

Weather Effects on Arizona Agriculture in 2003

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. Arizona's wide spectrum of climate and terrain support a remarkable agricultural diversity. All crops in Arizona are irrigated, meaning yield variability is less influenced by rainfall here than in the rain-dependent agricultural states. Weather conditions are still important to crop farmers in making planting and harvesting decisions. The highest recorded temperature in 2003 was 121 degrees at Parker on July 14. Flagstaff and Winslow recorded the lowest temperature of 1 degree above zero on December 28 and February 9, respectively.

Planting of the small grain acreage was complete by mid-February. Cotton planting began in early April, about a week later than the previous year.

Range and pasture conditions ranged from poor to excellent throughout the year. Livestock were reported in mostly fair condition.

Heavy rains in February and March brought much needed precipitation throughout Arizona. The precipitation brought improved conditions to range and pasture. Cotton growers wrapped up planting by mid-June. The State's small grain development was behind the average of previous years.

The harvest of small grain crops was completed by the third week of July. Range and pasture conditions improved slightly over the year with traces of rainfall scattered about the State. Cotton progress was behind average.

From October to December, range and pasture conditions declined due to lack of rainfall. Cotton harvest was virtually complete by the end of December.