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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
New Mexico Agricultural Statistics Service

Weekly Ag Update

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INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE

Crop Weather Agricultural Prices Received ERS

Available on internet at: www.nass.usda.gov/nm OR by e-mail: (call 1-800-530-8810 for information)

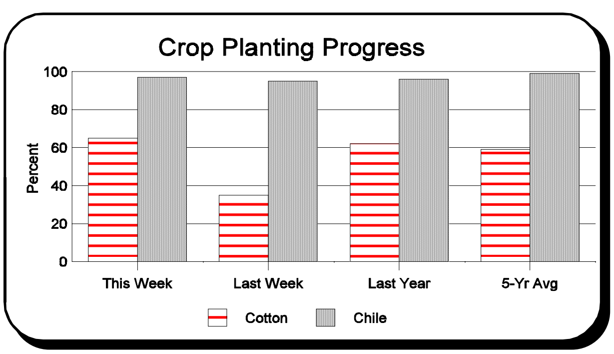
CROP SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK ENDING MAY 5, 2002

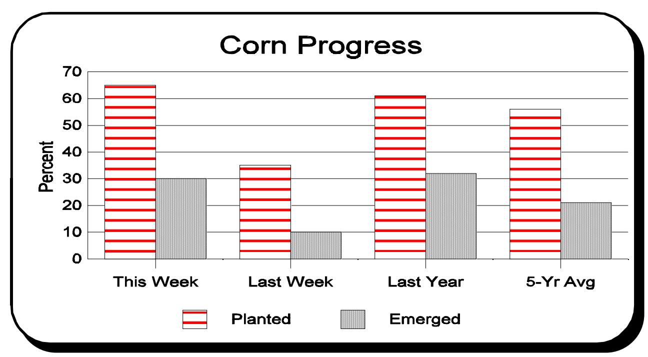
NEW MEXICO: There were 6.9 days suitable for field work. Wind damage was 25% light, 10% moderate and 1% severe, there was no damage to 64% of the crops. Farmers spent the week irrigating fields and tending to crops. There was frost damage in the north, hurting the heavy fruit set on cherries, apricots, peaches and plums. Apples are reported to have only a light fruit set in northern areas. Cotton and corn were 65% planted with 30% of the corn crop emerged. Chile was in fair to excellent condition with all but 3% of the crop planted. Alfalfa was listed in mostly fair to good condition, with the 1st cutting 40% complete and farmers are spraying to control the alfalfa weevil. Wheat was in mostly very poor to fair condition with 63% headed. Lettuce and onions were in fair to excellent condition. Ranchers continued supplemental feeding and watering across that state. Ranch activities included branding and heavy culling to minimize herd size due to lack of feed and the high cost of supplemental feeds. Pasture and range feed conditions were listed as 28% very poor, 55% poor, 15% fair, and 2% good.

CROP PROGRESS PERCENTAGES WITH COMPARISONS

CROP PROGRESS		This Week	Last Week	Last Year	5-Year Average
PLANTED	Cotton	65	35	62	59
	Chile	97	95	96	99
	Corn	65	35	61	56
EMERGED	Corn	30	10	32	21
HEADED	Wheat	63	33	60	41
HARVESTED	Lettuce	30	1/	29	27

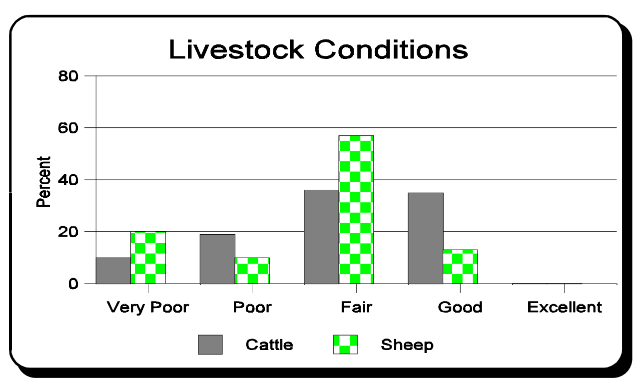
1/ Not Available.





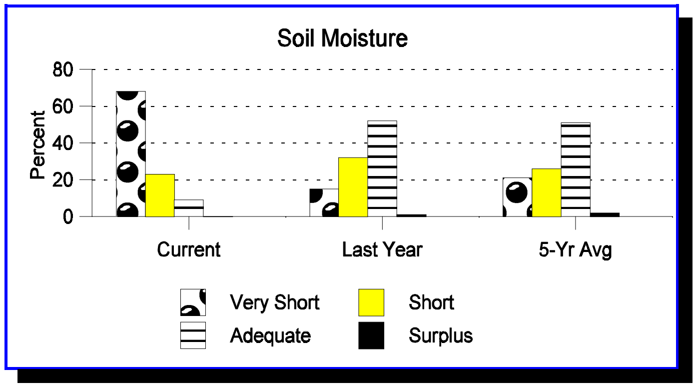
CROP AND LIVESTOCK CONDITION PERCENTAGES

	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Alfalfa	4	8	50	29	9
Apples	40	50	5	5	--
Chile	--	--	25	55	20
Lettuce	--	--	--	39	61
Onions	--	--	15	50	35
Wheat (All)	24	36	26	13	1
Cattle	10	19	36	35	--
Sheep	20	10	57	13	--



