

Issue NE-CW1302, released April 1, 2002, by the Nebraska Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA. For more information contact us at: 100 Centennial Mall North, Suite 298, Lincoln, NE 68508, 402-437-5541, e-mail at [nass-ne@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass-ne@nass.usda.gov), Internet at <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>.

**GENERAL:** For the month of March 2002, producer activities included beginning spring fieldwork, applying anhydrous ammonia, and monitoring spring calving, according to the USDA's Nebraska Agricultural Statistics Service. Except for the last few days of March, temperatures were below normals for the month. With minimal moisture received during the month, cattle and calves fared well but wheat condition deteriorated from a month ago.

This release is based on reports and data from county extension educators, FSA county directors, NOAA, and the High Plains Climate Center.

**WEATHER:** Weekly temperatures averaged below normals during March. Statewide, moisture was well below normal except for the northern Panhandle.

**CROPS:** **Wheat** condition declined again this past month and rated 2 percent very poor, 13 poor, 53 fair, 31 good, and 1 excellent, which was below last year's condition at this time. Moisture for the crop is needed as the crop comes out of dormancy. **Oat** planting was well underway in the southern two-thirds of the State with 15 percent seeded to date. **Hay** and forage supplies were mostly adequate to surplus statewide. The mild winter has allowed producers to limit the feeding of hay.

**LIVESTOCK:** **Cattle and calves** condition rated 1 percent poor, 16 fair, 63 good, and 20 excellent. Supplemental feeding requirements were once again below normal as cattle were able to graze pastures and utilize stalk fields through most of the month. Calving across the State progressed to 64 percent calved to date with most producers reporting calf losses at average to below average.

**The following are comments from Nebraska's County Extension Educators and FSA County Executive Directors:**

*NORTHWEST*

CHEYENNE: Wheat just beginning to green up. Some field work started.

DAWES: We have had a lot of snow in March which has helped the dry conditions, but we will need much more moisture.

SCOTTSBLUFF: Recent moisture very beneficial. Lack of snow cover on wheat may cause some losses--too early to tell.

*NORTH CENTRAL*

HOLT: This area needs a rain before planting. Rains are needed to stimulate the pastures.

*NORTHEAST*

BOONE: We need some moisture for soil profiles to be adequate for this spring and summer.

CEDAR: Cows look good with a mild winter. Plenty of hay and grain in area.

CUMING: Favorable weather for calving. Fields are becoming dry enough to allow application of fertilizer.

THURSTON: Fertilization of pastures started this week. Producers are preparing to plant in 3-5 weeks.

*CENTRAL*

DAWSON: We are still extremely dry and could use a two inch rain prior to planting. With the open winter there is an abundance of forage.

*EAST CENTRAL*

CASS: Calving in full swing, hay supplies OK, need moisture for subsoil.

COLFAX: Just starting field work with stalk shredding, discing, and anhydrous application.

NANCE: Producers are starting to apply fertilizer on their fields. Calving is in full swing and favorable reports are being heard. Need more moisture to get the pastures going so they will be ready in May.

YORK: Cattle came through the winter in good condition. Stock fields were open almost all winter for grazing. Very little hay fed until calving time.

*SOUTHWEST*

FRONTIER: Field work in earnest started last week with cutting of stalks and discing.

LINCOLN: Conditions are getting very dry in this area. Producers are becoming very concerned about the moisture situation as we get closer to spring crop activities.

*SOUTH CENTRAL*

FURNAS: The wheat started to break dormancy during the last couple of weeks and is in need of moisture. The warm, dry, windy weather causes the fire danger to be extreme. Pastures are not starting because of the dry weather and cool temperatures.

WEBSTER: Some field work is started - stocks being cut, fertilizer being applied, some alfalfa being seeded. Lack of precipitation is a grave concern and will have a large affect on wheat and spring crop planting.

