

2007 CROP WEATHER SUMMARY

JANUARY - APRIL: The first half of January was defined by above average temperatures and spotty rain showers, while colder wintry conditions dominated the second half. Total rainfall for the month remained below five inches in all areas. Total snowfall ranged from less than one inch in the south to near 20 inches in the north. Despite the frequent snowfall, snow cover remained significantly less than normal in most areas. Heavy winds and ice storms plagued most areas throughout the month, causing damage to trees and power lines. Colder and drier than normal conditions prevailed throughout the first half of February. Warmer temperatures arrived by February 21 and stayed for the remainder of the month. Only two major storm systems passed through the region during February. Total rainfall ranged from 0.03 to 2.0 inches and snowfall ranged from 0 to 32 inches. March temperatures were average during the first part of the month. A blast of Arctic air arrived on March 6 and remained through mid-month, keeping overnight lows in the single digits in southern states, and well below zero in northern states. With the advent of spring, temperatures rose back to the freezing mark on March 18 and continued to rise to between 48 and 61 degrees across New England. Total rainfall ranged between 2.3 and 5.7 inches and snowfall between 0 and 26 inches. April began with below average temperatures and a snowstorm bringing 6 to 12 inches of snow. A second storm in mid-April brought another 6 to 10 inches of snow to some areas and a wintry mix of sleet and rain to other areas. Flooding was an issue throughout much of New England due to melting snow and rainfall. Above average temperatures and sunnier skies arrived near the end of the month allowing farmers to finally begin plowing fields and planting field and sweet corn, early vegetables, and potatoes. However, heavy rains returned at the end of the month, bringing field work to a halt. Farmers kept busy tending livestock, calving and lambing, tapping maple trees, working in greenhouses, and preparing for the spring planting season.

MAY: Wet weather during April and high soil moisture levels in early May delayed the start of field work for many farmers. Sunny skies and warmer temperatures during the second week of May pushed along the development of fruit blossoms and provided ideal conditions for pollination. By mid-month, moderate to heavy rains slowed field work once again, and nighttime low temperatures brought the threat of a late spring frost. Much warmer weather arrived on May 24 and remained throughout the Memorial Day weekend, with daytime high temperatures ranging in the 80s and 90s, breaking record highs at some locations. Vegetable producers planted early season vegetables throughout the month, while also harvesting asparagus, rhubarb, spinach, and lettuce. Strawberries and highbush blueberries ranged from early to full bloom by the end of the month. Wild blueberry producers in Maine spent the month burning and mowing fields, and spraying fungicides for mummyberry. Although potato and small grain producers in Maine began planting late this year due to saturated soils, dry weather during the last week of the month allowed most growers to catch up with historic planting rates. Meanwhile, potato growers in Massachusetts and Rhode Island completed planting by month's end. Seeding of field corn advanced past the halfway mark by the end of May. Shade tobacco transplanting was close to completion in Connecticut and was near the halfway mark in Massachusetts at the end of the month. Broadleaf tobacco transplanting was active during the month. The first cut of

grass for dry hay and haylage began in southern New England near the end of the month.

JUNE: The first week of June was very wet with below average temperatures, prompting frost warnings in some areas. Cool temperatures continued during the second week, hindering crop development. The second and third weeks of June were very dry and growers in northern areas reported crops showing signs of stress. By month's end, most areas remained very dry despite scattered shower activity, forcing farmers to irrigate where possible. The scattered thunderstorms during the first and last weeks of June brought hail damage to orchards, vegetables, and hay fields. Producers harvested early season vegetables throughout the month and transplanted tomatoes and peppers. Strawberry harvest was active and berries were reported in good to excellent condition. Highbush and wild blueberries reached petal fall mid-month; highbush blueberries were starting to ripen by the end of the month. Maine, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island potato crops were rated in good to excellent condition and growers were busy hilling and scouting for pests. Barley and oats in Maine were all emerged by the third week of June and both were in excellent condition. Field and sweet corn planting was near completion by the end of the month and most of the crop had emerged. Shade tobacco transplanting was complete the first week of June and broadleaf transplanting was close to complete by the end of the month. The first cut of dry hay and haylage was active during the month and the second cut had commenced.

JULY: Early July temperatures were cool with daytime highs in the 70s. Thunderstorms brought heavy rain and hail to many areas, causing damage to tree fruit and vegetable crops. Despite the rain, most growers reported that fields remained fairly dry. Warmer temperatures and rain showers arrived mid-month. Rainfall amounts were extremely variable, and crop conditions ranged from flood damage in Vermont to drought stress in Connecticut. Heavy rains during the third week improved pasture conditions at very dry areas, but some tree fruit and vegetable growers reported crops showing signs of over-saturation. Warm, dry weather returned the last week of July and provided ideal conditions for drying hay and working in the fields. Heavy rain storms dominated the last weekend of the month. Growers in most areas reported the rainfall during the month was not sufficient to saturate dry fields and all crops would benefit from more rain. Producers continued to harvest early season vegetables throughout the month. Sweet corn harvest began the first week of July. Strawberry harvest was complete by July 22 and producers reported an abundant, high quality crop. Highbush blueberry harvest began the first week of July. Both highbush and wild blueberries were reported in good condition. Harvesting of potatoes in Rhode Island was underway the last week of July, about a week ahead of schedule. The potato crops in Maine, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island were all rated in good to excellent condition throughout July, enjoying rapid growth in response to adequate heat and moisture. Barley and oats in Maine were reported in good condition at month's end. Field corn was rated in good to excellent condition, but sustained hail damage from storms during the month at some locations. Shade tobacco harvest began the third week of July. Broadleaf tobacco harvest was just getting underway, with five percent hung in the barns at month's end. Both tobacco

crops were rated in good condition. The first cut for dry hay was nearly complete by the end of the month, the second cut had reached the halfway mark, and the third cut had just begun.