SOIL MOISTURE PERCENTAGES

	Very Short	Short	Adequate	Surplus
Northwest	85	15	--	--
Northeast	80	20	--	--
Southwest	69	19	12	--
Southeast	37	38	25	--
State	68	23	9	--
State-Last Year	15	32	52	1
State-5-Yr Avg.	21	26	51	2



WEATHER SUMMARY

New Mexico experienced another dry week with temperatures generally a little above normal. Las Vegas (.03") was the only spot to measure any measurable rainfall. Temperatures reached the 90s on some afternoons at the lower-elevation stations. Extreme for the week ranged from 18° at Chama on the 2nd and 3rd to 98° at Carlsbad on the 29th.

NEW MEXICO WEATHER CONDITIONS APRIL 29-MAY 5, 2002

Station	Temperature Mean	Temperature Maximum	Temperature Minimum	Precipitation 04/29 05/05	Precipitation 05/01 05/02	Precipitation Normal May	Precipitation 01/01 05/05	Precipitation Normal Jan-May
Carlsbad	76.1	98	56	0.00	0.00	1.16	2.54	2.65
Tatum	65.1	89	40	0.00	0.00	2.09	4.50	4.14
Roswell	70.5	96	48	0.00	0.00	1.24	3.53	3.23
Clayton	62.6	88	36	T	0.00	1.99	0.80	4.03
Clovis	65.1	91	37	0.00	0.00	1.87	2.07	4.17
Roy	58.2	76	41	0.00	0.00	1.84	0.42	3.98
Tucumcari	65.4	93	38	0.00	0.00	1.49	1.81	3.49
Chama	44.5	69	18	0.00	0.00	1.11	2.01	7.72
Johnson Ranch	50.8	78	25	0.00	0.00	0.62	0.88	3.09
Capulin	54.1	79	29	0.00	0.00	2.30	1.66	5.16
Las Vegas	56.3	78	35	0.03	0.03	1.68	0.49	3.84
Los Alamos	55.2	74	37	0.00	0.00	1.17	1.00	5.05
Raton	52.8	83	29	0.00	0.00	2.27	0.73	5.17
Santa Fe	55.8	79	27	0.00	0.00	1.22	1.24	4.09
Red River	49.3	69	25	0.00	0.00	1.77	3.07	7.52
Farmington	55.2	81	30	0.00	0.00	0.67	0.51	3.15
Gallup	50.1	76	24	0.00	0.00	0.51	0.99	3.74
Grants	51.9	79	22	0.00	0.00	0.53	1.55	2.48
Silver City	57.1	81	36	0.00	0.00	0.30	0.00	4.20
Quemado	53.5	78	22	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.62	3.45
Albuquerque	64.2	84	42	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.78	2.46
Carrizozo	64.7	86	37	0.00	0.00	0.62	1.93	2.72
Gran Quivera	61.9	82	38	0.00	0.00	0.82	0.65	3.70
Moriarty	58.7	86	31	0.00	0.00	0.97	1.16	3.07
Ruidoso	---	---	---	0.00	0.00	0.87	1.44	5.11
Socorro	64.4	90	36	0.00	0.00	0.52	0.36	1.93
Alamogordo	67.3	90	45	0.00	0.00	0.45	0.00	2.38
Animas	67.3	89	39	0.00	0.00	0.18	1.28	2.04
Deming	65.7	91	36	0.00	0.00	0.19	1.24	1.73
T or C	67.1	89	44	0.00	0.00	0.49	0.50	1.89
Las Cruces	66.4	94	39	0.00	0.00	0.29	1.29	1.55

(T) Trace (-) No Report (*) Corrections

All reports based on preliminary data. Precipitation data corrected monthly from official observation forms.

AGRICULTURAL PRICES RECEIVED

NEW MEXICO: Prices received in New Mexico during April 2002 for All Hay and Alfalfa remained at the same levels as the previous month. All Hay prices were $134.00 per ton and Alfalfa $137.00 per ton. Cow prices dropped by $0.60 to $41.80 per hundredweight compared to $42.40 the previous month and $47.30 the same time last year. In spite of the decrease, they still remained $1.30 above the U.S. average of $40.50 per hundredweight. Prices for steers and heifers declined by $3.10 to $76.10 per hundredweight but were $4.90 above the national average of $71.20. Prices for calves dropped to $96.40 per hundredweight compared to $99.80 in March 2002 and $110.00 in April 2001. The U.S. average price for calves was $102.00 per hundredweight. Milk prices for April were $12.00 per hundredweight, a $0.20 decrease from the previous month and $0.50 below the national average of $12.50.

