

MONTANA CROP PROGRESS



United States Department of Agriculture
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
MONTANA FIELD OFFICE
 P.O. BOX 150969 · Lakewood, CO 80215-0969
 Cooperating with the Montana Department of Agriculture



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Eric Sommer
 (800) 392-3202

CROP PROGRESS AND CONDITION MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2024

AGRICULTURAL SUMMARY: The month of February brought mostly above normal temperatures and slightly above normal precipitation to much of Montana, according to the Mountain Regional Field Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA. Temperatures ran highest in the eastern third of the State. Temperatures ran as high as 16 – 20 degrees above average in parts of the northeast, according to data from the High Plains Regional Climate Center (HPRCC). Average temperatures ran lower in the west. Moisture levels were in a range of approximately 0.5 to 1.0 inches above average for much of Montana. Parts of Cascade and Madison Counties, as well as surrounding areas, received moisture as much as 1.5 inches above normal. Precipitation levels in the west, and in some parts of the east and southeast, were closer to average or below normal. Drought conditions deteriorated once again according to the U.S. Drought Monitor report released on February 20, 2024. The amount of land rated drought free fell to 12 percent, down from 20 percent as reported on January 23, 2024. Abnormal dryness was found in 45 percent of the State, up 4 percentage points. Moderate drought stood at 22 percent, down from 26 percent on the report published on January 23. Severe drought conditions increased to 20 percent, up 7 percentage points. Extreme drought, which has not been seen since the first part of November, was found in about 1 percent of Montana. Calving conditions were excellent in Powder River County with the warm and dry conditions. At the same time, the lack of moisture and high winds were a concern to many farmers and ranchers. With the higher temperatures in Wibaux County, operators were also in need of more moisture.

Note: Monthly reports will be released for March on March 25, 2024.

LIVESTOCK PROGRESS

Commodity	Current report (percent)	Previous report (percent)	Previous year (percent)	5-year average (percent)
Cattle and calves				
Cows calved.....	13	4	11	NA
Receiving supplemental feed	97	92	99	NA
Sheep and lambs				
Ewes lambled	9	3	7	NA
Receiving supplemental feed	96	95	98	NA

NA – not available
 (–) – zero

SOIL MOISTURE CONDITION

	Current report (percent)	Previous report (percent)	Previous year (percent)	5-year average (percent)
Topsoil moisture				
Very short	7	14	6	NA
Short	45	54	32	NA
Adequate	48	30	59	NA
Surplus	--	2	3	NA
Subsoil moisture				
Very short	23	23	10	NA
Short	48	46	50	NA
Adequate	29	28	37	NA
Surplus	--	3	3	NA

NA – not available
 (–) – zero

CROP AND PASTURE AND RANGE CONDITION

Commodity	Current report (percent)	Previous report (percent)	Previous year (percent)	5-year average (percent)
Grazing accessibility				
Open	64	50	27	NA
Difficult	23	35	30	NA
Closed	13	15	43	NA
Pasture and range				
Very poor	24	19	14	NA
Poor	38	35	31	NA
Fair	34	40	31	NA
Good	3	5	24	NA
Excellent	1	1	--	NA
Winter wheat				
Very poor	--	--	1	NA
Poor	2	3	8	NA
Fair	53	56	70	NA
Good	41	41	21	NA
Excellent	4	--	--	NA
Winter wheat – wind damage				
None	38	48	62	NA
Light	38	37	26	NA
Moderate	24	15	11	NA
Severe	--	--	1	NA
Winter wheat – freeze and drought damage				
None	43	47	77	NA
Light	24	32	10	NA
Moderate	23	20	11	NA
Severe	10	1	2	NA
Winter wheat – protectiveness of snow cover				
Very poor	12	8	1	NA
Poor	58	54	5	NA
Fair	27	21	33	NA
Good	3	17	60	NA
Excellent	--	--	1	NA

NA – not available

(--) – zero