



COLORADO CROP PROGRESS

United States Department of Agriculture
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
COLORADO FIELD OFFICE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CROP PROGRESS AND CONDITION MONTH OF DECEMBER 2023

AGRICULTURAL SUMMARY: Above average temperatures and dry weather across the State during the month of December was interspersed with a few productive snowstorms, according to the Mountain Region Field Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor report published on December 28th, just over 63 percent of the State was abnormally dry or in a state of drought. Just under 9 percent of the State was in severe to exceptional drought, a better start than 2023 when over 30 percent of the State was under severe to exceptional drought conditions. Areas of Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, and Rio Grande counties were experiencing extreme drought conditions after continued below average precipitation. Productive snowstorms during the latter half of December improved moisture across the State, but moisture levels continued significantly behind the previous year. Temperatures across the State for the month of December trended above average. Several northeastern counties realized temperatures more than six degrees above normal. Most of the high country experienced above average temperatures, while areas of Mineral County realizing temperatures more than 2 degrees below average. Northeastern counties remained very dry, but received beneficial moisture at the end of December, accumulating at least one inch of precipitation in several areas. Reporters noted warm conditions have allowed cattle to thoroughly utilize corn stalks and winter grazing. Winter wheat conditions in the district are mixed, with earlier planted wheat in better condition and other areas yet to come up. Below average moisture in southwestern counties since the end of the growing season have worsened drought conditions, with most counties in a moderate drought or worse. Livestock producers continued to utilize winter grazing arrangements where available. In southeastern counties, recent snow events had provided good topsoil moisture. The San Luis Valley has received limited snowfall this winter, leaving soils dry and rangeland deteriorating. According to county reports, limited snow in the region has allowed open pastures and good livestock condition, and a good hay supply. Statewide, winter wheat condition declined, with 61 percent of the crop rated good to excellent, compared with 65 percent good to excellent from the previous report and 50 percent good to excellent last year. As of January 2, 2024, snowpack in Colorado was 69 percent measured as percent of median snowfall.

Note: Monthly reports will be released for January on January 29, 2024; and for February on February 26, 2024.

SOIL MOISTURE CONDITION

| | Current report | Previous report | Previous year | 5-year average |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Topsoil moisture | (percent) | (percent) | (percent) | (percent) |
| Very short | 16 | 20 | 12 | NA |
| Short | 29 | 41 | 24 | NA |
| Adequate | 55 | 38 | 62 | NA |
| Surplus | -- | 1 | 2 | NA |
| Subsoil moisture | | | | |
| Very short | 12 | 15 | 26 | NA |
| Short | 34 | 35 | 37 | NA |
| Adequate | 54 | 50 | 37 | NA |
| Surplus | -- | -- | -- | NA |

NA – not available
(--) – zero

CROP, LIVESTOCK, PASTURE AND RANGE CONDITION

| Commodity | Current report (percent) | Previous report (percent) | Previous year (percent) | 5-year average (percent) |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Pasture and range | | | | |
| Very poor..... | 4 | 2 | 11 | NA |
| Poor..... | 8 | 5 | 24 | NA |
| Fair..... | 16 | 43 | 24 | NA |
| Good..... | 67 | 40 | 41 | NA |
| Excellent..... | 5 | 10 | -- | NA |
| Winter wheat | | | | |
| Very poor..... | 4 | -- | 5 | NA |
| Poor..... | 7 | 2 | 10 | NA |
| Fair..... | 28 | 33 | 35 | NA |
| Good..... | 56 | 59 | 50 | NA |
| Excellent..... | 5 | 6 | -- | NA |
| Livestock | | | | |
| Very poor..... | -- | -- | 5 | NA |
| Poor..... | 1 | 1 | 8 | NA |
| Fair..... | 6 | 11 | 33 | NA |
| Good..... | 86 | 75 | 46 | NA |
| Excellent..... | 7 | 13 | 8 | NA |

NA – not available

(--)- zero