Prices Received by Farmers: Selected Commodities, March 2002 and April 2001-02

		New Mexico			U.S.[1/]
Commodity	Unit	Apr 2001	Mar 2002[2/]	Apr 2002[1/]	Apr
CROPS		----------Dollars----------			
Grain Sorghum	Cwt	--	--	--	3.11
Cotton, Upland	Lb	--	--	--	.303
Potatoes	Cwt	--	--	--	8.61
Hay, all baled	Ton	126.00	134.00	134.00	99.90
Alfalfa, baled	Ton	128.00	137.00	137.00	106.00
Peanuts	Lb	--	--	--	
Corn	Bu	--	--	--	1.86
Wheat, all	Bu	--	--	--	2.80
LIVESTOCK					
Sheep[3/]	Cwt	---	---	---	34.40
Lambs[3/]	Cwt	---	---	---	66.30
Cows	Cwt	47.30	42.40	41.80	40.50
Steers & Heifers	Cwt	88.20	79.20	76.10	71.20
Calves	Cwt	110.00	99.80	96.40	102.00
Milk	Cwt	14.40	12.20	12.00	12.50

[1/] Mid-month. [2/]Entire month. [3/]March-Entire Month

LIVESTOCK, DAIRY & POULTRY OUTLOOK

USDA, ERS, April 2002

Drought Conditions Increase Cattle Placements
Drought continues to affect the cattle sector, much as it has over the past several years, by forcing more cattle into feedlots. Conditions coming out of the winter, without improved soil moisture conditions or snow pack to fill reservoirs, have raised even greater concern for spring and summer forage-grazing prospects. Beef cow slaughter, while below the large levels of a year earlier, are above 2000 slaughter levels. However, dairy cow slaughter is historically low, and consequently total cow slaughter continues to decline. The April 19 quarterly *Cattle on Feed Report* provides a better view of the number of heifers on feed following the very large number of heavy-weight cattle placements in January and February and likely again in March.

Beef production estimates have been increased for the year due to the larger numbers of cattle forced into feedlots and continued record slaughter weights. Beef production in the second and third quarters is now expected to exceed year-earlier levels. Fourth-quarter production is expected to average below a year earlier, but continued poor grazing prospects and even larger placements could push production up. Although dressed weights are declining, they remain sharply above the weather-reduced weights of the first half of 2001.

Fed Cattle prices have remained relatively firm so far this year, although well below the weather-induced levels of a year earlier. However, increasing weights and slaughter numbers in late April- and May are likely to pressure prices down unless prices of competing meats begin to strengthen from recent low levels. Stocker-feeder cattle prices remain under pressure from poor forage conditions,forcing large supplies onto the market. Favorable feeding costs continue to support feeder cattle prices, although at lower levels than a year earlier. Without favorable grain prices and larger placements into feedlots, given the poor forage prospects, stocker-feeder cattle prices would be even lower. Utility cow prices remain strong as total cow slaughter and dairy cow slaughter continue to decline.

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Dairy Demand Soft

Early 2002 dairy demand was sluggish. Complete data for February commercial use will not be available until late April, when full import data are released. However, it appears as though commercial use of milkfat during January-February slipped fractionally from a year earlier, while commercial disappearance of skim solids fell about 1 percent. The modest recovery in autumn commercial use was not sustained this winter. Winter buying for use later in the year probably was much more muted this year. In early 2001, milk production was down sharply and still weakening, a sharp contrast to this year's burgeoning recovery. Confidence in demand also is much different than a year ago, when buyers were riding a continuing surge in consumer demand. Even so, final sales to consumers probably were unchanged or a little lower in early 2002.

Cheese sales were about unchanged in January-February. American cheese sales probably fell more than 3 percent, but use of other varieties rose almost 3 percent. The unusual lack of growth in cheese sales might reflect weakness in restaurant use. Commercial disappearance of nonfat dry milk fell more than a third. Powder buyers have been expecting a significant reduction in the support purchase price (accompanied by a corresponding boost in the support purchase price for butter) and minimized their purchases. In addition, weaker international prices may have affected commercial use in several ways. On the other hand, commercial use of butter jumped about 9 percent in January-February. Butter was readily available this year in contrast to a very tight market a year earlier. Fluid milk sales rose fractionally during early 2002, another possible sign of weaker away-from-home eating.

The recession is proving to be quite mild and may already be over. However, the dairy demand adjustments might be greater than would normally be expected on the basis of the observed economic conditions. After a 4-year binge, consumer demand may be settling back more in line with the long-run trend. The price declines needed to clear the expected rise in milk production may be larger than projected earlier. Average farm milk prices are projected to decline about $2 per cwt in 2002.