

2012 CROP WEATHER SUMMARY

January: The month of January was mild with below average snowfall and monthly average temperatures ranging from 2 to 8 degrees above average throughout New England. The highest sustained wind speeds above 30 miles per hour were recorded in mid-January. Snowfall totals in January were generally between 7 to 20 inches, with higher accumulations in northernmost latitudes. Total precipitation for the month ranged from as low as 1.23 inches in northern elevations in New Hampshire to 4.13 inches in Portland, ME.

The month started with warmer than normal across New England with temperatures reaching the 40s in northern States and as high as the mid-50s in southern States. A minor cold snap during the middle of the week was followed by record breaking temperatures, as high as 61 degrees in southern States with above average temperatures elsewhere. Average to above average temperatures dominated most of the second week until arctic air settled in on January 15 and brought the lowest temperatures of the season. Occasional snow and rain showers fell during the first half of the month with the heaviest precipitation occurring on January 12. Temperatures were seasonably cool during most of the third week, with the exception of January 17-18 when temperatures rose into the 40s in most areas. Snowfall during the week was heaviest in Maine and southern New England. The fourth week was the warmest in January with temperatures 9 to 16 degrees above normal. Temperatures failed to dip below freezing in every New England State for at least one night. The fourth week ended with heavy rain throughout the region with the exception of moderate snow in northern Maine. Some maple producers took advantage of the warm winter by setting out taps and boiling sap

February: The unusually mild February brought monthly average temperatures ranging from 4 to 8 degrees above normal throughout New England. Almost all of New England, outside of northernmost latitudes, received less than 10 inches of snow, with accumulations of less than 2 inches in various locations as far north as Concord, NH. Precipitation falling in the form of rain was also minimal, averaging around 1 inch throughout New England.

The first week began rainy with record-breaking high temperatures in the 50 and 60s throughout southern and central New England, followed by partly cloudy skies and average temperatures in the 30s and 40s. Average to above average temperatures dominated most of the second week with the exception of northern Maine, which experienced temperatures as low as negative double-digits. Mild temperatures and lack of significant precipitation persisted throughout the entire third week and first half of the fourth week. Significant rain and snow, temperature permitting, fell throughout the region during the second half of the fourth week. Reported precipitation was generally over half the total monthly precipitation in most locations. The week ended with damaging winds that

downed trees and caused power outages. The worst sustained winds were reported to be above 40 miles per hour. Farmers kept busy during February tending livestock, working in greenhouses, moving potatoes and apples out of storage, and preparing for the spring planting season. Mild winter conditions are encouraging maple producers to tap trees well ahead of schedule.

March: The month of March brought monthly unusually warm weather average temperatures ranging from 6 to 15 degrees above normal throughout New England. The month was marked by a series of record-breaking heat waves. Almost all of New England, outside of northernmost latitudes, experienced one snowstorm in March. Precipitation in the form of rain was also minimal, ranging from 0.3 to 2.0 inches throughout New England. The first week began with a major snowstorm, directly followed by a rainstorm mixing with snow. Many areas of New England reported more than half a foot of snow and over an inch of liquid precipitation. Rainfall was light and infrequent after these storms. The second week began cool and sunny with high temperatures mainly in the 20s and 30s but warmed up rapidly as the first heat wave of the month impacted the region. The warmest weather was reported on March 8, with record-breaking daytime temperatures generally in the 60s. The second heat wave hit at the beginning of the third week, with record-breaking temperatures mainly in the 60s and 70s. Northern Maine reported significant snowfall of over 10 inches once temperatures returned to normal levels. The third and most significant heat wave of March impacted New England by the end of the third week and persisted for most of the fourth week. Temperatures in the 70s and 80s broke records by as much as 23 degrees and were the highest temperatures ever recorded for the month in many northern New England locations. Temperatures returned to normal levels by week's end. Maple syrup production suffered due to persistently warm temperatures during the month, causing maple trees to begin budding. Many sugar producers decided to pull their taps due to this issue. Farm activities included nursery/greenhouse work, tending livestock, and preparing for the spring planting season.

