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Weekly Crop & Weather Roundup

Week Ending April 25, 2004

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Good week for Field Work: There were 4 days suitable for field work. Soil moisture was rated as 1 percent short, 66 percent adequate and 33 percent surplus due to the sunny and warm conditions across the state during the last week. Despite rain, 58 percent of the spring tillage has been completed, which is ahead of 36 percent the previous year, and 45 percent for the five year average. Principal farm activities included spring tillage, planting of spring crops, spreading fertilizer, spreading manure, pruning fruit trees, repairing fences and machinery, and caring for livestock.

Crops: The winter wheat crop was rated as 1 percent very poor, 7 percent poor, 15 percent fair, 62 percent good and 15 percent excellent, which is all slightly improved over last week. Barley headed reached 8 percent last week, which is behind last year's average of 20 percent and the 5 year average of 13 percent. Oats planted is currently at 57 percent complete, and also at 16 percent emerged. Potato planting has begun and reached 12 percent by the end of last week, which is close to last year at 8 percent and the 5 year average at 11 percent complete. The green house planting of tobacco was completed this last week. Alfalfa stand last week was rated as 2 percent very poor, 6 percent poor, 28 percent fair, 53 percent good and 11 percent was excellent. The timothy clover stand was rated 1 percent very poor, 2 percent poor, 22 percent fair, 65 percent good and 10 percent was excellent.

The fruit crop is looking good with all the sunny weather the last week. Peaches are at an average full bloom of 75 percent across the state. Apples at the same progress at 75 percent full bloom. Cherries received the most benefit from the warm weather and are now past full bloom and into pedal drop.

Livestock: The sunny conditions and warm temperatures has 2 percent of pasture land in Pennsylvania was rated very poor, 5 percent was rated poor, 30 percent was rated fair, 51 percent was rated good and 12 percent was rated excellent.

U.S. As of April 18, 2004: Early in the week, frigid weather covered much of the High Plains, with some temperatures below 20 degrees Fahrenheit. In the central and southern parts of the region, with much of the winter wheat in the vulnerable jointing stage, growers were watching for signs of freeze damage. By midweek, the weather in the region turned hot and dry, further stressing the crop. Above-normal temperatures and dry conditions prevailed across most of the Corn Belt, encouraging planting of summer crops. Along the Atlantic Coast and in the Ohio and Tennessee Valleys,

moderate to heavy rainfall and below-normal temperatures limited fieldwork. Rainfall was light to moderate across the Southeast and Mississippi Delta, and temperatures were below normal. The northern and central Rocky Mountains had above-normal temperatures and light precipitation. Temperatures were near normal in the Pacific Northwest, with moderate rainfall in coastal areas and lighter precipitation in the crop-producing areas further inland. The mostly dry Southwest had above-normal temperatures in the west and below-normal temperatures in the east.

Winter Wheat: The Nation's winter wheat crop advanced to 11 percent headed, 3 percentage points ahead of last year and 2 points ahead of normal. Heading progress slowed in California but remained well ahead of the normal pace. Heading had not begun across the northern and central Great Plains and Corn Belt. At the end of last week, just before the hard freeze, jointing was at 8 percent in Nebraska, 18 percent in Colorado, 49 percent in Kansas, and 93 percent in Oklahoma, with much of the acreage in this critical stage susceptible to freeze damage. Though damage estimates were incomplete, crop condition declined slightly in all of these States except Nebraska.

Corn: Planting was 20 percent complete, compared with 10 percent last year and 9 percent for the 5-year average. Ideal planting conditions across the Corn Belt encouraged growers to plant their crop well ahead of normal. Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa growers advanced over 1 week ahead of their normal planting pace, with Missouri producers over 2 weeks ahead. Almost all States planted ahead of their normal pace, though Colorado and Ohio trailed slightly behind their 5-year averages.

Small Grains: The Nation's oat crop was 45 percent planted, 16 points ahead of last year and 18 points ahead of normal, while emergence, at 7 percent, was 1 point ahead of last year and even with the 5-year average. Spring wheat planting was 32 percent complete, compared with 22 percent last year and 14 percent for the average. Thirty-one percent of the barley crop was planted, 13 points ahead of last year and 16 points ahead of normal. Emergence of oats lagged behind the normal pace across the Corn Belt and Ohio Valley. In Washington, spring wheat planting, at 95 percent, and barley planting, at 91 percent, remained well ahead of the normal pace. All States progressed ahead of their normal planting pace by at least 14 points for spring wheat and 6 points for barley.

