

OKLAHOMA CROP WEATHER SUMMARY

2003 CROP WEATHER REVIEW

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January: Dry weather statewide during January caused soil moisture levels to decline and restricted growth of wheat pasture in some areas. The wheat condition was still rated mostly good and winter wheat grazed reached 60 percent. Livestock were in mostly good condition due in part to mild temperatures during the month. Hay supplies were above average.

February: Large quantities of snow and below freezing temperatures were received at the end of February. This storm brought much needed moisture to the State. Wheat pasture for grazing was scarce due to the cold and freezing conditions. Heavy supplemental feeding was needed in most areas of the State due to the weather effects on pastures.

March: March started off with warmer than normal temperatures. This allowed producers to begin summer row crop seedbed preparations. Much needed rainfall finally came around mid-March, however, it also brought some hail and spawned a few tornadoes. The warmer temperatures and rain accelerated wheat progress ahead of normal and promoted new growth in pastures across the State. The month ended with some additional rain and high winds. There was also a cold front with freezing temperatures but it did not do any significant damage.

April: Spring winds and some unusually cold temperatures were prevalent the first two weeks of April. The State finally got some rain the last two weeks of the month, but all districts were still behind normal. Wheat conditions were ideal with progress ahead of normal. The wheat crop was in good condition. Row crop planting and hay harvest began during the month.

May: Severe weather brought hail, high winds, and tornados to Oklahoma during May. The rain that fell throughout most of the month, along with the warmer weather, improved crop conditions and helped accelerate row crop development. Wheat harvest was underway by about mid-May but was slowed by some of the storms. Planting and emergence of row crops was running ahead of normal. The warm temperatures that hit the last week of May helped promote pasture growth.

June: Wheat harvest started out ahead of normal last month but was delayed considerably the first half of June because of rain. However, by month's end, it was nearly completed. Row crop conditions were mostly good. Pasture and range conditions improved with the summer rains and were rated mostly fair to excellent throughout June.

July: July was the fourth driest July on record and the Governor requested federal assistance for 62 counties plagued by drought conditions. Highs reached above the century mark several days in July. In the last week of July all districts had an average high temperature of 92 degrees or higher. Lack of moisture, combined with the heat, created a lot of stress on summer row crops. Irrigation was active where water supplies allowed. Row crop conditions were good to fair as were hay conditions.

August: Conditions during most of August continued the same as July, hot and dry. It wasn't until the last week that any measurable rain occurred. Moisture supplies were short to very short throughout the month. Small grain seedbed preparations were dragging slightly behind normal because it was too dry. Corn, sorghum and soybean harvest began. Progress was ahead of normal because the hot conditions advanced maturity. Most row crop conditions, as well as pasture and range conditions, were fair to good.

September: Cooler temperatures and much needed rains were prevalent throughout September. Excellent progress was made during the month for planting fall small grains. At month's end, 91 percent of the wheat ground had been prepared for seeding and over half of the wheat was planted. Corn, sorghum and soybean harvest continued during September. Cotton and peanut harvest was just getting underway by month's end. Alfalfa and other hay cutting increased during the month.

October: Temperatures were unseasonably warm in October. The first part of the month was marked with many rain showers but, by the end of the month, drier conditions returned. Planting was nearing completion for small grains. Small grain emergence progressed rapidly with the rain and warmer temperatures. Small grains were in mostly good condition. Corn harvest was nearly complete and over half of the sorghum and soybeans were harvested. Peanut and cotton harvest was also making excellent progress. Hay, pasture and range, and livestock conditions were all in mostly fair to good condition.

November: Rainfall continued throughout much of November. This slowed down row crop harvest but most of the corn, sorghum, soybeans and peanuts were harvested by month's end. Two thirds of the cotton was harvested. Wheat was in mostly good to fair condition going into winter. Some producers began putting cattle on early planted wheat by mid-November. Pasture conditions made improvement due to the warm weather and rainy conditions, but there were still areas where pastures were in poor condition.

December: A light snow brought much needed moisture throughout the State. However, it was not enough as all districts with the exception of the Northeast were below average rainfall. Wheat was reported in good to fair condition with the major wheat producing areas still behind normal for moisture. The drier wheat pastures combined with higher cattle prices reduced the amount of wheat being grazed to 35%. Milder temperatures throughout the month helped livestock conditions.

OKLAHOMA ANNUAL PRECIPITATION, 1920-2003
MEAN PRECIPITATION = 34.32