April: The month of April brought monthly average temperatures ranging from 0 to 5 degrees above normal. Almost all of New England reported very little precipitation during the first three weeks of April. Precipitation for the month ranged from 1.4 to 5.2 inches throughout. The first week began dry and windy, fueling brushfires across New England. Northernmost latitudes of New Hampshire and Maine reported over 3 inches of winter precipitation at the end of the week. The second week of April did not produce adequate precipitation needed to alleviate brush fire danger conditions. A major heat wave began at the end of the second week, bringing record-breaking temperatures ranging from the low 70s to mid-90. Dry conditions and above average temperatures provided favorable conditions for brush fires during the third week. Significant precipitation during April 21-23 alleviated

drought concerns. The last week of April brought cool temperatures, resulting in multiple frosty nights. Some locations reported record-breaking nighttime temperatures in the 20s. When combined with high winds, New England reported abnormally cold wind chill measurements. General farm activities included working in nurseries and greenhouses, spraying fertilizers, spreading manure, disking, plowing, irrigating, and planting a variety of vegetable crops and field crops. The maple syrup season ended early in March for most maple producers and early in April for remaining sugarmakers. General crop development was 1 to 3 weeks ahead of schedule by the end of April.

May: The month of May brought monthly average temperatures ranging from 1 to 6 degrees above normal. Precipitation for the month was generally average to above average, ranging from 3 to 6 inches throughout most of New England. The first week began cold and rainy with scattered frost. Nighttime temperatures were cool on May 7 in northern New England, with some locations experiencing below-freezing temperatures. Rainfall of greater than an inch fell in most locations from May 8 to May 10. Temperatures rapidly warmed up by the end of the second week providing favorable fieldwork conditions. The third week had a good balance of rainy and sunny days. The fourth week was dry and very warm, favorable for fieldwork and crop development. The end of the month was marked by a severe storm outbreak bringing torrential rain, large-sized hail, and heavy winds to affected regions in New Hampshire and Vermont. Fruit crop development throughout New England was ahead of schedule, allowing early assessments of frost damage to berries and tree fruits. Damage to berries was variable as some growers were able to protect their crops with nighttime irrigation. The earliest strawberries were picked by the end of the month, well ahead of schedule. The wild blueberry crop in Maine enjoyed excellent pollination weather and received little winter injury. Cool soil temperatures kept some vegetable plants in greenhouses until soil temperatures became warm enough for transplantation later in May. Warm, sunny weather during the second half of May promoted vegetable growth. Dry hay recovered well from lack of rainfall in April and was actively harvested during the second half of May. Planting of corn was in full swing once soil temperatures warmed up during the middle of May. There were reports of insect, disease, and weed problems in corn fields. Emergence of potatoes and grains were ahead of schedule as a result of early planting. Pastures throughout New England responded well to precipitation and warmth.

June: The month of June brought monthly average temperatures ranging from 2 degrees below normal to 2 degrees above normal. Precipitation for the month was widely variable, ranging from 1.5 inches in parts of Vermont to 11.5 inches in Aroostook County, Maine. The month began with heavy rain and very cool temperatures primarily in the 50s and 60s. Most of New England

received at least 1 inch with parts of Maine reporting as much as 6 inches. Sunshine and warm temperatures prevailed during much of mid-June, drying out wet fields across New England. A heat wave, brought record breaking temperatures to some locations during June 20-22. Scattered thunderstorms developed on June 22 and June 23, cooling the region, bringing moderate to heavy precipitation, and producing localized hail and severe winds. The last week began cool with significant precipitation, particularly in northern Maine. The month ended with scattered thunderstorms and above average temperatures in the 80s and 90s. Fruit development throughout New England was ahead of schedule, with the first strawberries ready for picking by the beginning of the month. Some growers reported harvesting raspberries and sweet cherries by mid-month and highbush blueberries by the weekend of June 23. The Maine wild blueberry crop was reported in excellent to good condition and began to show blue color by month's end. Cranberries had favorable pollination weather throughout the month. Planting of vegetables early in the month was limited due to soggy fields. Warm, sunny conditions in late June allowed farmers to plant and harvest a wide assortment of vegetables. A few producers started harvesting sweet corn late in June. Re-growth of hay was vigorous. Abundant sunshine allowed farmers to harvest second crop well ahead of schedule. Corn also grew at a good pace and was 5 feet tall in some areas by month's end. There were reports of armyworms in hay and corn fields. Emergence of potatoes and small grains was generally 2 weeks ahead of schedule as a result of early planting. These crops were reported in excellent to good condition in Maine. Transplanting of shade tobacco was complete by month's end, about two weeks behind schedule. Broadleaf tobacco planting neared completion, on schedule with normal. Pastures were reported in good to fair condition in southern New England and good to excellent condition in the northern States.