AUGUST: Oppressive heat and thunderstorms at the start of August gave way to cooler and drier conditions as the month progressed. Although rainfall was not as substantial as earlier in the season, sporadic shower and thunderstorm activity throughout the month slowed field work and frustrated hay producers. In southern Maine, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, potato harvest was in full swing by the end of the month, with growers reporting the crop in good to excellent condition. Small grain harvest in Maine began two weeks ahead of schedule. Pumpkin and squash growers reported problems with mildew and fungus as a result of the rainy summer weather. Pears and early season apples arrived in farm stands by mid-month. Growers in southern states reported damage to fruit from high winds and hail from the month's storms. Peach harvest was in full swing during August. Highbush blueberry and raspberry harvest continued throughout the month, with many producers reporting a good crop. Maine wild blueberry harvest began and ended a week earlier than normal this year. Cool evening temperatures and rainfall at the start of August improved berry size and quality.

SEPTEMBER: Temperatures at the beginning of September varied widely, ranging from the upper 60s to low 90s. Skies were partly cloudy throughout the first part of the month, but much needed rain fell in the northern states by the end of the week. Southern states received very little to no rain, leaving most areas very dry and crops showing signs of drought stress. Cooler temperatures arrived mid-month and several areas across New England were hit with the first frost of the season. Heavy rain fell mid-month. The moisture was beneficial to replenish parched soils and improve pasture conditions, but for many areas, the rain arrived too late to benefit drought-stressed crops. Scattered thundershowers at the end of the month brought much needed moisture to the area, but also caused hail damage in northern states. Lack of adequate rainfall in September hindered field corn development and pasture regrowth. Rainfall at most locations was one to four inches below normal. However, the beautiful fall weather kept farm stands and pick-your-own operations busy throughout the month. Farmers took advantage of the dry weather to harvest crops and complete field work. Field corn harvest shifted into high gear, ending the month ahead of last year and normal. The potato harvests in Maine, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island had outpaced last year and normal at month's end and condition ratings were all good to excellent. The oat and barley harvests in Maine had neared completion at the end of the month, on target with last year and normal. Dry weather throughout September provided good curing conditions for tobacco crops. Rain at the end of the month offered the first tobacco damp of the season and growers began bundling their crops for sale. The second cut of dry hay was complete by the end of September, slightly ahead of last year and normal. The third cut was 80 percent complete by the end of the month. Sweet corn harvest had drawn to a close by month's end; the crop was reported in good to excellent condition throughout the growing season. Apple and pear harvest was active. The peach harvest was complete the last week of September. The cranberry harvest in Massachusetts was underway mid-

month and in full swing by the end of September. Overall cranberry condition ranged from good to excellent at month's end, with cool nighttime temperatures enhancing berry color.

OCTOBER: October began with unseasonably warm conditions with much of New England experiencing record breaking high temperatures in the mid-80s. The warm weather was beneficial to field corn growth and putting up dry hay, but most areas were in need of rain. Welcomed rain fell the second week throughout the region. The rain was too late to benefit crop growth, but did help to replenish dwindling reservoirs. Mid-month brought the first localized frosts to the north while the south remained frost-free. Heavy rain and wind entered the area late October, replenishing topsoil moisture; however, subsoil conditions remained dry throughout the region. Temperatures in the mid 20s brought the first killing frosts to southern states on October 29, bringing much of the growing season to a close. Rainfall totals for October were 1 to 3 inches above average throughout New England. The continued beautiful fall weather and lack of killing frosts in many areas kept farm stands and pick-your-own operations busy throughout the month. Field corn was all picked by month's end, ahead of last year and normal due to prolonged dry conditions in September and early October. Potatoes in Maine and Rhode Island were all dug by mid-month, ahead of last year and normal. The oat and barley harvests in Maine were complete at the beginning of the month, on target with last year and ahead of normal. Second cut of dry hay was complete by mid-October, slightly ahead of last year and normal. Third cut was complete by the end of the month. The pear harvest was complete mid-October, while the apple harvest was winding down. Massachusetts cranberry harvest was active during the month. Berry size was average to below average, with overall cranberry condition ranging from good to excellent.

NOVEMBER: November began with above average high and low temperatures which immediately dropped down to average levels by the end of week one. Rain in the first part of the month totaled from 0.7 to 3.0 inches. Temperatures dropped down to below average levels after the rain had passed. Mid-November saw scattered light rains, with some of the northern areas experiencing light snow. High temperatures in Connecticut and Rhode Island at the end of the month nearly set new records. Widespread rain and above average temperatures hit the area the last week of November. Precipitation totals for November ranged from 1 to 5 inches above average throughout New England, except for some areas of Connecticut where there was a deficit of almost an inch. November saw the harvest of all crops come to a close. The apple harvest was complete by mid-November, on target with last year and normal. Massachusetts cranberries were all harvested by month's end, on target with last year and normal.

DECEMBER: New England experienced near-record snowfall in December, ranging from 25 to 60 inches for the month. The beginning of the month saw average high temperatures and average to below-average low temperatures. Higher elevations of Vermont and New Hampshire experienced record breaking low temperatures in the negative teens mid-month. New England was given a break from the snow when unseasonably warm temperatures along with heavy rains and wind arrived on December 23 and 24. Temperatures remained above average throughout the rest of the month.