

Issue NE-CW1305, released March 28, 2005, 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/>.

**Agricultural Summary:** For the month of March 2005, producers continued to make preparations for spring planting with some oats being seeded, according to the USDA's Nebraska Agricultural Statistics Service. Moisture received slowed some fieldwork but was well received as the planting season approaches. While the moisture did benefit wheat in southern counties, the major wheat producing areas of the state continued to be rated in severe drought. Producer activities included spring planting preparations and livestock care.

This release is based on reports and data from FSA county directors, county extension educators, NOAA, and the High Plains Climate Center. Current county specific comments plus current and historic PDF files of Weather and Crop reports can be found at: [http://www.nass.usda.gov/ne/cropwthr/cmts\\_cur.htm](http://www.nass.usda.gov/ne/cropwthr/cmts_cur.htm)

**Weather Summary:** March temperatures averaged mostly above normals the first half of the month and below normals the latter half. Portions of south central Nebraska received above normal precipitation during the month with amounts over 2 inches. Snow cover averaging 0.3 inches was reported in the North and Southwest Districts as of the end of March.

**Field Crops Report:** **Wheat** condition rated 1 percent very poor, 5 poor, 35 fair, 47 good, and 12 excellent. This rating is virtually unchanged from a month ago and remains well above last year's condition of 35 percent good or excellent. **Oat** planting was underway across the state with 17 percent seeded to date. **Hay and forage** supplies were mostly adequate statewide.

**Livestock, Pasture, and Range Report:** **Cattle and calves** condition rated 8 percent fair, 61 good, and 31 excellent. Calving was 61 percent complete with calf losses rated average to below average.

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

#### ***NORTHWEST***

**BOX BUTTE:** Preparations going well for sugar beets, brown mustard, and canola planting. It has snowed and been wet this week or some would have been planted. The wheat overall looks good but it needed this moisture -- especially early wheat plantings.

**DAWES:** We received some moisture in the last week but we will require more. Calving is going well. Hay supplies are holding.

#### ***NORTH CENTRAL***

**HOLT/BOYD:** Moisture remains our largest concern. Producers are starting to shred stalks and disc. Livestock continue to graze many of the stalk fields. A lot of cow/calf producers are seeding oats to try to come up with some early pasture. If this plan is to work, we will need moisture.

#### ***NORTHEAST***

**CEDAR:** Weather continues to be mild. Good weather for calving.

**DAKOTA:** We are currently getting some welcome moisture in the form of rain. Producers were discing stalks earlier in the week and readying equipment for spring work. This has been a good winter for livestock, mild temperatures and very little snow.

**DIXON:** Producers continue to prepare for spring planting with a dry, unseasonably mild March. Good moisture last week was a welcome change with up to .5 inch of rain followed by 2 to 3 inches of snow. Conditions for livestock continue to be excellent for this time of year.

**THURSTON:** Very little precipitation in the last 6 weeks has allowed excellent livestock conditions through the winter. However, fields are dry and will need much rain to assure adequate topsoil and subsoil supplies. Chemicals, especially fertilizer are much higher in cost this year. So far, supplies are adequate. Fertilizing and land preparation for planting are the primary fieldwork activities.

#### ***EAST***

**HAMILTON:** Good, easy rain this week. Still quite a bit of fertilizing to be done.

**LANCASTER:** We have received light rain the last few days which has stopped field work. Previous to the rain, anhydrous ammonia application was going on across the whole county.

**NANCE:** Area received rains in excess of 1 inch last week--much needed!

**SARPY/DOUGLAS:** Some Anhydrous Ammonia is being applied but very little tillage.

#### ***SOUTHWEST***

**CHASE:** Received some moisture this week that did help the wheat but we need more. Field work was progressing until the rain.

**FRONTIER:** This is the first measurable amount of moisture that this area has received this year. All field work has come to a stop with the moisture and it will be a few more days before the farmers can get back in the fields again. The winter wheat and the pastures really needed this moisture to get a good start to the 2005 growing season.