July: The month of July brought monthly average temperatures ranging from 1 degree below normal to 4 degrees above normal. Precipitation for the month was generally below average, ranging from 0.6 inches in northern Maine to 4.4 inches in southwestern Connecticut. The month began warm with severe thunderstorms in northern New England on July 4, with strong winds, heavy rain, and hail at some locations. The second week of July was hot and humid with minimal precipitation. Dry, hot weather continued through the third week with some locations reporting triple digit temperatures. Scattered storms in mid-July brought much-needed precipitation to northern New England. Strong storms moved into the area during the fourth week providing some relief to most of New England with the exception of northern Maine. Fruit development throughout New England was ahead of schedule, with the harvest of peaches and highbush blueberries underway by the first week of July. The first apples and Maine wild blueberries were picked by the end of the third week. The wild blueberry crop was reported in

excellent to good condition with above average fruit set and size. Cranberries finished blooming by the first week of the month and showed potential of a good crop. Picking of strawberries was wrapped up by the end of the month, one week ahead of schedule. Fruit growers were busy irrigating and spraying for pests such as SWD fruit flies. Harvest of sweet corn was 30 percent complete by the end of the month, ahead of last year and normal. Vegetable crops showed signs of stress in late July due to lack of moisture. Late blight in tomatoes spread to several Counties in southern and central New England. Vegetable growers harvested an array of vegetables and sprayed for insects and diseases. Warm weather increased fieldwork and accelerated crop development early in July. However, lack of significant precipitation later in the month stressed crops and slowed re-growth of hay and pasture fields. Blue mold on tobacco was detected and producers were working to control its spread. Potatoes and grains in Aroostook County, Maine were ready for harvest at the end of the month and were in good condition, but stressed by dry weather and pests. Pastures conditions deteriorated from 87 to 37 percent good to excellent during the course of the month.

August: The month of August brought monthly average temperatures ranging from 0 to 5 degrees above normal. Precipitation for the month ranged from 1.8 inches in northern Vermont to 6.7 inches in central Massachusetts. The month began with daytime temperatures consistently in the 80s and 90s across the region. Strong storms during August 10 and 11 brought high winds and welcomed heavy downpours. A few areas received an overabundance of rain over a short period of time, resulting in saturated soils. Most areas in New England, with the exception of Vermont, received much needed precipitation during the middle of August. However, the remainder of the month was mostly free of precipitation, save for light to moderate precipitation falling on August 28. Fruit growers began harvesting pears and early season apple varieties early in August. There was evidence of frost and hail damage in tree fruits. Many blueberry growers reported severe pressure from Spotted Wind Drosophila (SWD) fruit flies. Pleasant summer weather boosted pick-your-own sales at fruit operations. Farm stands were very busy and full of local produce throughout the month. There were scattered reports of downy mildew and late blight across the region. Vegetable growers harvested an array of vegetables, applied preventive sprays, irrigated, and cleaned vegetable fields. Abundance of dry weather provided excellent haymaking conditions, pushing second and third cut progress ahead of the 5-year average. Soil moisture levels were variable across the region, resulting in uneven pasture conditions. Corn conditions were extremely variable, with crop specialist ratings ranging from poor to excellent depending on local moisture levels. Corn maturity levels were also highly variable given some late plantings and dry summer conditions. Growers in Aroostook County, Maine took

advantage of the warm, dry weather to combine grains and harvest of barley and oats was well ahead of schedule. Producers in Maine had sprayed to kill potato vines and were gearing up for harvest.

