to seven feet. The surface soil has thawed, but frost levels remain in the subsurface soil. Currently, the main agriculture activity for the north involves maple sap. Warm weather in mid-March caused difficulties in sap flow and yield. The maple syrup season is continuing in many parts of the state. Southern Wisconsin has lost most of the frost in the ground but soft, wet soils cause most fieldwork to be at a standstill.

Field activities have begun on a small scale in Central and Southern Wisconsin. Activities include manure spreading and fertilizer application on lighter soils, when local conditions allow. There were some planters drilling oats in a few places. Cold temperatures have kept soil temperatures low. Warmer temperatures would be a welcome relief.

Due to the lack of snowcover for most of the winter and deep frost depths, there are many concerns over winterkill for both winter wheat and alfalfa. Early reports have alfalfa beginning to break dormancy and farmers appeared optimistic about the current condition of the crop. Winter wheat is beginning to green up across southern Wisconsin and does not appear to have been damaged by the frost depths. Most reporters agree that it is still too early to fully assess the extent of the winterkill damage for both crops.



Quotes from Farm Reporters and County Ag Agents

BARRON-A.B.: Alfalfa has not greened up yet. Most winter wheat has not emerged ground except for the very earliest plantings of last fall. Frost continues to be at record depths, and is only thawed out in the top 10 inches or less. Maple season very uncertain at this point.

POLK-R.T.: Still too early to tell the condition of our alfalfa stands. While soils seemed to be thawing a couple of weeks ago, recent cooler temperatures, snow, and ice have frozen the upper portion of the soil profile.

RUSK-G.P.: A short winter that at least allowed manure spreading but closed the end of last week with six plus inches of heavy wet snow. Very muddy now. Frost depths reported to seven plus feet this year. It will be a while before frost is completely out. Poor sap run so far.

LINCOLN-R.S.: Snow is still here. No work has started as yet.

ONEIDA-P.L.: Frost still in the ground and very deep. Ice may cause problems with alfalfa in addition to the frost heave. Maple syrup looks like another problem year. The frost and the weather are not co-operating for a good sap run. Field work could be three weeks away; this would put us two weeks behind normal.

MARINETTE-S.R.: Combination of frost in the ground and snow makes fieldwork difficult yet.

SHAWANO-B.R.: Both winter wheat and alfalfa are starting to green up contrary to many predictions from the very cold soil temperatures this past winter. Still some frost in the ground.

BUFFALO-R.S.: The only thing that is green is winter rye. There is no activity of grass or alfalfa yet or fieldwork activity. Soil moisture is low where frost is out. No grass or alfalfa is green yet. This is another late spring, weather wise.

TREMPEALEAU-D.D.: There are two farmers with oats in, so there are likely a few more. Sandy soils firmed up quite quickly. Daily manure spreading is once again possible on most farms.

PORTAGE-J.W.: Only activity this week was some fertilizer spreading and manure hauling. Winter wheat looks good. Too early to tell hay conditions. Maple syrup tapping still going on.

WAUPACA-D.H.: Soils still too wet for any fieldwork. A struggle to haul manure except on light soils. Frost very deep from winter. Top soil is frost free now. Very little maple sap this year due to warm mid-March conditions.

BROWN-K.J.: No signs of winterkill yet on alfalfa or wheat.

DOOR-M.F.: Winter wheat looked good after the first spring thaw. Alfalfa roots dug two weeks ago were firm and healthy.

SHEBOYGAN-T.B.: Surprisingly, all winter wheat and alfalfa is looking good. One large grower was plowing fields, but very little on field movement. There is still frost in the ground. Maple syrup has been non-existent. No sap flowing.

GRANT-D.W.: The alfalfa appears to have come through the winter in good shape. Saw a few farmers sowing oats on Wednesday.

IOWA-S.M.: Winter wheat looks good. Alfalfa is just starting to green up. Pasture and wheat fertilizer were applied early in the week.

DANE-D.R.: It is really too early to tell for sure what injury has occurred. All indications are that the frost is out of the ground. The surface soil is too wet, but the soil is dry down to 8-10 inches. We are still short of moisture. We need some good rain.

GREEN-M.M.: Alfalfa and winter wheat both look to have come through the winter much better than expected. Most of the alfalfa has broken dormancy as a result of some very warm days and could still be damaged by freezing nighttime temperatures.

ROCK-S.H.: Wheat looks fine; but vigor may support weed growth. Top dressing wheat has just begun. Some ammonia may be going on later in the week. Seeding was put on hold because of rain.

RACINE-L.F.: Have noticed just a few tractors here and there starting to scratch the earth. Nice gentle rains needed. Winter wheat is starting to green up, and it does not look too bad.

WASHINGTON-K.K.: Fields are wet and frost is out. Wheat was all brown over winter because of lack of snow cover, it is starting to green up. No tillage is going on.

WAUKESHA-D.W.: Ground is very dry. Frost is about gone. Fieldwork is just getting started.



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Wisconsin Weekly Weather, Selected Cities, Ending as of 7:00 a.m. on April 6, 2003

City	Temperature						Growing degree days (modified base 50) 1/		Precipitation			
	Avg. max.	Avg. min.	High max.	Low min.	Avg.	Avg dep. from normal*	Mar. 1 to Apr. 5	Mar. 1 to Apr. 5 normal *	Last week	Since Mar. 1	Mar. 1 dep. from normal*	Year to date
Eau Claire	44	25	64	17	34	-4	63	7	0.29	2.31	0.00	3.27
Green Bay	37	25	51	18	31	-7	28	8	0.09	2.41	-0.07	3.56
La Crosse	47	28	74	20	37	-5	68	20	0.11	2.57	0.06	3.66
Madison	46	26	74	17	36	-4	61	22	0.39	2.09	-0.69	2.94
Milwaukee	43	29	66	22	36	-4	54	n.a.	0.70	2.29	-0.89	3.08

1/Formula used: GDD = (daily maximum (86°) + daily minimum (50°))/2-50°; where 86° is used if the maximum exceeds 86° and 50° is used if the minimum falls below 50°. *Normal based on 1961-90 data. Source: NCEP/NOAA Climate Prediction Center <<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov>>. N.a. = not available. T = trace.