



Nebraska Weather and Crops

100 Centennial Mall North, Room 298, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508
(402) 437-5541 · (402) 437-5547 FAX · www.nass.usda.gov



Issue NE-CW 0909

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Agricultural Summary: For the month of February 2009, a lack of snow cover across much of the wheat growing area left the crop vulnerable to high winds, however, statewide wheat conditions continue above year ago levels, according to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Nebraska Field Office. During the last week of the month soil temperatures across the state were in the mid to lower 30's, near year ago levels. Producer activities included moving grain, machinery maintenance, calving, farm program sign up, and completing tax work.

This release is based on data from FSA county directors, county extension educators, NOAA, and the High Plains Regional Climate Center. County comments and reports can be found at:
http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Nebraska/Publications/Crop_Progress_&_Condition/index

Weather Summary: At the end of February snow depth averaged one inch. The Southwest and South Central Districts reported none, with near three inches reported in the Northeast. Precipitation for the month was below normal. Temperatures for the most part were one to three degrees below normal with the exception of the second week of February where temperatures were 3 degrees above normal.

Field Crops Report: **Wheat** conditions declined from last month and rated 0 percent very poor, 6 poor, 25 fair, 59 good, and 10 excellent, but remained above last year's condition of 57 percent good or excellent. **Hay and forage** supplies rated 0 percent very short, 5 short, 91 adequate, and 4 surplus, well above year ago levels.

Livestock, Pasture, and Range Report: **Cattle and Calves** conditions rated 0 percent very poor, 1 poor, 18 fair, 69 good, and 12 excellent, above year ago levels. Calving progressed to 19 percent complete.

The following are comments from Nebraska's FSA County Executive Directors and County Extension Educators:

NORTHWEST

BOX BUTTE: The warm weather is greening up the wheat -- even the wheat that was looking bad a month ago. There have been some light snows but primarily the occurrence of strong winds has diminished. There are still moisture concerns as we head into the growing season.

SCOTTSBLUFF/MORRILL: Normal winter activities.

SIOUX: Weather has been favorable for calving with only a few cold snaps.

NORTHEAST

ANTELOPE: County received 4-6 inches of snow Friday evening. Producers are hauling grain and most cattle producers are just beginning heavy calving season.

BOONE: Winter snowstorm Friday and very cold conditions through the weekend.

CEDAR: Cedar County received a fresh blanket of snow (4 to 6 inches) over the weekend. The snow has stayed where it fell with little to no drifting. Cattle still in the stalks and are mostly looking good.

DIXON: The snow had all but disappeared until Friday of last week. That front dropped anywhere from 1.5 to 3 inches by early Saturday morning. Weather conditions remain generally favorable even at that. Cows continue to pick up some feed in open stocks.

KNOX: Primary activities are grain marketing, farm program sign up, and tax work. There is much uncertainty about cost inputs compared to expected prices.

MADISON: Producers preparing for spring by arranging for crop inputs - fertilizer, seed, chemicals, and financing. Many producers are still enrolling in USDA programs. ACRE uncertainty is causing many questions. Calving is picking up. Cattle feeders are seeing big financial losses.

THURSTON: Mild temperatures and little precipitation through February have given livestock producers, especially cow-calf producers, a break as they have been able to utilize stock fields and are experiencing good gains. Thaws eliminated much of the snow through the month but a month ending storm left some snow on the ground.

EAST

DODGE: Producers are getting their seed orders in and getting equipment ready for spring work. Some grain is being hauled to town also. Cattle remain in good condition and calving is going well.

YORK: The 6 inches of snow on the 14th had melted and fields were bare until 28th when 2 to 3 inches of wet snow fell. Half of that in the fields was gone Sunday. The weather has been very variable the past month. A few days of very warm weather and then many days of cold, windy, disagreeable weather, which are not good for calving. Most farmers in this area have maternity buildings for the cows. There are always a few that are missed at evening check and calve outside overnight. Herdsmen spend many hours day and night with the herd. Implement dealers have been repairing combines ever since corn harvest to be ready for the next crop. Farmers are delivering contracted grain on the good days.