**HAYES/HITCHCOCK:** Rain gave wheat much needed moisture. Some field work and shredding of stalks was done last month as temperatures were above normal.

**RED WILLOW:** Calving is progressing well and favorable weather conditions have helped to reduce calf losses. Many producers are preparing for spring planting. Several producers were in the fields last week. Wheat was starting to show signs of stress until moisture was received this week. The moisture received will help provide good planting conditions this spring.

#### ***SOUTH CENTRAL***

**FURNAS:** Most of the county received 2 to 3 inches of rain this week. The wheat is in very good condition.

**HARLAN:** This week we had 2.50+ inches of rain over the county. The wheat looks very good due to the moisture we received this week.

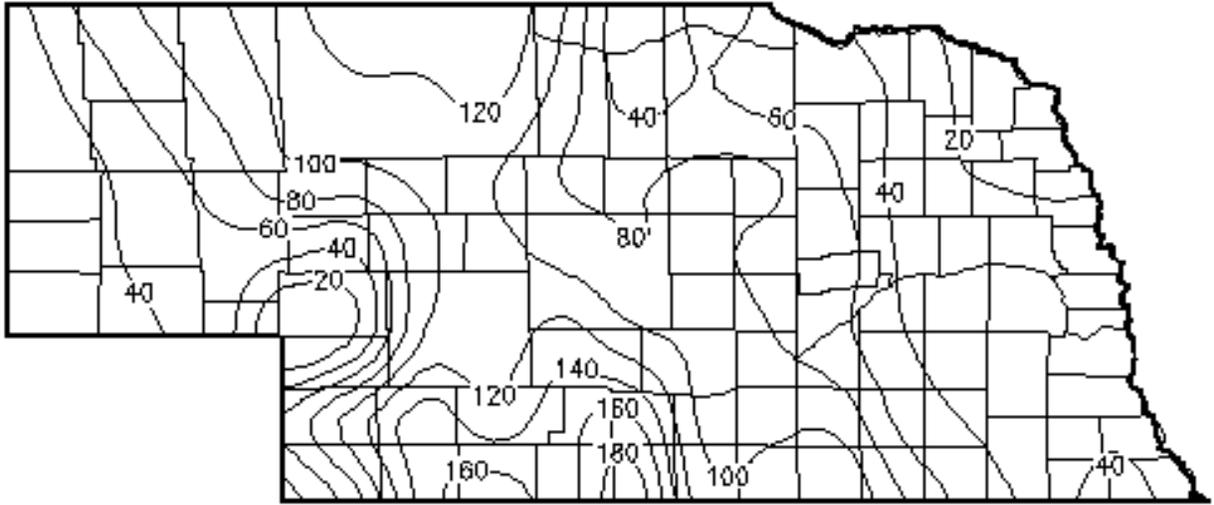
**WEBSTER:** There has been quite a lot of activity in the fields the last couple of weeks. Fertilizing and cutting stalks. Calving has progressed well and no big calf losses have been reported.

