



Weekly Crop & Weather Roundup

For The Week Ending March 30, 2003

This is the first report in the 2003 series of the 'Pennsylvania Weekly Crop & Weather Roundup'. This and other NASS reports can be found on the Internet at www.usda.gov/nass.

Poor week for Field Work: There were 2 days suitable for field work. Soil moisture was rated 2 percent short, 47 percent adequate, and 51 percent surplus. Principal farm activities included hauling and spreading manure; spreading lime and fertilizer; fixing fences; trimming brush; caring for livestock; repairing equipment and buildings; preparing and finishing income taxes and attending farm meetings.

Crops: Below normal temperatures, along with snow and rain have prevented farmers from doing much in terms of plowing or planting. A minimal percent of the oat acreage has been planted. The condition of both the alfalfa and timothy clover improved as compared to last year. Alfalfa condition was rated as 2 percent very poor stand, 6 percent poor, 49 percent fair, 36 good and 7 percent excellent. Timothy clover condition was rated as 6 percent poor stand, 40 percent fair, 49 percent good and 5 percent excellent. Winter wheat conditions were slightly poorer than 2002 however, with 2 percent rated very poor, 11 percent poor, 32 percent fair, 41 percent good and 14 percent excellent.

Livestock: Seventeen percent of pasture land was rated very poor, 16 percent was poor, 45 percent was fair, 15 percent was good and 7 percent was excellent. Even with adequate soil moisture the cold temperatures have prevented pasture land from flourishing.

U.S. As Of March 23, 2003: A major storm brought needed moisture and some relief to the prolonged drought in the northern and central Rocky Mountains. Temperatures were also above normal and began melting snow quickly. Warm weather covered the Corn Belt, while rainfall was minimal in some areas and up to 2 inches in others. Recent California rains benefitted crops, and good soil moisture contributed to strong growth in wheat, oats, barley, and winter forage. Developing fruit became visible in many stone fruit orchards while bloom continued in late varieties. New green shoots became more widespread in raisin, wine, and table grape vineyards as vines responded to periods of warm, sunny weather. Many grape growers cultivated and irrigated their vineyards. Vegetable transplanting was slowed in some areas by cool, wet weather. Harvest of a wide range of vegetables remained active. The additional rainfall benefitted pastureland. Foothill pastures were in mostly good condition, and livestock were in good condition. Much-needed rain fell in the plains and across central and southern locations. The rains improved harvest prospects for small grains. Small grains suffered in areas where rain was nonexistent, and irrigation remained active. Some corn producers were concerned by delays in land preparation due to previous wet spells. Land preparation and fieldwork were active for soybeans. Peach trees began to bloom. Warm weather allowed pasture and range conditions to improve. Supplemental feeding of livestock declined. Surface soil moisture was adequate as a result of recent rains. Vegetable harvest remained active, with strawberry harvest slowed by rains.

PA Crop Progress for Week Ending March 30, 2003

Crop	Current Week	Last Year	5-Year Average
	<i>Percent</i>		
Spring Plowing	2	22	11

PA Crop Condition for Week Ending March 30, 2003

Crop	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
	<i>Percent</i>				
Winter Wheat	2	11	32	41	14
Alfalfa Stand	2	6	49	36	7
Timothy Clover Stand	0	6	40	49	5
Pasture Conditions	17	16	45	15	7