SOUTHWEST

FRONTIER: Calving season is just getting underway in the area. Ranchers seem pleased with how it's going. Warm spring-like weather is helping them out.

HAYES/HITCHCOCK: Wheat needs moisture and cover. Calving conditions have been good.

LINCOLN: We had 1 inch on snow which melted on Sunday. Beef producers are in full swing with calving.

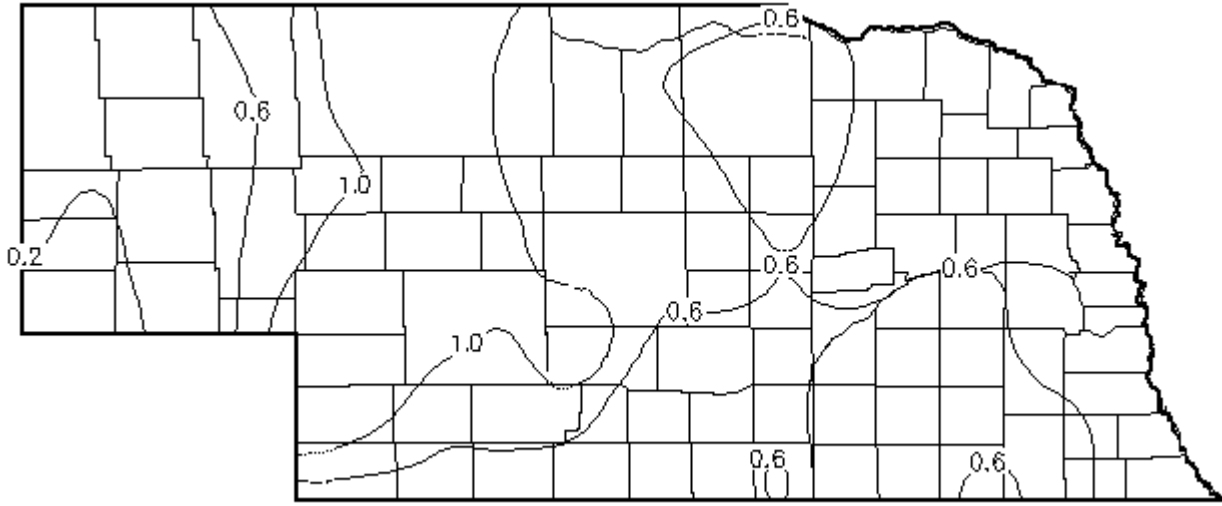
SOUTH CENTRAL

HARLAN: Producers are completing tax work for the year. There is beginning to be a concern about the dryness for pastures and winter wheat. Some oats have been planted. Due to the lack of snow cover, cattle are getting all that they can get from stalk fields. Very little hay has been fed to cow herds so far this year.