September: The month of September brought monthly average temperatures ranging from 3 degrees below normal to 2 degrees above normal. Precipitation for the month ranged from 2.3 inches in central Vermont to 7.0 inches in southwestern Connecticut. The month began with above average temperatures primarily in the 70s and 80s. Widespread rain showers on September 4-5 brought over an inch of precipitation to many locations. A line of thunderstorms moved through New England on September 8, resulting in heavy rain and gusty winds. Temperatures briefly climbed into the 70s and 80s by mid-month. A strong storm hit New England on September 18, bringing heavy precipitation and high winds. Late September was marked by sunny, cool weather. There were scattered instances of frost but no major killing frost in September. The month ended with widespread rain showers and below average daytime temperatures. The harvest of apples and pears was active thanks to excellent pick-your-own weather. Some producers were reporting poor yields due to the spring frosts and dry summer conditions. Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) posed a problem to fruit orchards. Some cranberry growers in Massachusetts began harvesting their crop, but most waited for the berries to ripen. A total of 10 percent of the crop was harvested by month's end, compared to 25 percent last year and 20 percent normal. Orchardists also harvested peaches, plums, grapes, blackberries, and raspberries. Farm stands were busy and full of summer and fall produce. Pumpkins matured early and were harvested throughout the month. Vegetable growers were busy cleaning vegetable fields and planting cover crops. Sunny weather provided favorable haymaking conditions, bringing second and third cut progress ahead of last year and on par with normal. Soil moisture levels in the beginning of September were low but were replenished by month's end. There was significant variability in the stage of development of field corn, depending on planting dates and soil moisture levels. Abundant sunshine in Aroostook County, Maine allowed operations to finish the harvest of small grains ahead of schedule. Farmers also harvested potatoes, finished the tobacco harvest, spread manure, and planted cover crops.

October: The month of October started seasonably cool with scattered reports of light frosts in northern New England. Widespread showers arrived on Friday and wet weather conditions persisted throughout the rest of the week. Average temperatures for the week ranged from 2 degrees below normal in Maine and Vermont to 2 degrees above normal in Rhode Island. Total precipitation for the week ranged from 0.2 to 4.9 inches. The week ending October 7 was warmer than normal with frequent precipitation. Average temperatures for the week ranged

from 6 degrees above normal in Rhode Island to 8 degrees above normal in Maine and New Hampshire. Total precipitation for the week ranged from 0.2 to 4.3 inches across the region.

The middle of October was cooler than normal with several rain showers. Average temperatures ranged from 4 degrees below normal in Rhode Island to 6 degrees below normal in Maine. Most areas received the first hard frost of the season during the week. Total precipitation for the week ranged from 0.2 to 1.6 inches across the region. The end of October was warmer than normal with average weekly temperatures ranging from 5 degrees above normal in Maine to 7 degrees above normal in New Hampshire and Rhode Island. Widespread rain shower continued during the week, bringing between 0.2 to 2.9 inches of precipitation across the region.

November: The month of November started mostly dry and sunny with weekly average temperatures ranging from 5 degrees above normal in Maine to 8 degrees above normal Connecticut and Vermont. This was followed by super storm Sandy which brought high winds and varying amounts of rain to the region on Monday night causing power outages, river flooding, and structural damage to many areas. Overall, the week was warmer than normal with weekly average temperatures ranging from 5 degrees above normal in Connecticut to 11 degrees above normal in Maine. Precipitation totals for the week ranged from 0.45 to 5.92 inches across the region. Cooler and dryer condition followed with temperatures ranging from 5 degrees below normal in New Hampshire to 7 degrees below normal in Vermont. Precipitation totals for the week ranged from zero to 2.7 inches across the region.

The month ended with average temperatures ranged from 1 degree above normal in Connecticut to 5 degrees above normal in Maine. Precipitation totals for the week ranged from zero to 0.6 inches across the region.

December: The month of December became one of the mildest on record with temperatures ranging from 4.0 to 8.5 degrees above normal in almost all of New England. Measurable snowfall was nonexistent in southern New England and minimal elsewhere. An exception was northernmost latitudes of Maine reporting up to 17 inches, a below-average measurement for December. Total precipitation for the month ranged from as low as 1.53 inches in northern elevations in New Hampshire to as great as 5.16 inches in central Massachusetts. The first week began with average to above average daytime temperatures ranging from the low 30s to mid-50s. Constant showers during the second week brought over 2 inches of rainfall throughout most of New England. Temperatures were unseasonably warm during this period with highs and lows reaching the mid-60s and low 50s, respectively, as far north as New Hampshire. In contrast, northern Maine was cool enough to receive up to 9 inches of snow during the week. Warm temperatures in the 50s made a comeback during the middle of the relatively dry third week. The fourth week continued the trend of average temperatures with a warm spell. However, there were several nights with subzero temperatures in the northern most latitudes of Maine and New Hampshire during the week. Light snow was reported throughout northern New England on December 23. Rain showers, gusty winds, and abnormally high temperatures in the 50s were reported in every State of New England during the last week of the month.