Weather Data For Week Ending April 25, 2004

Station	Last Week Weather Summary						April 1 - April 25, 2004					GDD Base 40F Total
	Temperature				Precipitation		Precipitation			GDD Base 50F		
	High	Low	Average	DFN	Total	Days	Total	DFN	Days	Total	DFN	
Northwest												
Erie	83	38	57	9	0.73	4	2.90	0.18	12	87	66	193
Franklin	83	39	57	9	0.62	5	4.12	1.18	14	69	49	191
Meadville	80	40	56	10	1.08	4	2.70	-0.05	12	65	52	172
Mercer	81	36	56	7	0.67	3	2.96	0.14	11	55	35	149
Springboro	81	35	56	8	1.22	6	3.69	1.04	14	64	40	163
Warren	84	38	57	10	0.99	5	4.26	1.32	13	64	50	175
North Central												
Bradford Region	78	34	56	12	0.80	4	3.54	0.74	12	66	60	155
Emporium	83	39	58	13	0.81	4	3.68	0.85	13	73	65	191
Kane	76	28	51	7	0.40	3	2.85	-0.15	9	28	22	99
Laporte	80	39	56	7	0.74	4	2.77	0.08	13	52	23	156
Lock Haven	86	46	61	12	0.87	4	3.47	0.93	11	92	61	254
Port Allegany	80	38	56	10	0.74	4	2.97	0.36	12	58	47	151
Renovo	87	43	61	11	0.71	4	3.27	0.73	11	91	60	231
Ridgway	80	35	56	11	0.88	3	3.93	1.10	9	56	48	148
Stevenson Dam	84	39	59	14	1.22	4	3.56	0.73	10	78	70	211
Towanda	85	38	57	8	0.45	3	2.72	0.33	11	64	36	183
Wellsboro	80	39	56	11	0.73	4	3.14	1.22	12	53	45	148
Williamsport	85	44	61	10	0.47	6	2.71	0.02	13	98	48	272
Northeast												
Hawley	84	33	55	8	0.89	5	2.81	-0.04	11	49	37	148
Wilkes-Barre/Sc	86	38	59	9	0.56	3	2.21	-0.23	8	84	51	235
Susquehanna	85	38	58	13	0.34	3	1.61	-1.38	9	63	54	195
West Central												
Butler	83	39	59	10	0.72	4	3.42	0.78	13	76	45	197
New Castle	84	41	58	10	0.84	4	3.75	1.25	14	74	55	204
Slippery Rock	82	39	59	11	0.77	6	3.90	1.31	15	83	68	225
Central												
Altoona/Blair	81	46	62	11	0.45	5	3.93	1.31	13	104	59	233
DuBois	79	39	58	10	0.89	5	3.60	0.85	15	85	67	193
Lewistown	86	47	63	11	0.34	4	4.22	1.80	13	106	48	270
Middletown	87	51	65	12	0.34	3	4.05	1.39	12	134	62	328
Prince Gallitzi	77	44	59	11	1.01	3	5.90	2.40	10	75	57	190
Selinsgrove	87	45	61	11	0.70	3	4.00	1.36	12	93	50	245
State College	85	44	62	12	0.54	3	3.48	1.07	10	98	67	239
East Central												
Allentown-Bethel	88	41	61	9	0.22	4	2.48	-0.41	14	98	48	285
Lehighton	88	42	60	9	0.54	3	2.59	-0.08	11	87	43	248
Matamoras	85	36	57	7	0.45	4	2.81	-0.47	10	57	24	185
Tobyhanna	83	30	55	10	0.17	3	2.72	-0.65	10	51	44	158
Southwest												
Pittsburgh/Alle	83	45	63	12	0.32	4	3.67	1.03	12	122	78	280
Derry	85	45	62	14	0.65	5	6.08	3.40	16	105	82	251
Myersdale	80	44	60	11	0.24	2	4.01	0.75	11	75	47	182
Mount Pleasant	83	42	61	14	0.20	2	4.48	1.05	9	96	80	232
Pittsburgh Intl	83	43	62	11	1.35	3	4.38	1.78	12	119	67	277
Rector	85	46	63	16	0.34	4	6.25	2.82	19	108	92	251
Waynesburg	85	46	62	13	0.23	2	3.85	0.98	12	106	69	248
South Central												
Biglerville	87	49	65	12	0.40	3	4.76	1.99	14	124	52	292
Everett	84	41	60	10	0.53	4	4.38	1.63	13	75	39	178
Hanover	88	49	65	12	0.35	2	3.96	1.19	11	124	52	294
Shippensburg	87	48	65	11	0.45	2	4.28	1.59	9	137	61	304
South Mountain	84	44	62	11	0.39	2	4.88	2.26	11	100	58	224
York	89	47	64	11	0.79	3	4.15	1.15	13	122	48	301
Southeast												
Green Lane	87	43	64	12	0.14	3	2.56	-0.51	13	120	75	322
Hamburg	89	46	62	12	0.32	4	2.57	-0.56	13	104	75	284
Hopewell	87	45	62	9	0.51	3	4.09	1.03	13	102	24	283
Lancaster	87	47	64	12	0.76	3	3.74	0.90	13	124	72	313
Neshaminy Falls	88	44	63	12	0.49	1	5.86	2.56	10	114	63	307
New Holland	88	48	65	13	0.62	3	3.25	0.41	13	126	74	305
Philadelphia	86	48	66	11	0.22	2	4.53	1.52	12	152	69	360
Philadelphia NE	87	42	64	10	0.63	1	5.92	2.91	11	139	56	345
Reading	89	47	64	13	0.42	3	2.68	-0.46	13	122	79	315
Valley Forge Na	89	40	63	10	0.41	1	4.20	1.14	9	113	35	293
Willow Grove	87	43	62	10	0.11	2	2.81	-0.49	12	125	74	326