Weather Data For Week Ending March 30, 2003

STATION	LAST WEEK WEATHER SUMMARY						April 1, 03 -		GDD BASE 50F		GDD
	TEMPERATURE			PRECIPITATION			PRECIPITATION	DFN	TOTAL	DFN	BASE 40F
	HI	LO	AVG	DFN	TOTAL	DAYS	TOTAL	DFN	TOTAL	DFN	TOT
NORTHWEST											
Erie	76	29	49	+9	1.28	3					
Franklin_AG	73	29	48	+9	0.41	2					
Meadville	73	27	46	+9	0.74	2					
Mercer	75	21	46	+7	0.58	3					
Springboro	74	27	46	+7	0.72	2					
Warren	69	28	46	+9	0.67	4					
NORTH CENTRAL											
Bradford_Regi on	67	27	47	+12	0.46	2					
Emporium	74	28	49	+12	0.48	2					
Kane	67	25	43	+8	0.34	2					
Laporte	66	29	45	+7	0.86	3					
Lock_Haven	76	30	49	+9	0.26	3					
Port_Allegany	72	28	46	+10	0.41	2					
Renovo	76	30	48	+8	0.55	3					
Ridgway	71	28	47	+10	0.29	2					
Stevenson_Dam	76	29	48	+12	0.62	3					
Towanda	70	29	47	+8	0.71	3					
Well sboro	71	28	45	+11	0.66	3					
Will iamsp ort_AP	72	30	51	+9	0.70	3					
NORTHEAST											
Hawley	66	28	45	+8	0.71	2					
Will kes-Barre/Sc	69	31	51	+11	0.55	2					
Susquehanna	70	28	47	+12	0.65	3					
WEST CENTRAL											
Butler	75	28	49	+9	0.41	2					
New_Castle	77	28	50	+11	0.51	3					
Slippy_ Rock	77	29	49	+11	0.43	2					
CENTRAL											
Al toona/Blair_C	73	30	50	+8	0.37	2					
Du_Bois	71	28	50	+12	0.21	3					
Lewistown	76	32	51	+8	0.49	2					
Middletown	69	36	52	+8	1.06	2					
Prince_Gallitzi	73	28	49	+9	0.31	3					
Selinsgrove	71	32	50	+9	0.77	3					
State_Col lege_P	75	32	50	+10	0.57	2					
EAST CENTRAL											
Al l entown-Bethl	69	32	51	+9	0.75	3					
Lehighton	68	31	49	+8	0.91	3					
Matamoras	67	27	46	+6	1.05	2					
Tobyhanna	69	29	51	+17	1.40	2					
SOUTHWEST											
Pittsburgh/Alle	76	30	53	+12	0.25	3					
Derry	75	30	49	+8	0.75	3					
Meyersdale	71	25	45	+5	0.34	2					
Mount_Pleasant	75	27	50	+11	0.38	2					
Pittsburgh_Intl	76	31	52	+10	0.26	3					
Rector	77	26	48	+9	0.37	2					
Waynesburg	78	28	49	+8	0.45	2					
SOUTH CENTRAL											
Biglerville	72	31	52	+8	0.69	2					
Everett	76	27	49	+8	0.61	3					
Hanover	71	32	52	+7	0.77	2					
Shippensburg	76	32	53	+8	0.57	2					
South_Mountain	70	29	49	+8	0.47	3					
York_AP	73	30	52	+6	0.91	3					
SOUTHEAST											
Green_Lane	73	32	52	+10	1.09	3					
Hamburg	69	33	51	+11	0.75	3					
Hopewell	70	31	51	+6	0.87	3					
Lancaster_AP	68	33	52	+9	0.72	2					
Neshaminy_Falls	72	36	52	+9	0.65	2					
New_Holland	70	34	51	+8	0.76	2					
Phil adelphi a	74	39	55	+10	0.60	2					
Phil adelphi a_NE	74	36	53	+8	0.53	2					
Reading_AP	69	31	52	+10	0.87	3					
Val ley_Forge_Na	74	30	51	+6	0.69	3					
Willow_Grove	71	38	54	+11	0.41	2					

DFN = Departure From Normal (Using 1961-90 Normals Period).
 Precipitation (Rainfall or melted snow/ice) and Pan Evap in inches.
 Precipitation Days = Days with precip of .01 inch or more.
 Air Temperatures in Degrees Fahrenheit.

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INTERNET REPORTERS' COMMENTS, BY COUNTY:

*Reporters are from Extension Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service,
Farm Service Agency, farmers, commodity specialists, or other knowledgeable individuals.*

“After a long and snowy winter, farmers are anxious to get out into the fields. Most of Crawford County is still too wet to begin field work, however farmers are busy getting equipment ready for their window of opportunity.”

- Ron McCorkle, Crawford County

“The snow has melted and we are now waiting for spring to get here. Ground is very wet in places and manure hauling can be an adventure.”

- David Stratton,
Potter/Mckean/Cameron Counties

“Does ‘spring plowing’ include snow?”

- Jackie Root, Tioga County

“The long, cold and snowy winter has caused most farm work and crops to be behind schedule. Late March warm weather has caused a flurry of activity. Spring tilling and planting is behind schedule with virtually no oats have been planted in March.”

- J.Lee Miller, Beaver County

“Even though there were beautiful days last week, it is too wet to do any field work. Just as the fields start to dry we get snow or rain. Received about 5-6 inches of snow over the weekend.”

- Dolly Little, Cambria County

“Winter weather delays spring activities. Manure hauling a top priority at this time.”

- Paul H. Craig, Dauphin County

“Long winter!! Plenty of ground water. All neighbors buying hay. Hay is cheaper to ship in from Canada or Mid-West than to buy around here.”

- Marina Kemper, Huntington County

“While farmers are anxious to begin spring field work, soils continue to remain too wet to work.”

- Bob Leiby, Lehigh County

“First spring field work got underway this week. Manure and fertilizer are being spread, oats and alfalfa are being planted, and spring tillage is beginning. Some sweet corn growers are ready to plant under plastic but will probably hold off this week because of the cold forecast next week. Pastures are just starting to green with this week's above normal temperatures.”

- John Lohr, Westmoreland County

“Spring weather this past week helped operators to get onto the field with manure spreading, spring fertilizing and other minor chores. The weather is much later than last year and soil moisture level is maximum at this time. Short spring though as winter returned over the weekend with 4 inches of snow. Fruit not affected at this time by the sudden chill.”

- Thomas Kerr, Franklin County

“Wheat was hit hard by geese again this year. It will take a couple of weeks to see how much of it recovers.”

- Mike Fournier, Bucks County

Comments continued on next page.

“There has been significant goose damage to winter wheat, barley and rye cover crops this past winter. It remains to be seen how well winter grain crops recover from it.”

- Samuel High, Chester County

“Things look very optimistic with excellent soil moisture as we start into the new crop year! What a pleasant change after last year.”

- Randy Ranck, Lancaster County

“Watch the soil dry out, some horse farmers were plowing.”

- Bob Anderson, Lancaster County

“The mild weather was welcome after a long winter. Some over-seeding was done in hay fields and pastures. A few people top-dressed wheat, hay fields and pastures. Manure is being hauled where they can. Another important activity is sign up for the DCP and getting the last of the land owners signatures. No ground has been worked for spring grass seedings yet.”

- Andrew Frankenfield, Montgomery County

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