*SOUTHEAST*

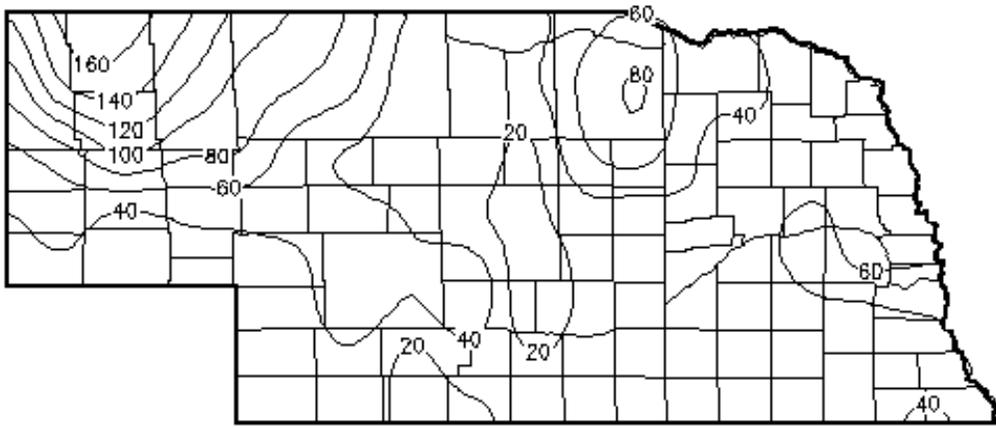
FILLMORE: The wheat is just starting to green up. Next month will be the factor for the wheat.

GAGE: Snow and cold weather has delayed spring fertilization, wheat and pasture spraying etc.

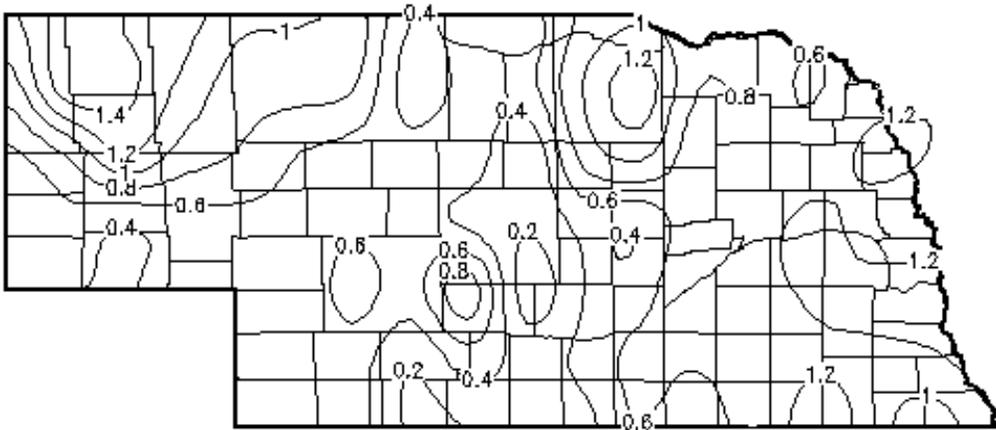
NEMHA/JOHNSON/PAWNEE: Field work has begun with anhydrous ammonia being applied last week before the snow.

OTOE: The dry weather has been great for calving. Moisture is definitely needed for pastures, alfalfa and wheat.

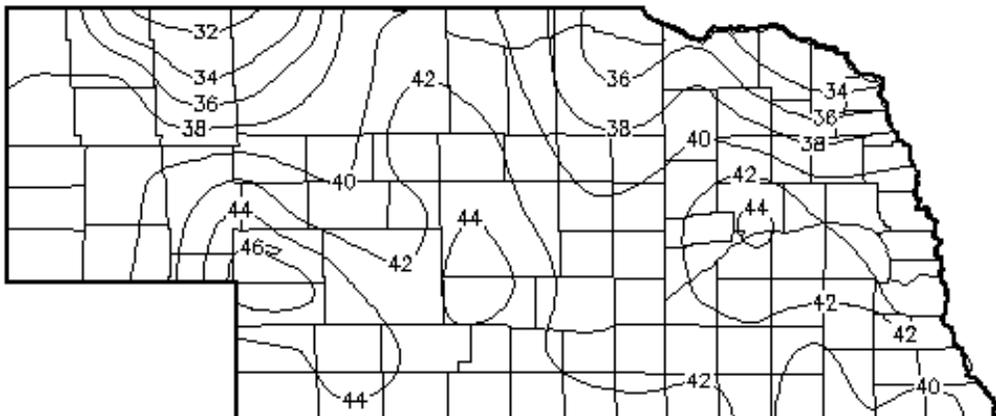
**PRECIPITATION AS PERCENT OF NORMAL FOR MARCH 2002<sup>1</sup>**



**PRECIPITATION IN INCHES FOR MONTH OF MARCH 2002<sup>1</sup>**



**SEVEN DAY AVERAGE TEMPERATURE AT THE FOUR INCH DEPTH UNDER BARE SOIL<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Source: High Plains Regional Climate Centers Automated Weather Data Network (AWDN).