

February 27, 2017

GEORGIA: Total rainfall for the month ranged from 0.7 to 6.0 inches. On average, rainfall totals were 3 inches lower than normal for the month. Although the southern half of the State remained drought free, extreme drought conditions intensified in the most northern counties of the State. On average, temperatures were 4 to 9 degrees warmer than normal for the month, which put some areas almost 1 month ahead in the breaking of spring dormancy. Many fruit crops were in full bloom. Insufficient chill hours had many fruit producers worried about future yields. Pecan buds started to swell. Winter grazing and small grains condition was fair to good and steadily improving with the aid of mild temperatures and sufficient rainfall. Pasture and forage growth remained delayed in the northern half of the state, but pulled ahead of schedule in the southern half. Much of the State experienced higher than normal weed growth in pastures that thinned due to drought damage and delayed growth of fall planted annual forages. Aphids and rust in fields were also reported. The statewide hay shortage continued, and several producers struggled with depleted supplies. Late-planted small grains for forages started to provide limited grazing opportunities. Cattle condition was good despite limited grazing and rationed hay of below-average quality. Many operations continued to work on cleaning up damage from the severe storm systems in January, including fixing fences, irrigation systems, and buildings. More than 4,000 mature pecan trees were damaged in the storms, and producers continued to work on cleaning up their orchards. Other farm activities included fertilizing pastures and hay fields, applying pre-emergent herbicides on forages, sampling soil, spreading litter, applying lime, and breaking peanut land. Cover crop termination began in preparation for corn planting in early March. Commercial vineyards and blueberry operations began pruning. Onions were in good condition with minimal disease or insect pressure. Cabbage crop was progressing quickly. Strawberry harvest started.