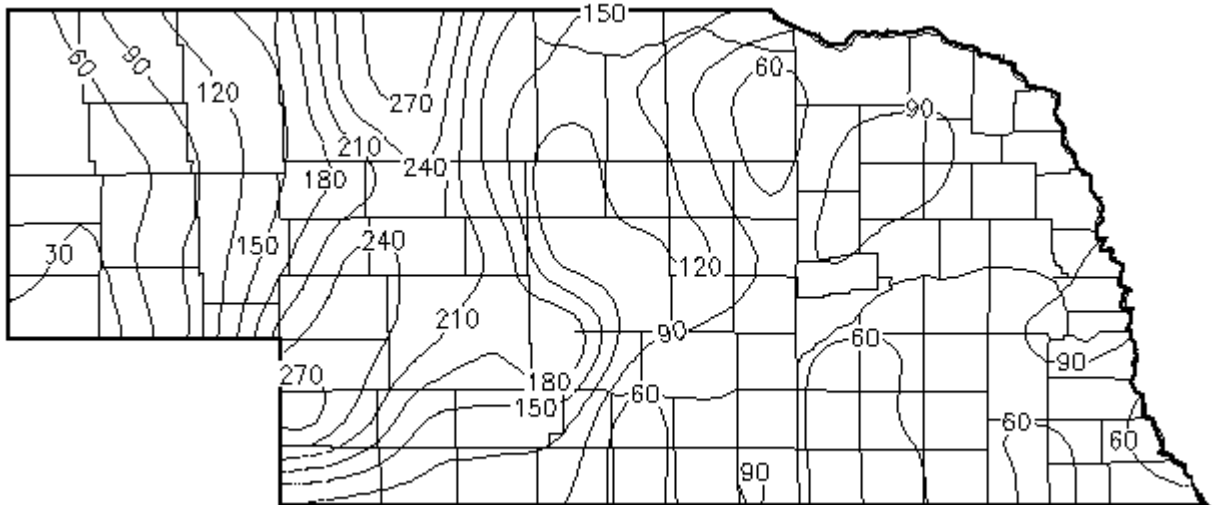
PHELPS: Calving has gone well, mild weather and dryer conditions have contributed to better calving conditions. Rangeland is beginning to show a little green.

WEBSTER: Calving is in full swing and weather hasn't been too bad for them. Wheat is greening up quickly with warmer weather.

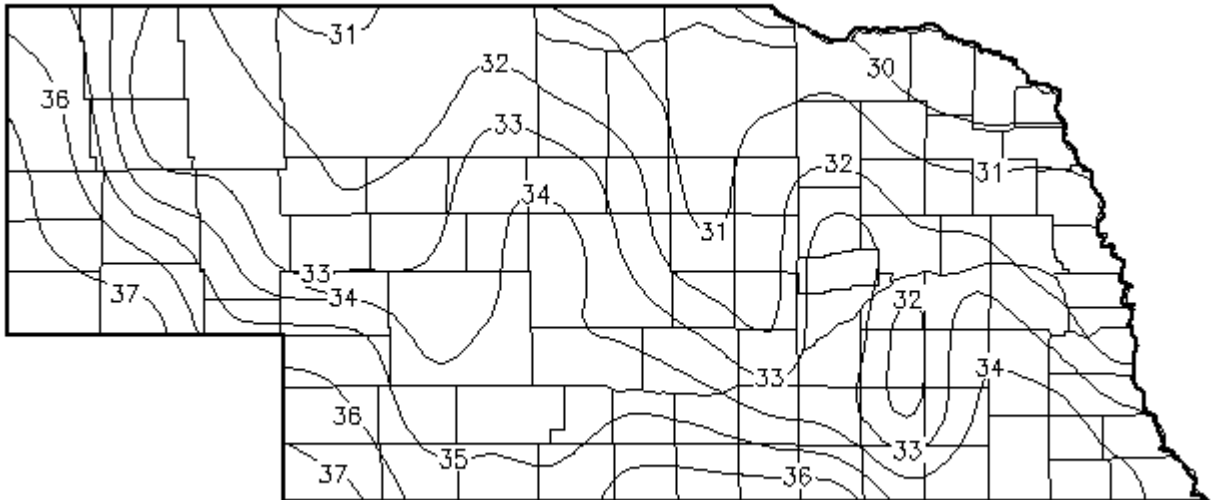
PRECIPITATION IN INCHES FOR MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2009¹



PRECIPITATION AS PERCENT OF NORMAL FOR FEBRUARY 2009¹



**SEVEN DAY AVERAGE TEMPERATURE AT THE FOUR INCH DEPTH UNDER BARE SOIL
FEBRUARY 23, 2009 – MARCH 1, 2009¹**



¹ Source: High Plains Regional Climate Center and Nebraska State Climate Office