DFN = Departure from normal (using 1961-90 normals period).
 Precipitation (rainfall or melted snow or ice) and pan evaporation in inches.
 Precipitation days = days with precipitation of .01 inch or more.
 Air temperatures in degrees fahrenheit.
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Internet Reporters' Comments, By County:

Reporters are from Extension Service (Ext), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Conservation District (CD), farmers, commodity specialists, or other knowledgeable individuals.

Crawford County, Ron McCorkle (NRCS) - - Off and on rain showers this week put a hold on doing much field work. Pastures are extremely wet and farmers are delaying turning cows out until pasture conditions improve. Lime piles are still in fields waiting to be spread.

Erie County, Lew Steckler (NRCS) - - Farmers are ready to start planting, but frequent showers and thunderstorms are keeping fields too wet. Hay fields are greening up nicely.

Armstrong/ Indiana Counties, Kevin Fry, (Ext) - - Excellent week for field work. Some areas actually got a little on the dry side. The showers we received will help get the oats out of the ground. Over 1" of rain Sunday the 25th will slow things down a little. The next dry stretch should begin the big push for corn planting.

Centre County, Dick Decker - - Good weather for field work most of the week, added about 1 inch of rainfall in my gauge.

Huntington County, Marina Kemper - - This week before the rain came we got both of our barns cleaned out from winter; now as soon as its fit, we will get ready to plow and plant corn. The cows are waiting for us to let them out on pasture but we like it to grow back a good bit so it can be rotated pastures all summer.

Juniata County, Dave Stetler - - Sunday morning raining again, I just want to save some of these showers for late June, July and August.

Snyder/Juniata Counties County, William C. Sheaffer - - This was a good week for many activities - plowing, chopping corn stalks, sowing oats, planting alfalfa, spraying herbicides, spreading manure and lime, repairing fences and equipment. Some herds of livestock are being placed on pastures. Some areas within the pastures are showing bare spots due to the very wet conditions coupled with traffic from the 2003 season.

Westmoreland County, John Lohr (FSA) - - Best week for field work yet this spring. Dry early in the week with only some light rain toward late week. Good progress with tillage, oats and alfalfa planting, manure hauling, spraying, and fertilizer spreading. A very small amount of corn has been planted along with some sweet corn for the early July roadside markets.

Franklin County, Thomas Kerr (FSA) - - Good week for field work. Warm and drying wind helped to dry the soil surface. Many acres of corn went in this week in all areas of the county. Oats are almost all planted. Several fields of rye being cut for green chop. Fruit is progressing well. Peaches are in full bloom and cherries will be by mid week, sweet cherries are past full bloom. Apples will be in full bloom first week in May.

York County, Wayne Kurtz (FSA) - - Corn planting began in earnest this week along with potatoes. Other activities included completing topdressing wheat and general farm work. Above normal temperatures, sometimes +20 deg., provided long awaiting drying conditions.

Chester County, Samuel High (NRCS) - - Because of the wet fall and freezing this winter, there has been more apparent damage to new 2003 alfalfa stands than expected.

Montgomery County, Andrew Frankenfield (Ext) - - Best week for field work this year. The remainder of the small grains and hay fields were sprayed and topdressed. Widespread tillage progressed as the dry week continued. Manure was hauled, animals were sent out on pasture, and then rains returned.

PA Crop Progress for Week Ending April 25, 2004

Crop	Current Week	Last Year	5-Year Average
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Spring plowing	58	36	45
Corn, planted	8	4	5
Barley, headed	8	20	13
Oats, planted	57	47	46
Oats, emerged	16	11	20
Potatoes, planted	12	8	11

PA Crop Condition for Week Ending April 25, 2004

Crop	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Wheat	1	7	15	62	15
Alfalfa and alfalfa mixtures stand	2	6	28	53	11
Timothy clover stand	1	2	22	65	10
Pasture	2	5	30	51	12

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