

Weather Effects on Arizona Agriculture in 2000

With Arizona's diverse topography, the state's temperatures range from the wintertime cold in the higher mountain areas to the searing summertime heat of the desert areas. The highest recorded temperatures for the year were 121 degrees at Lake Havasu City on August 5, and at Bullhead City and Lake Havasu City on July 19. Flagstaff recorded the lowest temperature of -15 degrees on January 3. In general, temperatures were above normal during April, May, and August. Temperatures were below average during October and November and mixed during the remaining months.

The first quarter of 2000 showed below average precipitation at most reporting stations throughout the state. April and May had little precipitation, leaving most areas with below average amounts. The monsoons arrived in mid June, with three months of rains. Even with the monsoon rains, by early September, precipitation was below average throughout the state. Good rainfall in the last quarter of the year helped to bring precipitation levels throughout the state closer to average. The year ended with most areas in the state being slightly below average.

Planting of the small grain acreage was complete by late January. Cotton planting commenced in late March, earlier than last year. Cotton planting finished in early June, nearly two weeks ahead of the previous year.

Dry range conditions across the state continued to worsen as high temperatures and no precipitation was the norm in the beginning of the year. Cattle were reported to be in fair condition, while grazing and range and pasture conditions were poor to good.

March and April precipitation brought little relief to range conditions. Cotton progress was ahead of normal, even though it was a little late in getting planted. The small grain crops continued to progress normally. The state's citrus groves continued harvesting grapefruit, tangerines and tangelos. The lemon harvest was winding down, while the Valencia orange harvest gained momentum.

The small grain crops harvest was completed in early July. Monsoon rains continued to improve range and pasture conditions during July, August and into September. Cotton condition was good and progress was ahead of normal by more than a week. Cotton harvest started in southern Arizona in early September and the other producing areas were active before the end of the month. Cotton harvest continued ahead of normal.

The fourth quarter brought lower than normal temperatures throughout the state. There were heavy rains in the state during October and November. Range and cattle conditions improved with the low temperatures and heavy moisture. Ranchers reported good winter growth. Cotton harvest was virtually complete by the end of the year. By late November, small grain seeding had begun in western and central areas; the lemon harvest was well under way in the west; and the navel orange and grapefruit harvests were gaining momentum. Small grain plantings were about one-third complete at the end of the year. The vegetable harvest stayed active as the year came to an end.