#### ***SOUTHEAST***

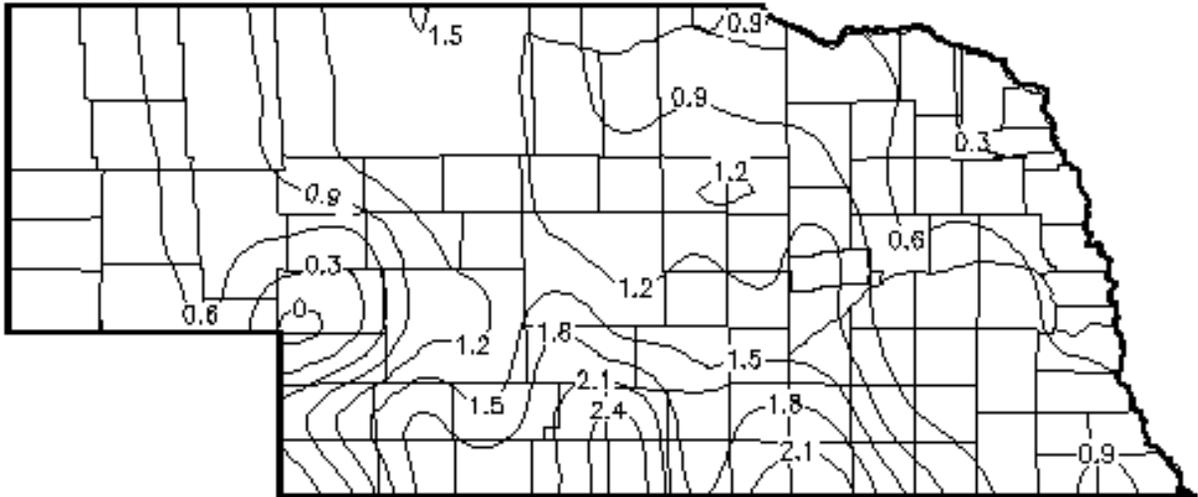
**JEFFERSON:** Recent rains have annual moisture near normal. Many producers have fertilizer applied and are ready to plant.

**JOHNSON:** Overall, we have had good calving weather this past month. Every little bit of precipitation is also appreciated, but we are still dry. We have seen very few farmers in the fields, some fertilizing. Fuel prices are a very big concern.

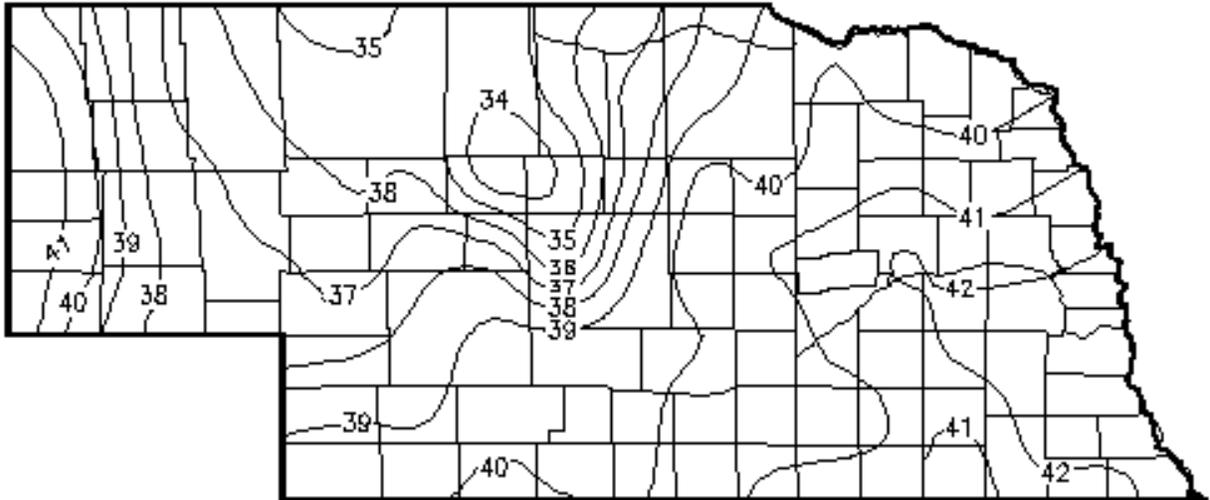
**PRECIPITATION AS PERCENT OF NORMAL FOR MARCH 2005<sup>1</sup>**



**PRECIPITATION IN INCHES FOR MONTH OF MARCH 2005<sup>1</sup>**



**SEVEN DAY AVERAGE TEMPERATURE AT THE FOUR INCH DEPTH UNDER BARE SOIL  
MARCH 21, 2005 - MARCH 27, 2005<sup>1</sup>**



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